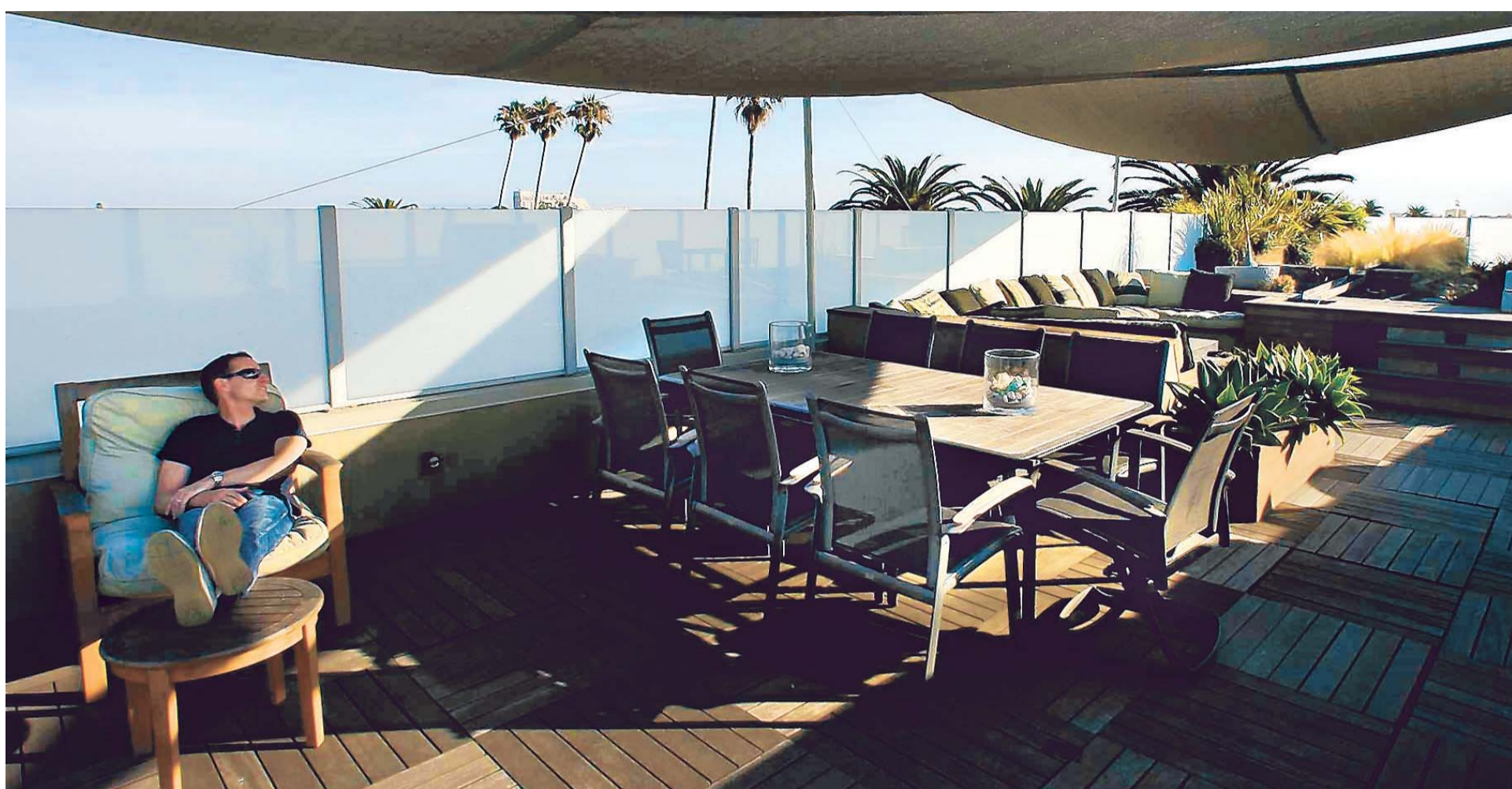


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THE 'UP YARD'

