

Light Rendering

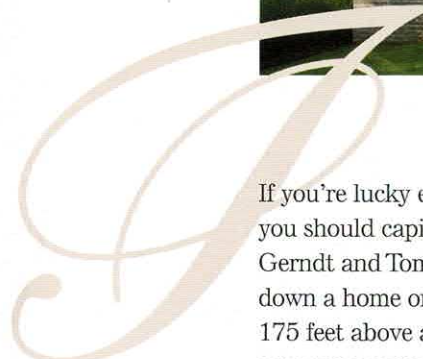
Glass, steel, and stone come together in striking, contemporary ways to welcome sunlight and river views into a new Birmingham, Alabama, abode.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEAN ALLSOPP

Residential architects Adam Gerndt and Tom Adams added depth to an office located just off the front entry with rich wood cabinetry. Orange accents delivered via modern patterns balance the wood's rusticity. "In the rooms that didn't have a view, we brought energy to the spaces with color," Gerndt says.







If you're lucky enough to find a lot that offers spectacular scenery, you should capitalize on it. That was residential architects Adam Gerndt and Tom Adams' take when clients asked them to tear down a home on a property with breathtaking mountain vistas set 175 feet above a river in Birmingham, Alabama, to make way for a new, more modern residence.

Channeling Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture for inspiration, the design team drafted an 8,800-square-foot home that embraces the site, the trees, and the horseshoe bend of the river below. "The house hugs the curve of the river," Gerndt says. "In most parts, it's one room deep so floor-to-ceiling windows can capture the view."

Natural light and shadow lines play a big part in the home's footprint. "During the design process, we visited the site several times a day just to see how the light moved," Gerndt says. "We also put the homeowners on a forklift so they could understand the height of the house and see what views each room would offer."

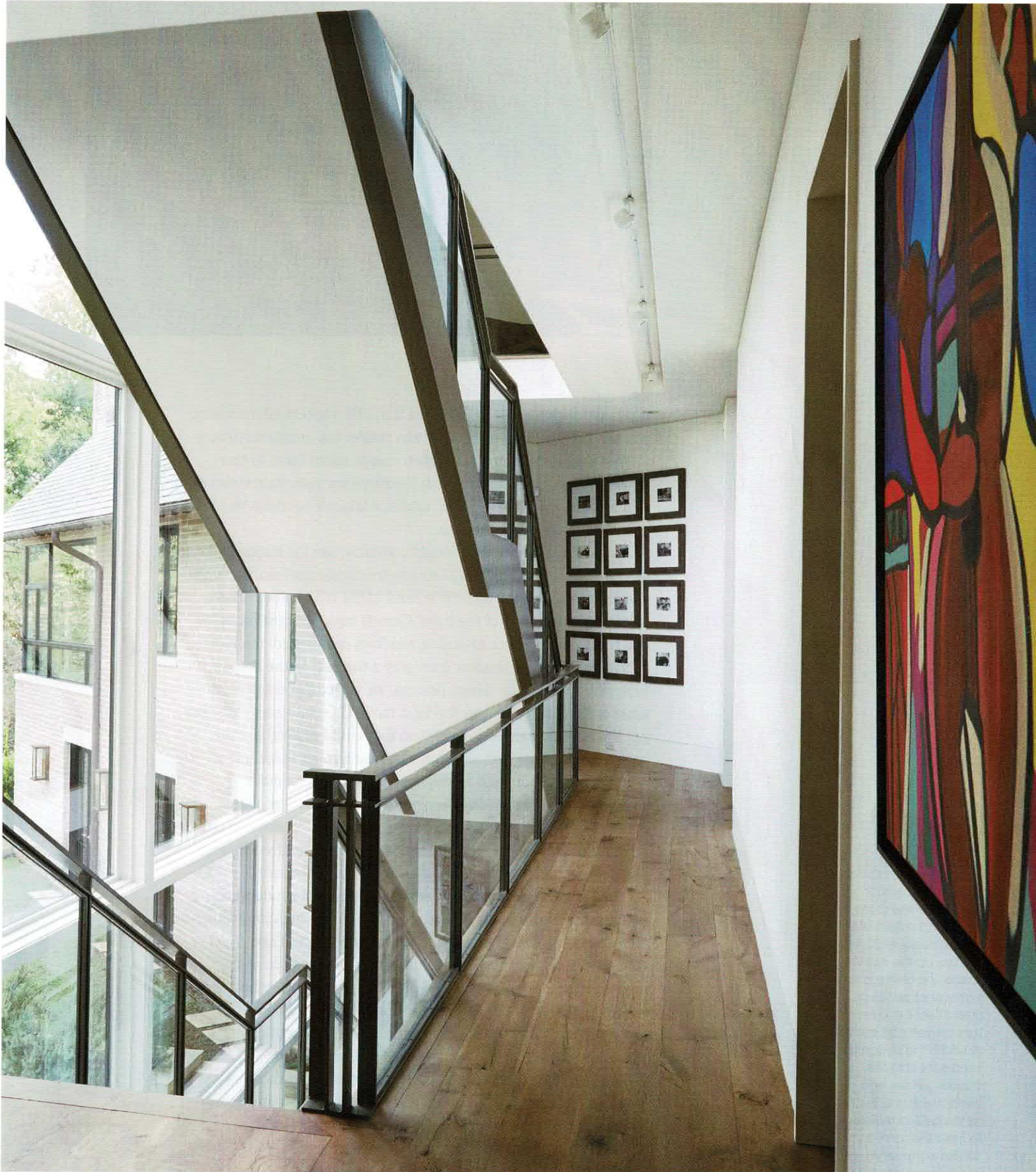
In the living room and throughout the house, minimal adornment and linear forms convey a contemporary edge that matches the mood of the glass-wrapped exterior. "There's no crown molding or flourishes," Gerndt says. "Instead, we used wood, steel, glass, stone, and limestone to make dramatic statements."

