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# sdhome

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A photograph of a modern, single-story house at night. The house features large glass windows and doors, revealing a dining room with a table and chairs, and a kitchen area. The interior is warmly lit. Outside, there is a swimming pool with a curved edge, and a patio area with several lounge chairs and a fire pit. The pool is illuminated with small lights, and the patio is lit with warm, ambient lighting. The overall atmosphere is cozy and luxurious.

## Dream Makers

*Plus:*

- Ever-blooming Roses
- Holiday Feasting
- Cooking With Steam

- In Encinitas: Compound Charm
- In La Jolla: Canyon Inspiration
- In Eastlake: Garden of Delights

Overlooking the Pacific, the Schroeder home combines beauty with efficiency. The great room encompasses a sunken living room facing a TV and linear fireplace, galley kitchen and, in the foreground, formal dining room.



# CANYON CRESTED

*Ocean-view home is low profile and highly satisfactory*

Story by Roger Showley

Photography by Nancee E. Lewis and Eduardo Contreras



**P**ick a canyon-rim home-site overlooking the ocean, add in archaeological and endangered habitat issues, incorporate unusual building materials and design innovations, and build at a time when construction costs are skyrocketing out of control.

The result is a marvel in concrete, steel and glass that is understated at the entrance gate and grows in awe as you proceed from room to room and floor to floor.

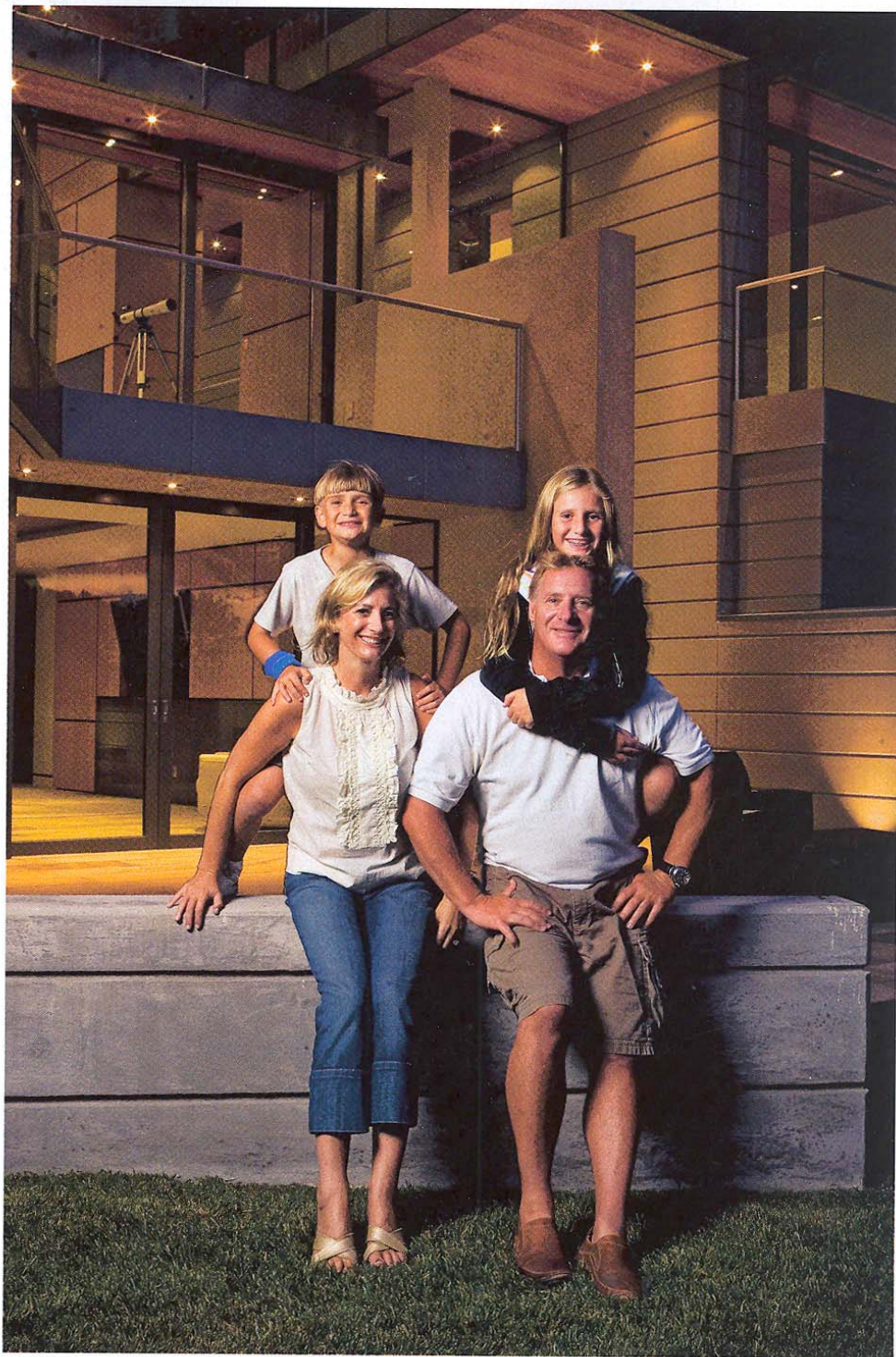
Designed by Dominy + Associates Architects and built by Mitch Burton Construction, the 4,755-square-foot, two-level home was completed at the end of last year for Lisa and Dan Schroeder. It is located in the Scripps Estates Associates subdivision adjacent to La Jolla Farms, originally set aside in the 1940s for professors at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

