



The curves of this Portland floating home evoke ripples and curves of a river. // PHOTO BY ROBERT HARVEY OSHATZ ARCHITECT

ECLECTIC/ORIGINAL HOMES ROBERT OSHATZ

It's fair to say that no other architect in Oregon — or the world, for that matter — designs homes like Robert Oshatz. Take his Fennell residence in Portland, a curvi-



linear floating house that seems to be made up of nested comma-shaped forms. Or his Wilkinson residence in Portland, a cylindrical design filled with round windows, trapezoidal doors and complex angles, flowing through a forested hillside setting. Or his Miyasaka residence in Hokkaido, Japan, a startling, ethereal fusion of

Northwest and Japanese design elements.

An original architectural thinker, Oshatz never loses sight of the fact that it is his clients who ultimately have to live in the homes he designs. "You want to take the client exactly where they want to go, but you have to make sure that where they want to go is where you want to go, so that you're compatible with one another," he says.

ARCHITECT: Robert Oshatz

FIRM: Robert Harvey Oshatz Architect, Portland, www.oshatz.com

SPECIALTY: Eclectic original homes

STYLE: Contemporary

SIGNATURE HOME: "I'm happy with everything I've done; I've never taken on a project I wasn't happy to do. Each site is different; each has its own poetic sense to it, and each client has his or her own personality. The design I'm happiest with is the one I'm working on at a particular time."

WHAT MAKES HIS WORK DISTINCTIVE? "The continuum in materials between interior and

exterior spaces. The use of color, texture, light. I like to bring light in so it exists where the occupant wants it."

KEY INFLUENCES: Alvar Aalto, Frank Lloyd Wright

PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH/AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY: "I visit the sites with my clients to find out what they like about it. They chose it for a reason; there's something about that property that they like. I look at the poetry of the site with that client, and ask them, 'What would you like to see when you wake up in the morning?' They might say, 'On the west side of the property there is a beautiful tree and rock formation.' That presents the problem — that's the hottest side of the house

in the afternoon, so how do you keep the sleeping room cool? Before solving that problem, you need to know whether the client wants a lot of sunlight coming in, or whether they like a darker room. It's the architect's job to solve those kinds of problems in a beautiful way."

WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT PORTLAND ARCHITECTURE AND WHAT HE'D LIKE TO SEE LESS OF: "I'd like to see some imagination and original thinking; all I see is basically imitations of what's in the magazines. The magazines have one agenda they're catering to. Architecture in Portland is lacking a great deal of free thinking and imagination. But even in the worst buildings, I can find elements I like."



ROBERT OSHATZ Wood and glass connect this Portland home to its forested exterior.// PHOTO BY ROBERT HARVEY OSHATZ ARCHITECT



ROBERT OSHATZ Above, curvilinear floating home. Below, home on Elk Rock Road soars out of the hillside and overlooks the Willamette River.

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