

About the Architect

Beverly "David" Thorne (1924-2017) was known for his innovative "steel-and-glass" style and graceful cantilevered homes that boldly jutted out from hillsides. "Designs which are often discarded as sheer fancy can be accomplished with the steel frame," Thorne once wrote in an industry publication.

Thorne grew up in Piedmont and studied architecture at UC Berkeley after serving as a fighter pilot during WWII. His architectural star rose early in his career after designing the stunning Oakland hillside house at 6630 Heartwood Drive – nicknamed "House in the Sky" – for jazz legend Dave Brubeck, and creating "Case Study House No. 26" in San Rafael. Another Thorne "house of the future" was built in 1957 at 23 Sequoyah View Drive near Oakland's Sequoyah Country Club. As a publicity stunt, a helicopter landed on the roof, and the house remained open for tours for months afterward.

Thorne designed 6624 Saroni Drive in 1959 for Kay and Edward Baldinelli, a structural engineer and founder of Baldinelli Vineyards in Amador County. Mr. Baldinelli admired Thorne and Frank Lloyd Wright and help design the house, which was featured in Engineering News Record.



David Thorne during construction at 6624 Saroni Dr



Construction at 6624 Saroni Dr