



Merrick House

By Anthony Robins

Merrick House is a documentation of one of the jewels of West Coast Modern architecture, a home that, as a young architect, Merrick built by hand on the steep wooded slopes of West Vancouver, BC in the early 1970s. The photographs by Michael Perlmutter bring out the wonders of the architectural space and materiality, and the text by Tony Robins explores Merrick's influences, the many spatial moves he employed and the changes made over time with successive renovations. The 17-level edifice is both contextual and truly eccentric. The cathedral-like living space, with its fully glazed walls, is like an open pavilion in a forest of enormous cedars. The visible structure of the house is remarkable in that it is almost entirely composed of simple and inexpensive dimensional lumber; Merrick chose common 2x4s, 2x10s, and so on as his palette. Whilst at once showing his comfort with regular planks from the lumberyard, in many places Merrick meticulously carved the ends into fanciful shapes, a move that reveals the shadow of his mentors, Ron Thom and Frank Lloyd Wright. Robins delves into these quirks and the many risks Merrick

took in defying building codes and common sense. The huge single panes of glass and the retention of large rocks protruding into interior space are but two examples of his bold eccentricities.

Author

Tony Robins is an architect and writer living in Vancouver B.C., a recipient of the Canadian *Prix de Rome* and Western Living's 'Architect and Interior Designer of the Year in 2014'. He is an Adjunct Professor at the University of British Columbia's School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

Photography by Michael Perlmutter.

Part of the SALA West Coast Modern House Series.