

THE WORLD'S BEST HOMES,  
INTERIORS & DESIGN

ISSUE 24 JULY 2008

# spaces

INTERIORS//ARCHITECTURE//FASHION//DESIGN//TRAVEL//ART

## THE MILAN ISSUE

FEATURING THIS SEASON'S KEY NEW FURNITURE TRENDS

## ROCKY ROAD

ARCHITECT ARTHUR DYSON GOES  
OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

## SCANDI MODEST

A RARE INTERVIEW  
WITH JONAS LINDVALL

## INTO THE BRIGHT

MAKE A STATEMENT WITH THE NEW NEONS

## TOP SECRET

THE UK HIDEAWAYS THAT ARE TOO GOOD  
TO KEEP TO YOURSELF

PLUS//ONE OFF HOMES//THE ULTIMATE RETAIL TH  
THE DESIGN STARS OF TOMORROW

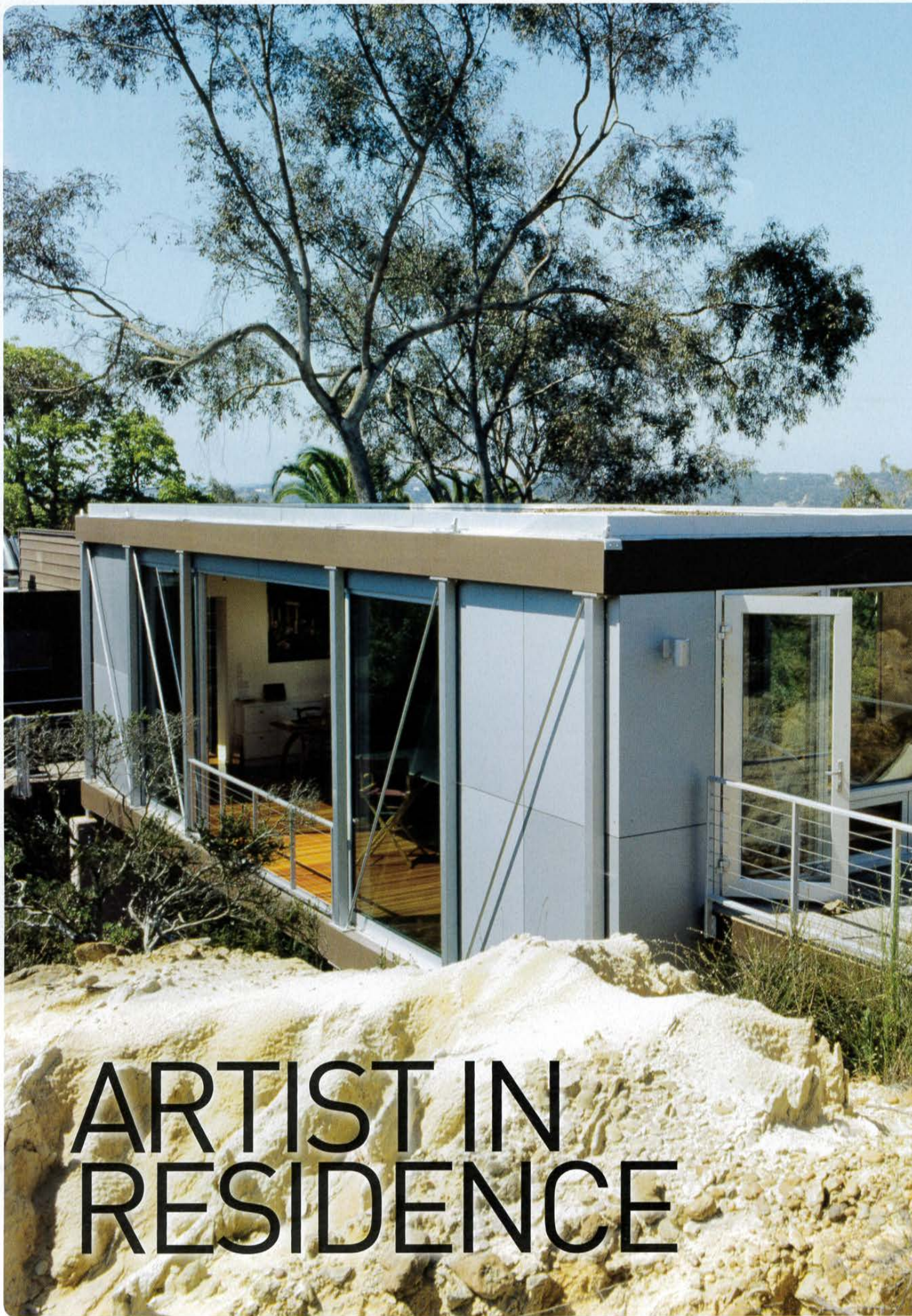
SPACES

\$8.99



PRINTED IN ENGLAND





# ARTIST IN RESIDENCE


66

07.08

HOME SPACE

[www.spacesmagazine.co.uk](http://www.spacesmagazine.co.uk)





