

INSIDE: BEST IN BATHS!

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VIEW

Create the ultimate urban retreat



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he quiet Sentinel Hill neighbourhood is tucked neatly up the mountainside at the entrance to West Vancouver—it's always been an ideal place to escape without quite retreating. Several houses here are small, mid-century gems designed by Ron Thom and his circle; almost all are screened behind vegetation. But locals know this is also a launch pad—in a minute they can be cruising into downtown along the arc of the Lions Gate Bridge.

It made perfect sense to designers Matthew McLeod and Lisa Bovell (of McLeod Bovell) when their young, educated clients chose this site for their new home. "They're entrepreneurs," explains McLeod. "They need to be involved in day-to-day business, but they also have a very private and religious life, so they needed this house to let them do both. That's the drive for this building." The home would be a gathering place for their religious community as well as for themselves—to be an expression of both their personal and public spiritual lives.

All this needed to be accomplished while building on a hill so steep that the house's roof is at the same height as the road; the result is a miniature canyon between the street and the front door. Happily, the lot is 16,000 square feet (most in the area clock in at 10,000), so they had some room to play. What could have been an awkward entrance—other houses nearby simply dump visitors down to the front door—became a private courtyard "well," arrived at via cantilevered stairs and concrete steps that meander across a minimalist pond.

But, inside the home, the street and neighbouring houses all but disappear. A palette of meditative greys and whites—plenty of raw concrete walls—was assid-



Still Reflections

Pools of water maximize light in the home's front and backyards. The concrete patio out back (above) includes an infinity pool that seems to be suspended over the neighbourhood. The entrance to the front door (opposite top) is an asymmetrical collage of beams and concrete gilded with bouncing sunlight from the pond. Cantilevered stairs (opposite bottom) descend from street level, delivering visitors to a well of light and water.