The home's large windows fill the house with light and expose a view that includes city and hill vistas. A new deck provides an outdoor viewing area. The wood ceiling gives the space texture and warmth.

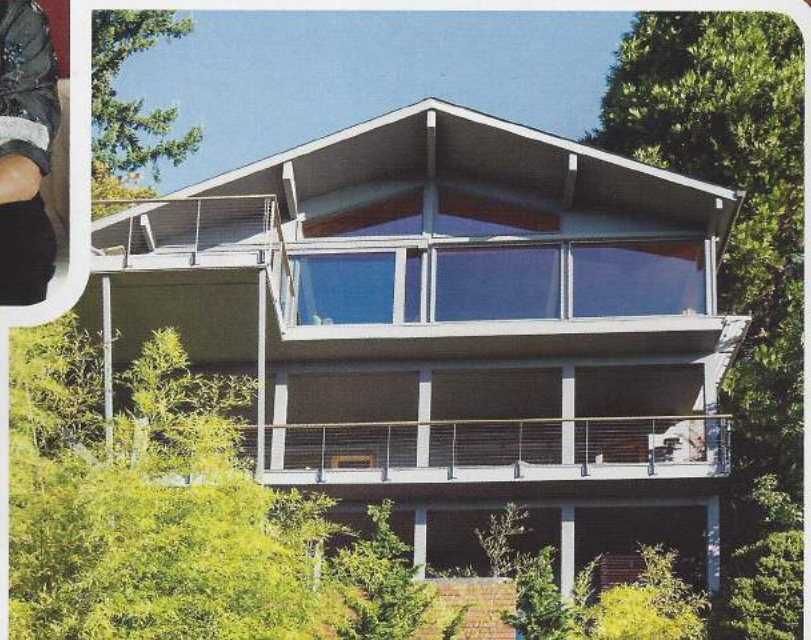
When Bernard Gasch first saw the three-story house with its panoramic view of Portland and Mount Hood in the Kings Heights neighborhood, he wasn't planning to buy it. "I was actively pursuing another house nearby," he says. "But that other house turned out to have an inferior structure. This house was solid, I liked 85 percent of it immediately, and I was wowed by the view."

Gasch, a Portland physician, was living nearby and had been looking for a new house. "My other house faced north, which meant it was more exposed to the wind and had industrial views toward Mount St. Helens," he says. "When I realized my remodeling plans for that house weren't feasible, I began searching for something else."

ROOMS *with a view*

A home built into a steep, sloping lot is reworked to connect the floors and create multiple outdoor rooms

By ***Margaret Foley*** • Photography ***Paula Watts***



ABOVE: Bernard Gasch sits in the redesigned master suite.

RIGHT: The home's design makes use of its steep lot with decks that orient it toward the views.

The 3,500-square-foot home, purchased in summer 2010, was built into a steep hillside and is accessed through a small Japanese garden leading to the home's top level, where floor-to-ceiling windows reveal the expansive view. The home had some design issues. "The house was disconnected," says Gasch. "The deck off the living room was too small and didn't feel sturdy. Also, you couldn't get directly to the first floor from the second floor. You either had to take an elevator that went only from the top to the bottom floor or go outside the second floor and take an exterior path down. That totally separated the house, and I never went down to the first level."

Rather than remodel immediately, Gasch lived in the two-bedroom, four-bath house over the winter to see how he wanted to use the space. To reconfigure the home's layout, he worked with designer Lee Shradar and architect Alan Jones of Holst Architecture to connect the home's floors, create a better flow through the house and improve the outdoor spaces. "Everybody's take on the house was that it was a magnificent space and had all this potential," says Shradar. "But because of the steep, sloping lot, we had to keep the nature of the site in mind." The remodel, begun in August 2011, took nine months to complete.

A central element in the design was a new interior staircase, built by Creative Woodworking NW, to connect the home's three floors. "We dug the central core for the new staircase from the interior of the house by hand," says Paul Gustavson, the owner of Viewpoint Restoration, who was the project's contractor. "It's pretty unusual to excavate from the inside with a pick and a shovel."

