



The cover of the magazine 'dwell'. The title 'dwell' is written in large, bold, blue lowercase letters. Below the title, the text 'AT HOME IN THE MODERN WORLD' is written in smaller, blue, uppercase letters. On the right side, the text 'Keep It Clean The Best Washers and Dryers' is written in white. The background of the cover shows a wooden deck and greenery.



Director's Cut

A double-height living room makes not only a bright, airy space for relaxing and entertaining but also an ideal showplace for the Wenderses' collection of aboriginal Australian artwork.

With films like *Wings of Desire*, *Buena Vista Social Club*, and *Paris, Texas* to his name, Wim Wenders is one of cinema's most acclaimed directors. But filmmaking wasn't always his aspiration. "When I was growing up, I dreamed up houses and drew them," Wim remembers. "I had a big book of houses by Richard Neutra, and I wanted to be an architect for a long time."

This is perhaps why the German filmmaker and his wife, Donata, embraced the challenge of creating a home in the Hollywood Hills out of what was once a 5,000-square-foot 12-car garage. The three-level structure was built by a vintage car collector, who lived in an adjacent

house. But instead of moving into the house, Wim had it converted into an office/editing studio and set his sights on the garage. "As we came up the driveway, I told Donata, 'This is it,'" Wim recalls.

It was the wide-open space that attracted him. "The city of Los Angeles has all this space, but the houses somehow don't reflect that," Wim explains. "This, however, was one big weird loft that captured that generosity of space. It didn't seem to belong here."

But this was no simple garage conversion. Because the plywood shear panels had rotted, the interior had to be gutted and the skin replaced. Site limitations, including ▶

The largest ground-floor room (right) serves as a workspace for Donata, who, like her husband, is an accomplished still photographer. On the upper two floors (below), architects Olivier Touraine and

Deborah Richmond hid the stairwell with a wall rising to about two-thirds of the ceiling's height, creating a mezzanine that doubles as more exhibit space for the couple's pictures.

setback restrictions to one side and unsuitable sandy soil to the other, also meant the structure could not be expanded. The job was complex, and even though the architects, husband-and-wife team Olivier Touraine and Deborah Richmond of Touraine + Richmond Architects, had compiled impressive resumes working for the likes of Rem Koolhaas, Renzo Piano, and Jean Nouvel, they were largely untested on their own. Wim was undeterred. "I think he liked the idea of working with young architects, because he wanted to be involved in the design process," says Richmond.

Wim made for an unconventional client. "In the U.S., film producers basically obligate you to stick to the script, whereas in Europe, it's more of a guide," Richmond continues. "At some point I realized that's how Wim treated our drawings: something to be constantly revised. Even as things started to be built, he and Donata would walk through the space and say, 'Maybe this wall should go here.' But we had a very good contractor [Arni Osvaldsson of Brown/Osvaldsson Builders], and he made it work."

Wim and Donata knew they wanted to keep the living area two stories (the sloping site puts it on the second floor), creating a dramatic space to entertain and to display their extensive collection of aboriginal Australian paintings, not to mention the couple's highly praised still photographs. The concrete floors were preserved (light-colored maple flooring was used in other parts of the house), contrasting with pristine white walls while also forging inviting space complemented by generous bookshelves and plush custom-designed furniture. "Wim and especially Donata were searching for that rare achievement: warm modernism," says Richmond.

The spacious living area leads through two large glass doors to a patio with a Cubist-like water fountain (to mask noise from the nearby 101 freeway) and a vine-covered trellis for shade. "We wanted a permanent ambiguity between what's inside and what's outside," Touraine explains. Indeed, the combined space makes for a great party house, which the director admits to taking advantage of.

The interior also features a mezzanine for the master ▶



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