

# the Coast is CLEAR

Designer/Builder Steve Lazar Makes Maximum Use Of Interior Space With His Innovative Designs

TEXT BY MELISSA SHERMAN PEARL  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN THOMAS JONES

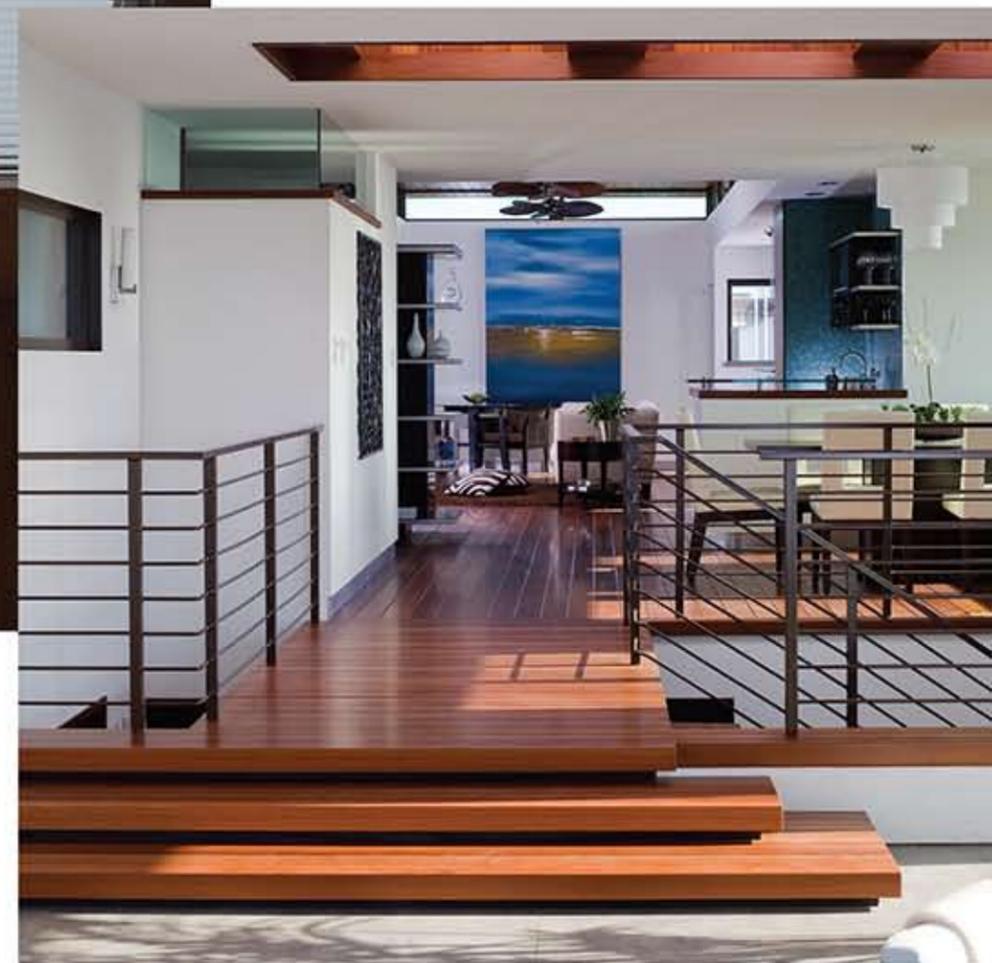
Retractable doors slide behind the TV creating a lanai as sharkskin patterned weather-impervious porcelain tile extends from the living room onto the balcony. Teamed with clerestory, closed reflective glass doors invite a plethora of natural light without compromising privacy.



**C** *Crashing waves, salty air, walking barefoot* through sand just steps away from the front door—it is all a part of what makes coastal California living so special. Regardless of whether the home is cozy or palatial, what counts is location, location, location, as real estate agents say. Lazar Design Build principal Steve Lazar is fully aware of the premium placed on Southern California's South Bay region that he has called home for the last few decades.

