

L.A. Jackson: October garden chores. Page 7E  
Top Drawer .....2E  
Marni Jameson .....4E  
Garden Calendar .....7E  
Television.....8E  
Films.....9E  
[www.newsobserver.com/home](http://www.newsobserver.com/home)

# Home&Garden

'Figaro' sings:  
The N.C. Sym-  
phony joins with  
Opera Company  
of N.C. Page 9E.

home of  
the month

September's profile of a well-designed living space  
Take a look at a photo gallery at [www.newsobserver.com](http://www.newsobserver.com), search **home&garden**.



the entryway

The wood and steel bridge provides a dramatic entryway to the house. Below the bridge is an intimate walled garden with pathways and a cascading water fountain. An elegantly detailed spiral staircase connects the main living level of the house to the roof deck.

## Modern resurrection

Built on the crumbling bones of a 1960s house, a contemporary home boasts drama, comfort

*Home of the Month, a collaboration with the N.C. State University College of Design, shows possibilities for constructing a living space built with homeowners' living patterns and preferences in mind. Each month we profile a new home, selected by an expert panel, from designs by area architects. The goal: to offer inspiration and knowledge that can be applied to any living space.*

the project

the chiles residence

**architect**  
Tonic Design/Construction, 784-0573  
**project location**  
Raleigh  
**square footage**  
3,500  
**key attributes**  
Modern renovation  
Connecting inside with outside  
Living with art

BY DAVID HILL  
GUEST COLUMNIST

John and Molly Chiles decided to build a new modern house in North Carolina, and they found just the place for it on the resurrected bones of an old modern house. The Ohio couple explored the more traditional option of buying a home site and building from the ground up, but they soon became fascinated with the possibility of renovating an abandoned 1960s steel frame and wood panel house overlooking Crabtree Creek in Raleigh. Renovation does not sufficiently describe the task that lay ahead for the Chileses and Tonic Design/Construction, a local design-build firm. The house's wood walls and floors had rot-

ted, and it was camouflaged by a tangle of kudzu and ivy. Vincent Petrarca of Tonic admits that the house was in terrible shape, but "still strong in concept" and full of possibilities. John and Molly had the vision to see through the clutter and were confident that the neglected remains could be converted into a stunning new house that would pay homage to mid-20th century modern design. The owners were no strangers to great architecture of the past and present. They had traveled to see many famous modern houses, including the iconic Case Study House #22 designed by California architect Pierre Koenig



The open stair, meticulously constructed of steel and wood, illustrates the importance of small details to the overall design of the house.

SEE CHILES, PAGE 6E

**CALLING ALL ARCHITECTS** We are looking for designs to feature in 2008. Registered architects practicing in North Carolina are invited to submit designs completed since Jan. 1, 2002. The single-family house designs can be for new construction, a major renovation or a significant addition. The design should demonstrate quality use of space and innovative solutions for contemporary living. A panel of architects and architectural critics will select examples that support and expand ideas of what a home can be and that represent diversity in architecturally designed homes. Registration deadline is Oct. 15. Entry submission deadline is Nov. 9. For details, visit [www.design.ncsu.edu](http://www.design.ncsu.edu) and click on the Home of the Month icon. Questions could be addressed to [homeofthemoth@ncsu.edu](mailto:homeofthemoth@ncsu.edu).

## CHILES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1E

in 1959.

The Case Study Houses (more than 20 in all) were commissioned between the 1940s and '60s by Art and Architecture Magazine and were intended to showcase modern innovations in residential design.

Koenig's steel and glass houses, one of which perches precariously on a Hollywood hillside, captured the couple's imagination and inspired them to build something similar in Raleigh.

The Chileses' knowledge of architecture proved to be a valuable asset in working with Tonic. They were active in many aspects of the design and construction process, and they developed a working relationship with Tonic.

John Chiles insists that the only way to get a great project is to be "an involved client" willing to collaborate with designers and builders throughout the process.

The couple challenged Tonic to "make good architecture fit the program" — a term used to describe the general space requirements of a project. In return, John and Molly researched materials and even helped lay out mock-up wall panels to test interior spatial configurations.

Chiles notes that teamwork and "a willingness to wrestle with ideas" ensured that no one felt left out of the design and construction process and all points of view were considered.

Like the Case Study Houses, the Chiles house is structured for contemporary living. John Chiles notes that the "spaces and walls are designed specifically to take art."

Rooms flow together in a re-

fined but casual way, and floor-to-ceiling windows open views to the surrounding trees and greenway to the north.

