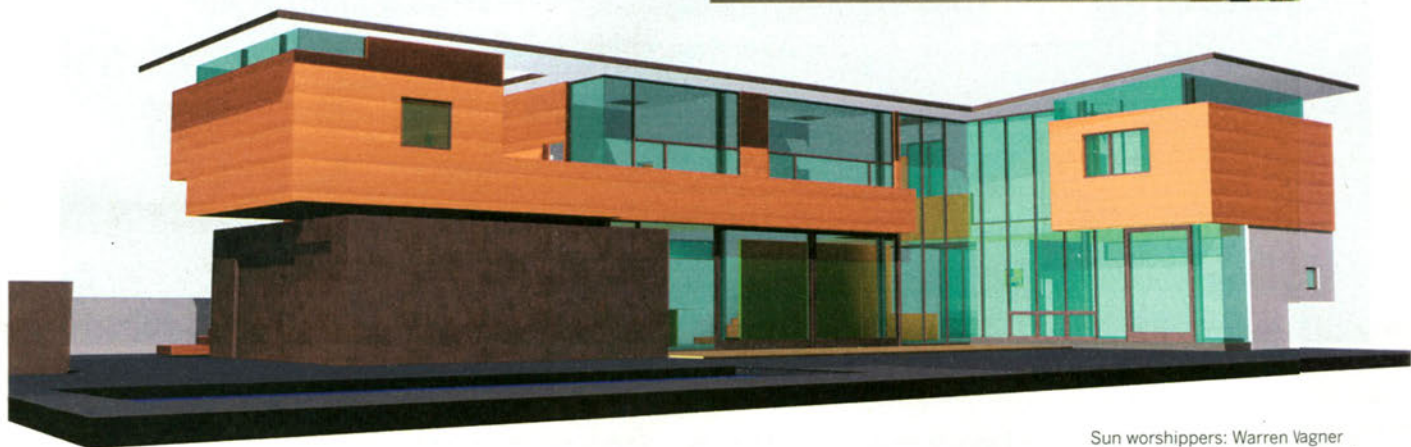


2 BEITCHER HOUSE | Warren Wagner describes the residence he's designed for Bob and Carol Beitcher as the latest in a series of "prototypical two-story solar houses." Beitcher, the chief executive of Panavision, had commissioned Wagner to design the façade of an office building eight years ago. As he was embarking on building a new house, the CEO says, his four children persuaded him to make their new home ecologically responsible. It's located in Santa Monica, which recently introduced guidelines on sustainable design, but the architect had to negotiate zoning modifications in order to maximize the house's solar exposure.

"Most of my clients are very enlightened people who want to do the right thing for the environment, but also demand a very high level of design," says Wagner. "In a climate as benign and sunny as that of Southern California, all cooling and most heating can be provided by informed design, and it costs little more to use green building materials."

The Beitcher house, now under construction, has a first story of stuccoed concrete block walls, while the second is clad with western red cedar. A sheet-metal roof appears to float above a clerestory that pulls in natural light and vents hot air. The house presents a closed face to the streets on the north and west, but opens up to the south and east through glass sliders. A passive solar system warms water for radiant floor heating, electricity is generated by photovoltaic panels, and gray water is used to irrigate the garden. The western red cedar is sustainably farmed, as is the bamboo used on the first-floor ceiling and the palm wood used for the second-story's floor.

Wagner, who has tried to balance efficiency and elegance in the 30 houses and additions he has completed in his 12 years of practice, first embraced these issues in the 1970s as an associate of Edward Mazria, who wrote "The Passive Solar Energy Book." "He emphasized function over aesthetics," says Wagner. "One without the other is not good."



Sun worshippers: Warren Wagner designed the Beitcher house to get maximum benefit from the sun's heat. "In a climate as benign and sunny as that of Southern California, all cooling and most heating can be provided by informed design."

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