

THE

HOMES & ESTATES



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MARTYN LAWRENCE BULLARD'S
OBJECT OF DESIRE

PRIVATE PLACES



MATERIAL BEAUTY

A HISTORIC CASE STUDY SITE BIRTHS A NEW MODERNIST VISION IN BEVERLY HILLS.

BY MICHAEL BRUNO

Looking down from a modern hillside perch less than two miles from The Beverly Hills Hotel, I have the kind of aha moment that occurs when I've encountered design greatness. That greatness is a new residential creation from Shelly and Avi Osadon, the husband-and-wife duo behind See Materials and See Construction. It is quintessentially Los Angeles: out-of-this-world views, open and airy rooms, a slick sort of confidence in its seamless flow from indoors to out.

"The idea was to create the ambience of a world-class boutique hotel," Shelly Osadon says as I step through the towering pivot door and into the foyer. "We wanted to include every amenity, so that when people enter the home, they really have no other place they would rather be."

Indeed, I feel the heaviness from my cross-country trip drift away as soon as I enter the 11,255-square-foot residence. Its presence is monumental, open and brimming with museum-quality details that easily make a New Yorker forget if he or she is inside or out. In this way, the home is a tribute to its modernist past. You see, a landmark Case Study House by Rodney Walker had once resided on the same site, Osadon tells me. As she gives me a tour of the rest of the property, she shares its unique history, her creative vision for it and just how much of an architectural feat a house of its stature is.

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MICHAEL BRUNO: What originally drew you to the site?

SHELLY OSADON: The view, the location and the possibility of building this incredible home on the site got me beyond excited when we first saw the property. Unfortunately, the house was not on the market, and the owner was not interested in selling. She had lost her husband during the planning phase for their dream home. I gently convinced her that even though we wouldn't be building their dream home, a dream home would definitely rest on this site!

MB: Do you think you did right by her, given the site's provenance?

SO: I hope so. I actually think that we exceeded her expectations, since this is our specialty: modern hillside homes, where the indoor-and-outdoor flow is of utmost importance. I don't think they could have imagined the property to be developed in this way. We actually maximized the views and the privacy on this lot. It took quite a bit of thinking outside of the box to make it happen.

MB: Were you familiar with Rodney Walker's work?

SO: I wasn't familiar with his work prior to purchasing the home. However, when I researched his work later, I was surprised to learn that some of the design ideas behind his Case Study House were very much in line with our views. He liked clean lines and he loved maximizing views. I think he would have been impressed.

MB: What was your design inspiration for the home?

SO: My main objective was to create the ambience of a world-class boutique hotel. We wanted to include every amenity, so that when you enter the home, you really have no other place you would rather be.

MB: How much inspiration did you take from Los Angeles itself? To me, this home could not have been built in any other city.

SO: LA is all about the outdoors. We enjoy great weather almost 360 days a year, so my design is always about incorporating the LA mentality of indoor/outdoor living. This house takes the indoor/outdoor concept to another level. Every living area has automated doors opening at the push of a button, creating a seamless connection between the indoors and out.

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MB: How much was privacy a factor for you?

SO: We take extreme caution about positioning a home for privacy. For example, in the dining room we saw that there was a house that was pretty far away, but it had an area in the backyard that could look directly into our space. We designed a suspended planter that completely obliterated any potential neighbors' view. The suspended planter had to be engineered in such a way to carry a significant load, but it was well worth the work. It's a stunning addition to the design of the home. We want the owner to be able to enjoy the views, which are stunning from every angle, yet still enjoy his or her privacy.

MB: What was your process for selecting materials for this home?

SO: I am incredibly selective when it comes to materials. My philosophy is always to select materials that are unique and timeless. I believe less is more. When you pick the right materials, you don't need many of them to make the home feel unified. In fact, in this house we used less than 10 different materials to outfit the entire home. The end result is a cohesive and unique feeling.

MB: Let's talk about the most eye-catching materials you chose.

SO: I think all of the materials, since there were so few, had to be incredible and eye-catching. On the first and main floors, I selected Italian-engineered porcelain slabs — resembling marble — that measure 5 feet by 10 feet. These slabs had never before been used in a residential flooring setting. They create an amazing stage for the rest of the materials to stand out. On the main floor, I selected Italian slabs that are extremely rare. They are a work of art in and of themselves. We worked with this material in a few different ways, by placing it on the fireplace walls, on the custom vanity and applying a leather finish to the stone, as well as designing a new edge detail that is extremely unique. The material I selected to be applied on the monument walls — the walls that wrap from the exterior to the interior — is also amazing. I used three different widths and alternated them into a pattern. All of the bathrooms were treated with large 5- by 10-foot slabs with vertical seams. The end result is very rich and elegant.

MB: Did you create the wall coverings as well?

SO: Yes, I designed them specifically for this home. In the family room, I chose an untreated leather, cut it into tiles and applied them on the wall. I used the same material, treating it to a wash, which made the material slightly more vintage and designed two chairs to sit along the leather wall.



MB: Who do you envision the buyer to be?

SO: Prior to designing the aesthetic of a project, I always think about who I anticipate the buyer to be. For this home, I imagined the buyer to be extremely savvy, someone who values quality and attention to detail. We went above and beyond with the design details and construction quality in this home. The build was extremely complex, and the design details were very intricate. Whoever the buyer is, he or she is one lucky human being! I wish him or her many years of enjoying this incredible property.

Michael Bruno is the creator and founder of 1stdibs, the online luxury marketplace for antique and vintage design, and the creator of HousePad app, a tool he designed to help families refine their lives at home. Read the rest of his exclusive interview with Shelly Osadon at www.previewsinsideout.com/beverlygrove.