A Santa Monica couple loved loft living in the city, but they longed for a private garden too. Their desire only grew after their daughters were born. The children needed a place to play, and the parents needed a place to chill. So, with no backyard, they turned the roof into a relaxing “up yard,” which features an inviting lounge, kitchen, sunbathing area and a water-wise garden, below. Their “little island of nature” is a modern retreat in keeping with the trend toward outdoor rooms that are as elaborately appointed as the interiors. **E3**



Photographs by GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

MAN OF THE HOUSE

It's a cursive fate

CHRIS ERSKINE



The summer of a thousand Band-Aids is over, and the little guy is off to the third grade, finally. The first day of school comes just as his mother is contemplating hurling herself from the roof. Coincidence? Probably not.

Our little Huck. Spent the summer working on his impressions and burping the alphabet. One week, he took up tap-dancing.

So now he's off to the third grade — elbows like broom handles, scrubbed as if being sold. I think his mother might've taken him to one of those car detailers to have him steam cleaned. He smells vaguely of waffles and the sort of scented little trees that dangle from rearview mirrors.

Naturally, the little guy is very excited about the first day of third grade. It's a milestone, in the sense that he gets to [See Erskine, E7]

HOT PROPERTY

Ready to leave this Pitt stop

LAUREN BEALE

Brad Pitt has listed his gated Malibu beach house for \$13.75 million.

The view home he shares with actress Angelina Jolie sits on 1.26 blufftop acres with a tennis court, a lap pool and access to the beach.

Features include walls of glass doors, a walk-in refrigerator/freezer and three fireplaces. The house has four bedrooms and four bathrooms in more than 4,000 square feet.

The couple is reported to live mostly in France but do own



ELVIS BARUKCIC AFP/Getty Images

SELLER: Brad Pitt, with Angelina Jolie, seeks a buyer.

houses in Los Feliz and New Orleans.

Pitt, 47, will follow his starring roles in “Inglourious Basterds”

(2009) and “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” (2008) by playing Oakland A's General Manager Billy Beane in the forthcoming “Moneyball.”

Jolie, 36, won an Academy Award for her supporting role in “Girl, Interrupted” (1999).

Public records show Pitt bought the Malibu property for \$8.41 million in 2005. He did not respond to requests for comment.

Ellen Francisco of Coldwell Banker, Malibu West, is the listing agent, according to the Multiple Listing Service.

[See Hot Property, E6]

HOME OF THE TIMES



Photographs by GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

SANTA MONICA: Brooke, 5, left, and sister Jade, 3, prance on artificial turf, while their mom, designer Velvet Hammerschmidt, looks from the sunbathing deck.

Playing in the 'up yard'

No garden? No problem. A couple turn their loft roof into a cool space for themselves and their daughters.

BARBARA THORNBURG

Here in the capital of outdoor living, there is the front yard. And there is the backyard. But an up yard?

For interior designer Velvet Hammerschmidt and her husband, software executive Mark Friedman, that was the solution. They loved their modern loft digs in Santa Monica's Commercial Broadway District. Within minutes, they could stroll to their favorite restaurant, browse the boutiques on the Third Street Promenade, watch a mime, stop for a cappuccino.

But the desire for a such a metropolitan life also came with a natural longing for, well, nature.

They wanted their own outdoors — a private place to dine al fresco, to watch psychedelic sunsets, to sit by a fire and gaze at the starry night and, more recently, to play. Since moving into their loft seven years ago, they've had two girls, Brooke, 5, and Jade, 3.

"We had all the urban amenities," Friedman said. "What we wanted was a relaxing, tranquil space — a little island of nature where we could chill out and the girls could play."

The rooftop that spanned their 3,800-square-foot loft proved to be an ideal setting for doing just that. But the space — 18 feet wide, 60 feet long and appointed with unattractive air conditioning ducts — had little in the way of aesthetics. Even more problematic was its severe cant.