Artwork is displayed prominently, but don't confuse the house with a museum. To the contrary, the Chileses are quick to point out that their house is not a gallery for the art, but a place where they can live with the works they have collected.

The open floor plan of the main level gives the Chileses a space that they characterize as "a loftlike house or a houselike loft" in which low walls, area rugs and furniture — yes, mid-century modern pieces — loosely define boundaries between living room, dining room, office, kitchen and breakfast area.

The designers believe this kind of plan encourages movement through the various spaces and levels of the house, and they designed several elements that make the journey graceful.

The gently curving driveway offers ever-changing vantage points to view the house's exuberant form. A steel and ipe (pronounced EE-pay) wood bridge spans a private walled garden and connects the drive to the front door. Interior and exterior stairs play an important role in establishing the house's contemporary character.

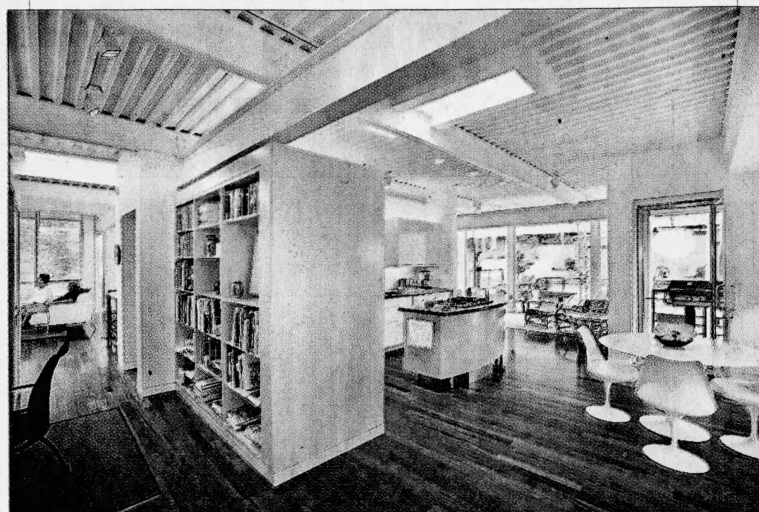
Tonic worked with structural engineer Richard Kaydos-Daniels and steel crafters from McConnell Studios in Raleigh to fabricate a striking spiral staircase that connects the main living level to the roof deck. Clipped onto the side of the house, the outdoor stair's helical form stands — or more precisely, floats — in contrast to the grid-like steel structure.

The rooftop oasis is a design feature that Molly insisted

upon. Because the house is sited halfway down a hillside and nestled in a stand of old-growth beech trees, she envisioned the roof deck as a large-scale "table on top of the house" where friends could gather for social occasions in a space with views across the treetops to the distant horizon.

Some critics have accused modern architecture of being cold, unlivable and lacking in detail, but the Chiles house proves otherwise. It is rich in spatial finesse, fine details and warm materials and, as Petrarcha points out, is a composition of "open perches and quiet retreats." The house elegantly frames art and nature in a setting that is at once dramatic and comfortable.

Together, the Chileses and Tonic have given life to old bones and made "modern" new again. *David Hill is an architect and faculty member in the N.C. State University School of Architecture.*

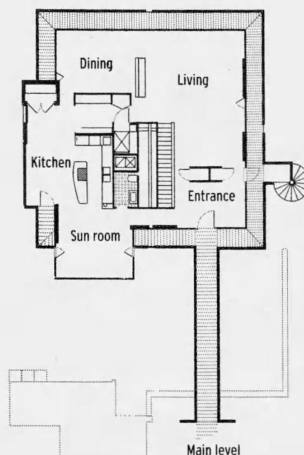


the living space

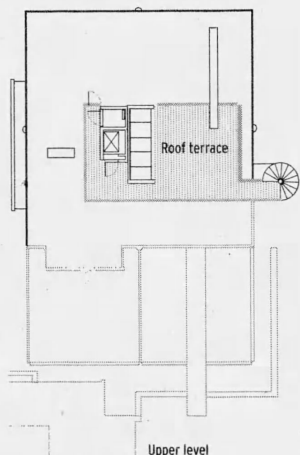
Exposed structure is an important feature inside. Crisscrossing beams create a bright ceiling that contrasts with the warmth of the cherry floors.



Lower level



Main level



Upper level

We Think Of It  
AS MATCHMAKING.



the structure

The home's "spaces and walls are designed specifically to take art," says homeowner John Chiles.