The new custom cherry floating staircase with a screen-style support railing unifies the house. "I like the warm color of the wood," says Gasch. "It echoes the other wood in the house, and the railing lets light filter to the lower levels." The placement of the staircase also meant that the second floor — which has the master suite, a guest bedroom and a connecting deck with a fire pit — could be reworked. An awkward space with a laundry area and a small bathroom was reconfigured to separate the laundry

LEFT: The galley kitchen has a Wolf range, mahogany cabinetry and a view of the Japanese pond at the home's entry.

BELOW: A modern wicker-style chair creates a seating area without blocking the view. Gasch purchased the chair from the home's previous owner.

The dining table, chairs and seating were designed specifically for the house by its second owner and have been purchased along with the house by its subsequent owners. Gasch is the home's fourth owner. "A regular table would be dwarfed in the space," says Gasch. "I like that you can fit a large group around this one."

ABOVE: A reclaimed-wood headboard provides a focal point for the master bedroom. Large sliding-glass doors allow easy access to the middle-level deck.

LEFT: Gasch relaxes by the custom fire pit from Moderustic.

A colorful abstract painting by Oregon artist Scott Hoyle hangs above a white leather couch in the master bedroom.

from the bathroom. "The laundry room also connects to the master suite," says Gasch. "So I can close my whole area off, and my guests can have an area that's more private."

With a staircase now connecting the first and second floors, Gasch reorganized the first floor, which he was not using because it was so difficult to access, into an entertainment area that includes a wide-screen television, indoor and outdoor sound system, a ping-pong table, and a small bar area. A textured wall with hidden lights that change color also conceals a Murphy bed for additional guests. "One of the things I thought was unusual about this house when I bought it was that it only had two bedrooms," says Gasch. "Down here, I wanted to create a room that could also be a bedroom if I needed it."

Off the entertainment area, a new hot tub deck with an outdoor shower and lounge chairs creates a live-in, live-out space. "I'd had the hot tub at my old house," says Gasch. "Wanting to have one here started me thinking about how I wanted this home's outdoor areas to look."

The other outdoor space that needed to be reworked was the deck off the main floor, which was not oriented toward the south-facing view that was a major impetus for purchasing the house. "You accessed the deck through a tiny door and were squished into a small

TOP ROW (from left): A wood screen provides privacy for the outdoor shower on the first-floor deck. Friends enjoy Champagne, the hot tub, conversation and views of downtown Portland.

MIDDLE ROW (from left): The view from the top deck takes in the lower decks and shows the steepness of the hillside. The covered middle deck off the bedrooms provides tranquil, covered seating.

BOTTOM ROW (from left): The fire pit allows year-round outdoor seating. "It's nice to sit here and watch the clouds roll in," says Gasch. Each deck provides a different way to enjoy the outdoors.

The first floor is now an entertainment space. "Before the remodel, I never came down here," says Gasch. "Now this space gets used." The textured wall hides a Murphy bed. The carpet is made of Flor tiles.

The design of the new cherry staircase unifies the entire house.

area," says Gasch. "I wanted to have space to spread out and look at the city and the mountain."

To capture the view, sliding-glass doors were added and the deck was extended 10 feet. Because of the steep hillside location, the deck had to be carefully engineered with steel pilings earth anchors and structural beams. "It took a lot of engineering to make that deck happen," says Gasch. "Many of the pieces for it had to be craned from the street or over the house, because that was the only way to get them into place."

Gasch enjoys socializing, and his home's remodel makes it more versatile. "My tennis friends come over and play ping-pong," he says. "Friends who like to stay warm in the winter sit in the hot tub. You can read on the bedroom deck because it's quiet. I like to grill, and everybody can hang out on the main deck and then eat together around the big dining table. The home's spaces can be used in multiple ways."

THE DESIGN/BUILD TEAM

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- **PAUL GUSTAVSON, VIEWPOINT RESTORATION**
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- **CREATIVE WOODWORKING NW**
  Portland; creativewoodworkingnw.com

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The kitchen's breakfast nook looks out on the Japanese garden at the home's entrance. "I like the fact that you come into the home through this small landscape," says Gasch. "It's a contrast to the home's views."