In the kitchen, a recycled-glass tile backsplash introduces the subtle blues, browns, grays, and creams found in building materials and views. Appliances paneled in sleek stainless steel and countertops crafted from white Alabama marble continue the modern theme. A limestone-clad fireplace in the master bedroom echoes the exterior cladding. Glass-lined stairwells allow light to travel between three levels of living space. "The repetition of materials helps create a seamless design," Gerndt says.

Streamlined seating pieces rendered in creamy leathers, sandy velvets, and khaki linens are paired with wood and metal accent tables to echo the outdoor palette. "In view-facing rooms, furnishings are neutral, allowing nature to steal the scene," Gerndt says. "Every detail complements the lot and views."

OPPOSITE: The dining room ceiling, which follows the line of the gable on the front of the house, peaks at 20 feet. To cozy up the soaring space, the ceiling is lined with walnut paneling; steel trusses and resin light fixtures add interest. ABOVE: The design team used slate shingles, copper gutters, and traditional forms, such as the gabled roofline, to meld the home's contemporary style into its established neighborhood.

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OPPOSITE: An interior wall by the floating staircase creates a natural gallery space. CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: An artistic collage of clear and frosted glass windows surrounds the front door. Appliances are confined to perimeter kitchen walls to showcase a waterfall-style marble-topped island. A metallic sheen gives classic penny tile a modern twist in the wet bar. The living room fireplace is located on an interior wall to avoid obstructing views. A limestone sink and antiqued mirror lend fresh patina to the powder room. The rear facade is distinguished by sheets of glass. Appliance garages keep kitchen countertops neat.



THIS PHOTO: In a nod to the home's modern attitude, the limestone fireplace in the master suite features an off-center limestone firebox surround. OPPOSITE LEFT: Playing off the colors in the fireplace, Gerndt chose sandy hues for draperies and linens in the master bedroom. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Marble slabs selected for their waterlike caramel veining form a floating wall between the tub and shower in the master bath.





Floor plan

TOTAL SQ. FT: 8,800
 BEDROOMS: 5
 BATHROOMS: 5 full, 2 half



Floor plan © Adams Gerndt Design Group