“We didn’t start the process to build a dream house,” Lisa said.

But after looking for an existing home with a view, plenty of space, a pool and a three-car garage, the Schroeders came across a lot where they decided to build their dream house after all.

The site is magical — located at the head of Scripps Canyon, a narrow gorge that leads to Black’s Beach about a quarter-mile to the west. There are two mature Torrey pines, one holding a swing Dan built for daughter Alix, 9, and a carpet of native plants that starts at the property’s edge and continues to the horizon.

It was the canyon gorge that inspired



Austin, 7, and Alix, 9, and their parents, Lisa and Dan Schroeder, moved from a Mount Soledad home to the Scripps Estates Associates subdivision late last year. The Schroeders took their architects’ advice to locate the children’s bedrooms on the basement level, with the master bedroom suite and guest room on the main floor.

John Pyjar, principal architect, to propose a concrete wall that stretches 168 feet from the front of the property through the house and out the back, acting like a pointer to the sea.

“It brings the canyon idea into the house, a long, linear slot right down the center, like the ‘V’ of the canyon,” Pyjar said.

Said Dan, “It’s really my favorite thing about the house.”

But before construction could begin, the Schroeders had to wade through a thicket of permitting agencies and neighborhood skeptics. There were height restrictions, possible impacts on the endangered gnatcatcher, the potential for Indian artifacts and burial sites



A linear fireplace from Canada heats up the living room area as a radiant heat system in the floor warms up the rest of the house. But extra levels of insulation have reduced and even eliminated the need for heating, even in cold winter months.

on the property, and the possible historic importance of the original home built for Guy Fleming, founding president of the Torrey Pines Association.

“To get the neighbors onboard, we kept the profile of the house very low,” only about nine feet above grade, Pyjar said. “You can stand in the street and look over the house. The natural topography was already that way; we just made sure it stayed with a pretty low profile.”

The Schroeders brought contrasting backgrounds to the project. Dan grew up in Dayton, Ohio, surrounded by family antiques, his mother’s copies of *Architectural Digest* a fixture on the coffee table. About 15 years ago, he moved to San Diego and made a 180-degree turn in his taste in architecture.



The master bath includes a multispray shower/steam room with a view to the ocean. The area also includes a spa tub and compact washer-dryer.



A doorway cut into a concrete wall in the master bedroom leads to a narrow balcony that overlooks the stairway to the basement. The cabinet at the foot of the bed hides a TV that rises into view at the touch of a button.

“I saw some modern art and gave up on the antiques and said I’m a modern contemporary guy,” he said. “I think I’m the only one in the family like that.”

Lisa grew up in La Jolla Farms, where contemporary design is common, and she knew a thing or two about microclimates — how it could be cold facing the ocean and pleasantly warm a few yards away if buffered from the wind.

So one of the early decisions was to locate the pool, spa, barbecue and fire pit in the front courtyard. This arrangement also avoided battles with neighbors who did not relish looking out at a pool complex at the edge of the canyon.

“We would have had a much more uphill fight with the neighbors,” Lisa said.

The next decision was to build a two-level house with the children’s rooms, laundry and game room in the basement. Dan said an early priority had been to locate the bedrooms near theirs. But David Keitel, the associate architect responsible for the interior layout, assured them that as the kids grew older, a little distance would be better.

Now came the fun part — the details.