**WHEN SAFDIE RABINES ARCHITECTS** took on this San Diego project incorporating an artist's studio the local zoning authorities threw down a challenge: the firm could build whatever they wanted as long as it didn't disrupt the local environment. Some would have thrown in the towel when faced with such a seemingly impossible goal but Taal Safdie and Ricardo Rabines, who are clearly made of sterner stuff, simply got planning.

WORDS: Emma Hill  
IMAGES: Undine Pröhl

**S**AFDIE AND RABINES (who regular readers may recognise as the masterminds behind a handful of intriguing architectural projects which we have featured in Spaces over the years) soon realised that the solution was to forget about your typical living / working space and to think instead about bridges. The resulting Artist Bridge Studio, which is an extension to an existing home, seems almost to float above the landscape.

Rabines explained: 'There are a lot of restrictions on what you can build in this area as they (the planning authorities) don't want anyone to disturb or destroy the landscape.' He added: 'We recognised that the best way to ensure that we worked within these restrictions was simply to build a bridge and then add the studio on top.'

The studio was designed as an expansion of a small 1960s home belonging to an artist and a poet. As the couple neared retirement they realised that they needed to update their home to respond to their changing lifestyle, enabling them

both to work from home without feeling cramped. Having used the architects on a renovation project in the past they decided to invite them back and ask them for suggestions on how to update their home so that it incorporated a new work area.

Rabines said: 'Our client paints and also spends quite a lot of time at her computer so the design of the studio reflects this. We thought the building should look like a simple box, but when the windows are opened this completely opens up the studio – this was important because the winds in San Diego can be fierce; we wanted to ensure that you can open up different sides of the house as needed so that no matter which directions the winds are blowing in from you can always get a cross-breeze, keeping the studio nice and cool in all weathers.'

He added: 'It was really important to us that we were able to create the impression that the building was somehow floating above the landscape. I feel that the sympathetic way that we've worked with the location has >>>





Capturing the light – the studio was specifically designed to create the perfect workspace

68

07.08

HOME SPACE

[www.spacesmagazine.co.uk](http://www.spacesmagazine.co.uk)





'The building really does have a very light feel to it'

been one of the most successful aspects of this project and the building really does have a very light feel to it.'

Rather than designing the studio to blend seamlessly with the original house (which has a Mediterranean colour scheme and an all-round traditional look) the architects embraced the idea that the home studio would have a separate identity and the unashamedly bold looks of an industrial box.

The connection between the main home and the studio is a book-lined reading room and visitors have commented on the fact that it comes as something of a surprise to enter the studio, gaze outside and suddenly realise that you're suspended over a small canyon.

As well as working on the artist's studio Safdie Rabines also carried >>>





out extensive renovation work on bathrooms, bedrooms and other areas of the home. However, Rabines readily admits that it was the challenge of creating the perfect studio which really caught his attention. This may not have been one of the architect's biggest projects by any stretch of the imagination but it has been one of his favourites.

Rabines clearly relished the technical challenge of finding an inventive eco-friendly design solution to the demands of the San Diego landscape. However, he seems equally excited by the way that the studio functions day-to-day. The building features a host of thoughtful details, such as the huge concealed drawers which allow the artist to store her large paintings flat. The home owners finally have the creative »»»

'This was a small, simple project for us but you tend to find the smallest projects can be the most satisfying'