When Lazar and his wife of seventeen years, Debbie, were dreaming of the perfect house in which to raise their four young sons, the builder stumbled upon a 2,700 square foot property in Manhattan Beach and his vision was instant. What he designed and built was a 4,200 square foot home with an organic, Pacific Rim feel that offers great views from Malibu to Catalina. A warm, livable blend of contemporary design and natural materials, the home emerges from the earth as if growing directly from it.

Lazar has created open spaces throughout using clerestory windows in conjunction with reeded and reflective glass to welcome in natural light while maintaining a sense of privacy. Alleys and neighbors are virtually invisible as clear glass is used only to reveal important views to the residents inside.



Mechanical doors open and close in tandem allowing for full exposure or complete privacy. Never in this home can anyone see what should remain private as even entries to bedrooms are somewhat indirect. OPPOSITE Mangaris wood, corten steel, painted steel and reflective glass harmonize in this linear composition.

"I am committed to clean, innovative, natural work that integrates the environment with the home in a fresh and inspirational way."

— Steve Lazar



Taking into consideration their active, growing, and not necessarily tidy boys as well as Nana, who resides locally but enjoys sleepovers, they wanted "the separation of spaces coupled with intimate spaces that allow the family to grow individually as well as collectively," says Lazar. "The compartmentalized floor plan enhances this desire by effectively creating six segments to the house. Front and rear areas spread over three stories that are separated by a series of bridges and floating stairs. Each space accommodates a very specific use while still being accessible to all other spaces via the open stairwell."

The exterior, composed of farmed mangaris wood, concrete and corten steel, is defined by Lazar's signature floating shadow lines that transition the seemingly incongruous materials into a fusion of elements that flow into the interior. Retractable vanishing walls not only provide ample cross ventilation, but generate a lanai effect in the west facing living room. They are used again on the street level to create a sublime indoor outdoor lounge.

The seaside theme is represented visually through subtle shades of blue and aqua, most notably in the kitchen's extended shimmering tile backsplash, as well as audibly with the exterior lounge fountain and a stream that runs over riverbed stones adjacent to the entry's long teak stairway. It is natural to place this kind of attention to detail in one's own home but, clients can attest, Lazar does the same for every single project he designs and builds.

"Form, function, nature, the outdoors, warmth, a sense of community and simultaneously, privacy, provide a constant source of design ideas," he says. "I am committed to clean, innovative, natural work that integrates the environment with the home in a fresh and inspirational way." In addition to creating many homes in Southern California, a number of which have been featured on annual philanthropic tours, he also has contributed his design expertise to mixed-use construction.

Lazar's work may be best summed up by his ten year old son who, upon careful examination of his dad's latest creation, a Hermosa Beach residence deemed simply the Lifeguard Tower, said "Dad, you think outside the box." And that's because Lazar doesn't build boxes. He creates lifestyles. [EAT](#)



Simple, clean, useful and warm, the Lazar kitchen captures and embraces the home's theme. **OPPOSITE** Since the grand backdrop across the entire west wall of the kitchen was the Pacific Ocean, it was easy to connect the kitchen splash to the horizon. Lazar's exquisite attention to detail prompted this Walker/Zanger glass-tiled ocean wall that not only extends from the kitchen into the bar but resides behind all of the floating hollowed back cabinetry that virtually seems to float.



A vertical two story window proportions the massive front elevation as it leads symmetrically up to a two level split flat roof. The broad stretched eaves not only protect the interior from direct sunlight but also balance the structure aesthetically. Composed of farmed mangaris wood, concrete and corten steel, the exterior is defined by Lazar's signature floating shadow lines that transition the seemingly incongruous materials into a glorious fusion of elements.



TOP The whitewater ocean view alone from the king size bed is enough to encourage long Sunday mornings. While the master space is open to some degree, the Lazars are able to enjoy dressing and bathing without use of conventional doors engaging what Lazar deems provocative privacy. ABOVE Ocean inspired one inch Lunada Bay glass tile pops against dark wood and is vertically laid creating the illusion of falling water. So as to engage fluid movement, the tile against the niche, the wall, and the door was all perfectly planned to avoid distracting cuts.