"With all the angles, it looked like a B-2 stealth bomber was hiding up there," Hammerschmidt said with a laugh. "We couldn't put a chair or dining table on the roof, because of the steep slope."

The couple called in the Los Angeles firm of Brandow & Johnston. Structural engineer Peter Moranian provided drawings to strengthen the roof for a raised deck.

"It included adding plates to the top of columns in order to receive posts for the raised deck," Moranian said. "We also advised adding posts to strengthen the structure and wood blocks to build up the roof for additional seismic forces."

Next came the issue of a deck material. The couple had their heart set on wood, which looked warm and inviting and created the ambience of a real room, "but wood roofs in Southern California are illegal unless they are grandfathered in," said architect William Brantley of Aarts Architects in Marina del Rey, who designed the three-story building and who occasionally helped the couple navigate the waters of the Santa Monica Building and Safety Division. "They needed a material with a Class A fire rating."

After speaking with consultants and doing their own research, they chose ipe, often called ironwood, a dense wood that met the Class A requirements.

"The contractors didn't like working with it," Hammerschmidt said. "It is so dense, it kept breaking drill bits and dulling saw blades, but it passed code and al-



NICE ANGLES: Underneath a large sun shade, Mark Friedman sits in the lounge section of the up yard, which has an ipe deck and fire pit. A copper runnel, far left, runs from a fountain to a water-wise garden then to a small pool near the lounge area. From the street, left, is the up yard is not visible atop the three-story building.

lowed us to have the wood deck that we wanted." Today, the ipe is set in 3-by-3-foot squares, with the boards running in alternating directions to form a checkerboard pattern.

With the roof material settled, next came the layout. A detailed scale model changed three times. Early iterations had different seating arrangements, and one even sported a Jacuzzi.

"The model proved invaluable in visualizing the space and deciding exactly what we really wanted — and to get it right," Friedman said. "We finally decided a Jacuzzi would take up too much room, and we didn't feel like we would use it that much."

The final plan features a central living section with a kitchen, dining

table and lounge area. That's flanked by an elevated sunbathing area on the eastern end of the deck and a garden with a fountain on the west. It's a modern space, in keeping with the trend toward outdoor rooms as artfully appointed as the interior of the home.

"People want everything they have inside, outside and sometimes more," said Janice Feldman, president and chief executive of Janus et Cie, maker of outdoor furnishings for more than three decades. "Also, holistically, people just want to be outdoors.... They want to see sky and light."

Hammerschmidt and Friedman's deck sports a Viking barbecue, warming drawers and gas burners, plus a sink and an under-counter refrigerator. Built-in L-

shaped seating constructed of ipe and stucco provides a comfy corner for curling up with a book or sitting with friends over cocktails. Behind this lounge, a teak dining table fits eight comfortably.

A fire pit with a granite surround keeps the area warm on chilly Santa Monica evenings, while triangular sun shades stationed by the dining and living areas block out harsh sunlight. Surrounding the rooftop, an opaque white glass fence protects against high winds, provides privacy and screens out neighboring rooftops.

At the western end of the deck overlooking the ocean, a copper runnel descends from a circular fountain and runs through to a lovely water-wise garden of tall grasses, red flax, rosemary and

succulents before cascading into a small pool near the lounge area.

"Fourth of July, we can see fireworks from Malibu to Manhattan Beach," Hammerschmidt said. "And we always have the lights from the Santa Monica Pier and Ferris wheel to look at."

Perhaps, most important, the couple's girls love the new rooftop. "They have yellow ducky races down the runnel," Friedman said, adding that this one water feature can keep them entertained for hours. "Sometimes, in the summer, we fill a small plastic pool with water for them to play in. Essentially, this is the kid's backyard."

Or the up yard, he said. "They can jump around and just be kids."

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