Curling up with a good book has never been more comfortable



A subtle working  
area that flows with  
the world outside

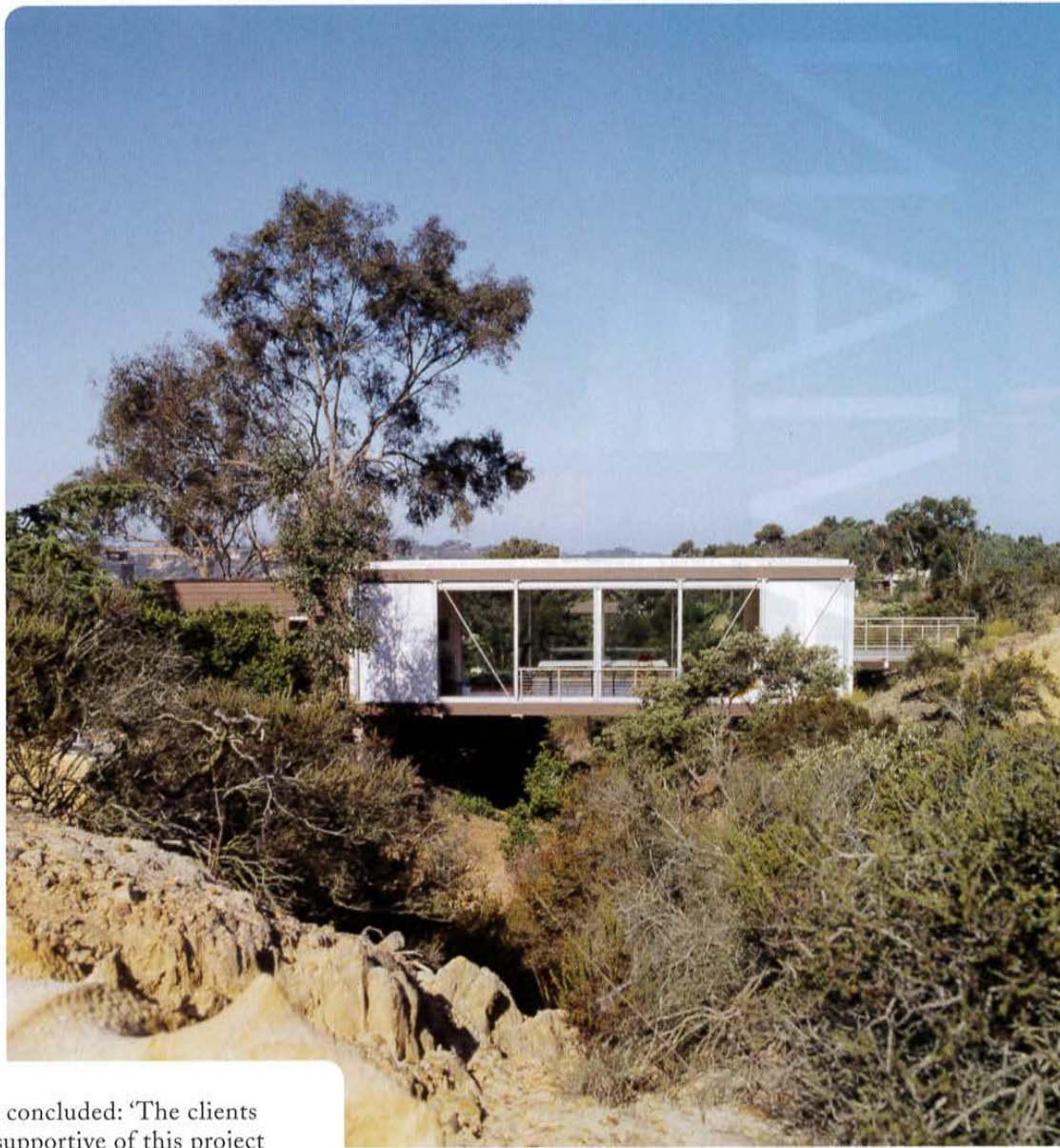
'Our client paints and spends a lot of  
time at her computer, so the design of  
the studio reflects this'

space they wanted and as well as  
gaining a beautifully designed living  
and working space they have also  
gained easy access to the other side  
of the canyon so that after spending  
productive days painting or writing  
they can unwind with nature walks.

Since completing this project in  
2007 Safdie Rabines Architects' star  
has been in the ascendancy and plenty  
of larger projects have beckoned.  
However, you can't help but feel that  
it is the satisfaction one derives from  
finding the solution to a particularly  
tricky design problem, rather than  
the prospect of bigger budgets which  
drives Rabines. Certainly he retains an  
undeniable enthusiasm for the Artist  
Bridge Studio even a year on. >>>







Rabines concluded: 'The clients were very supportive of this project and really embraced the idea of a floating studio. They were also happy with the appearance of the industrial-style box. They liked the fact that we barely had to touch the site because of the way in which we built, plus we've linked the house to the earth by bridging the canyon.'

'This was just a small, simple project for us but you tend to find that in the end the smallest projects can be the most satisfying – they're like tiny jewels and no matter how many big projects you go on to you always remember them.' 🍷

Safdie Rabines Architects  
T. +001 619297 6153  
safdierabines.com

Bridging the canyon now  
gives easy access for  
relaxing evening walks