

ORANGE COUNTY

MAY 2007
\$3.95

HOME

DECOR | FURNISHINGS | GARDEN | ENTERTAINING

A photograph of a modern outdoor poolside area. In the foreground, a hot tub with bubbling water is visible. To the right, two wooden lounge chairs with light-colored cushions are positioned on a light-colored stone patio. In the background, a wooden fire pit with a fire burning inside is situated next to a wooden sofa and a coffee table. Large glass windows of a building are visible in the background, reflecting the sky and the pool area.

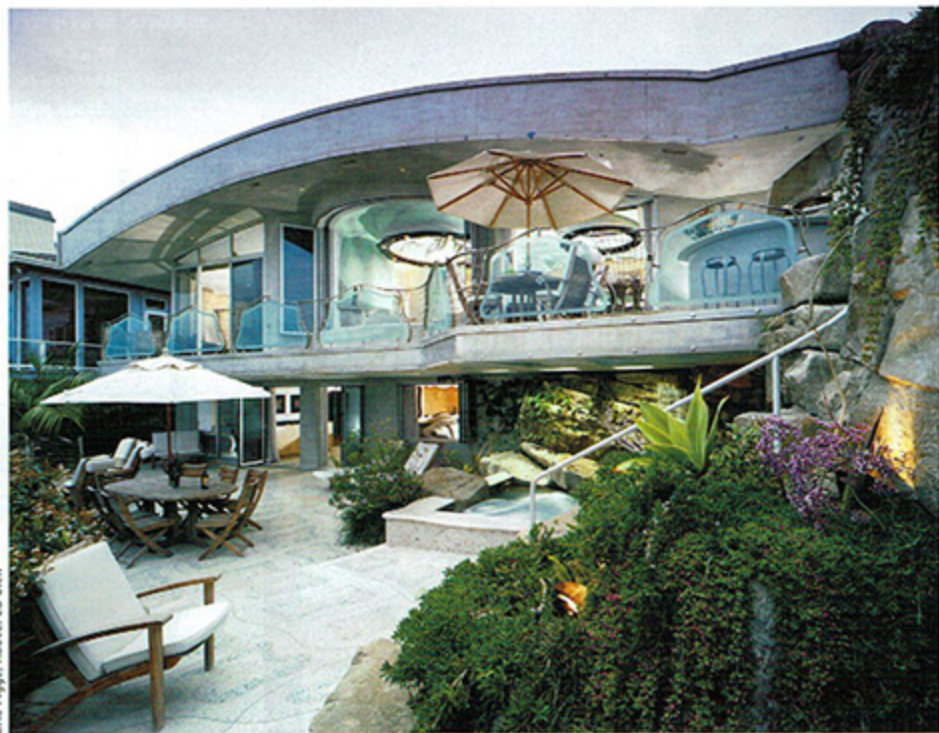
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POOLSIDE AT A
CORONA DEL MAR HOME

SURFER CHIC AT A SAN CLEMENTE HOME
ART MEETS FOOD AND WINE AT A GALLERY



Clockwise from left: Custom-made beveled glass in the balcony allows unmarred views from inside the house. Architect Brion Jeannette and contractor Butch Witik painstakingly worked to achieve an organic look. The outdoor spaces facing the ocean are made for entertaining and landscaped carefully so that plants look like they grew naturally from niches and crevices.



Eric Figgie; Above: Ed Olen

Forget what the wise man did - this house is built INSIDE a rock.