Wanting a very contemporary look, the Schroeders opted for lots of glass, high ceilings and an open floor plan that maintains the view from front to back to the ocean through floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding glass doors. The sloping roof is made of Rheinzinc, an alloy of copper, zinc and titanium (appropriate since Dan is the owner of locally

based Western Titanium Inc.).

Proceeding down a covered walkway, punctuated by openings to the sky, visitors enter a truly great room — dining room, kitchen and sunken living room. The floor is paved here (and throughout the house) in fossilized sandstone from Arizona Tile, the ceiling paneled in polished Douglas fir and the walls covered in anigre, an African hardwood the color of caramel with a slight scent akin to cedar.

“We can entertain, be with the kids, jump in swimming pool, barbecue, do all the family activities in this area,” Dan said. “The rest of the house is for sleeping, doing the laundry, other necessities.”

To one side of the great room is a



The powder room off the great room glistens, thanks to a skylight and mother-of-pearl wall covering. Water disappears into an unseen drain pipe.

19 1/2-foot-long countertop of CaesarStone, a quartz-based surface, that serves the galley-style kitchen. The shelves are hidden behind sliding doors rather than traditional cabinet doors. The built-in appliances include a four-burner Wolf stove, two Sub-Zero refrigerator-freez-

ers, two Dacor convection ovens and a microwave and Fisher & Paykel drawer dishwasher. Lighting is by Zumtobel Staff.

Just beyond the countertop is a 130-bottle wine rack, and that's a story all its own.



Breakfast takes place around the CaesarStone countertop at the east end of the kitchen. The outdoor barbecue area and pool are just out of sight to the right.

Contractor Burton had proposed a rack that, at the push of a button, would descend into a refrigeration unit on the basement level.

"Ultimately, it came down to the budget," Lisa said — \$200,000, according to Burton's estimate.

So, carpenters built a stationary rack. Besides, the Schroeders prefer reds, not cooled whites.

The living room, built 12 inches below the kitchen level, is sparsely furnished with upholstered couches and chairs and orients to a wall with two wows — a 60-inch Aquos flat-screen TV that swivels for viewing outside and a 10-foot-long linear fireplace. It resembles an aquarium but when ignited puts off an intense heat.

Burton has a story to share about installing the fireplace. Built by Montigo in Langley, British Columbia, it was delivered one day but without the warning that at 2,200 pounds, it could not simply be marched into place.

"What we had to do was rent a crane, cut the roof out and crane it in because it was so big and heavy," Burton said.

On the other side of the TV-fireplace wall is the master bedroom suite. The best part is the master bath, with an all glass shower-steam bath, sunken Consonance whirlpool tub by Kohler, his and her sinks and one closet Lisa and Dan share. There's a stacked washer-dryer and a laundry chute that leads to the regular laundry room downstairs.

Dan said he greenlighted the stacked washer-dryer and other little things for one reason. "My wife was extremely worried — everytime people do this, they get a divorce," Dan recalled.

What he got was a "man cave" — a three-car detached garage, complete with heated floor, grease pit, flat-screen TV and satellite radio. "It's just a place I like to go to and hang out," he said, while working on his car and motorcycle collection.

There's also an attached two-car garage that could be converted to a home theater.

One of the real gems in the house is the smallest room — a powder room, its walls covered in luminescent mother-of-pearl, a skylight lending a natural glow, and a Kohler hatbox-shaped toilet.

Downstairs are rooms for Alix and her brother Austin, 7. Alix requested and received a bubble-style chair that hangs from the ceiling. Austin got Fathead stick-on graphics of Chargers players.

The rooms open onto the backyard and a playroom that will certainly be the center of attention when they grow into teenagers. This level also includes the laundry room (enlarged to accommodate cabinets for toys and games), a guest room and an electronics utility closet.

The Schroeders did not want to reveal the cost of the home, but they did admit that they went over budget. That's partly due to details decided during construction but more because materials costs skyrocketed during the 2004-06 real estate boom.

"We kind of sucked it up," Lisa said.



Dan Schroeder and his brother built a swing on one of the two Torrey pine trees retained on the property

Architect Keitel said materials cost about 10 percent more than planned, and a stretched-out construction schedule added about 25 percent.

But the family had a pleasant surprise last New Year's Eve, when Burton realized that costs were \$300,000 under

budget. A rebate check was in the mail. 🍀

**ROGER SHOWLEY** is a staff writer at *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. He can be reached at (619) 293-1286 and [roger.showley@uniontrib.com](mailto:roger.showley@uniontrib.com).