TEXT BY RICHARD DODD

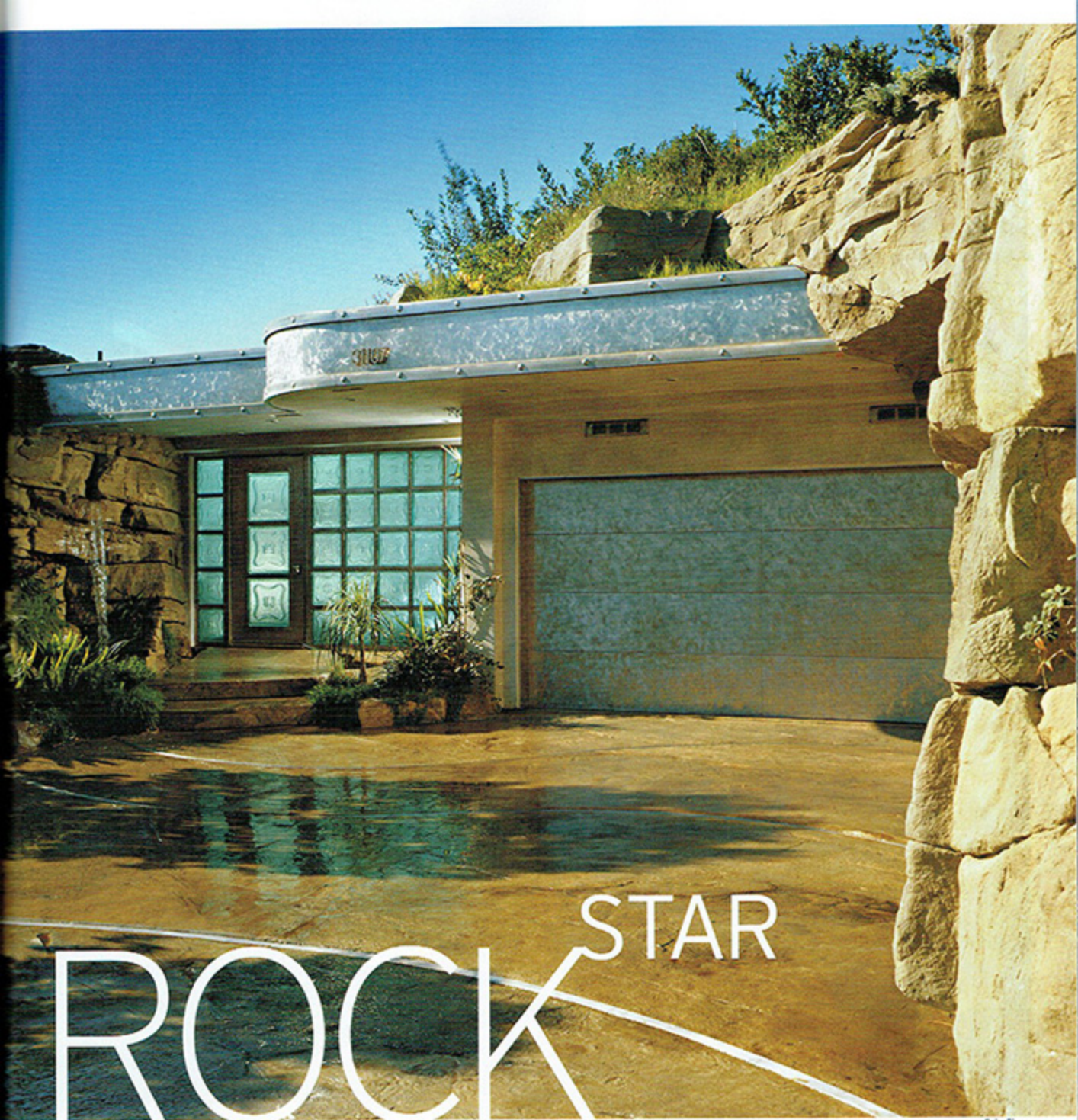
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rchitects often find themselves facing seemingly insurmountable situations, with steep, inaccessible or impossible terrain or conditions. Sometimes, if they are very innovative and very patient, they discover the path to an answer.

But seldom if ever has that answer been: Why don't we just build the house IN the rock?

Orange County boasts some unusual homes, but certainly the Aliso Rock House at Aliso Beach in South Laguna Beach is one of





Eric Figge

the most remarkable.

The owners of the Aliso Rock House were denied building rights for 23 years, as the site was considered an environmentally sensitive landmark.

Architect Brion Jeannette took on the challenge to design a home that met the community's concerns. The solution was to remove 42 existing plant species, nurture them off-site and replant after the home was completed in 1996. The natural rock

was removed, to be replaced after the structure was completed.

A two-story steel and glass beachfront home was built with a reinforced concrete roof that would sustain the weight of the original rock, earth and plants that were replaced.

The project was an environmental, as well as architectural, triumph: 92 percent of the plants survived.

The 2,825-square-foot home, built entirely within a natural rock landmark, is a head-turner. It is bounded by Pacific Coast



Photos: Eric Fänge

Clockwise from right: Rock formations are integrated into the wall along the staircase. An ocean view beckons beyond the living room at the end of the hallway. Homeowner Dennis Moran relaxes in his living room. Rounded walls and corners and curvaceous furniture are recurring themes in the house. Facing page: A star pattern on the floor anchors a showcase kitchen.



Ed Olen



Ed Olen

Highway, the Pacific Ocean and a private residence on one side and a public beach/park and creek on the other. Those keen on Orange County architecture will note that Jeannette also designed the Gucci House, another notable structure, which sits atop a bluff at the opposite end of Aliso Beach.

Jeannette's design provided a number of energy-conserving opportunities. The landform provided protection from heat and

cold and attenuated sound from the busy highway. Natural light and ventilation comes from 50 feet of ocean facing tinted, dual-glazed glass doors, which are completely retractable. Skylights and discreetly placed windows provide additional thermal ventilation and lighting. Large glass light wells are fitted into the upper deck to introduce natural light into the lower-level deck/patio areas.



Custom doors and glass-block walls bring light into the house, built into a rock.

This design solution - to build within the rock form - took two years of public hearings and eventually won praise and satisfaction from all facets of the community. The city's zoning and coastal constraints were satisfied, and the natural vegetation and the public view of this landform and coastal scenic views were all protected. The south-facing side of the site adjacent to the public beach was donated to the city as a permanent scenic resource.

The community now regards this unique home with pride. The Rock retained its landmark status and the owner enjoys an energy-conserving home on a spectacular, environmentally sensitive site.

The bright and airy interior spaces are a surprise (to those who expect to find a cave). It is truly a unique Orange County home.

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RESOURCES

- Architect: Brion Jeannette & Associates Inc., 470 Old Newport Blvd., Newport Beach 92663, 949-645-5854 and www.customarchitecture.com
- Landscape architect: Daniel Stewart & Associates, 2753 Camino Capistrano, Suite 82, San Clemente 92672, 949-361-9388