



MAGNIFICENT MASTERPIECE



Photography by: Michael McCarthy

The Douglas House is one of Northern Michigan's most spectacular architectural treasures. Constructed in 1973 on a slope that plunges dramatically to the shore of Lake Michigan, the house has gained international renown. Jim and Jean Douglas, the original owners, were enamored with the work of a young architect by the name of Richard Meier—a disciple of Le Corbusier. They commissioned Meier to design a house for them similar to his modernist glass-and-white Smith House, built in Darien, Connecticut, in 1967. Their plan was to build this house in the L'Arbre Croche resort community, but that fell through when they were informed only earth-toned exteriors were permitted.

Several months later, the Douglasses asked Meier to look at some property they found near Harbor Springs. Rather than being intimidated by the property's steep precipice, Meier began to formulate ideas for how he could build on this remarkable site. It was in these challenging surroundings that Meier's genius was revealed. The building is entered at the top via a narrow bridge connecting the access road to the main entrance at the back. From



that perspective, there is little hint that this house—discreetly tucked into the rock—cascades a dramatic four stories down the hillside. Once inside, that becomes more evident as floor-to-ceiling walls of glass at every level provide unprecedented views of Lake Michigan. When experienced up close, the house is an interplay of space, light and angles—becoming at times almost transparent. Viewed from the lake, the towering glass-and-white structure forms a breathtaking contrast to the tall evergreens that encircle it.

From the outset, the Douglas house and its architect drew much acclaim. In 1976 the Douglas House was given one of six Honor Awards by the American Institute of Architects—the only single family residence to win that year. For Meier, the Douglas House was a wonderful opportunity to refine ideas that he later employed as he moved into an illustrious career designing much larger projects, such as the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Scores of books and periodicals have featured the house since then, including last year's "The Iconic House—Architectural Masterworks Since 1900" by Dominic Bradbury and Richard Powers, published by Thames and Hudson. This book highlights the 100 top residences world wide since 1900. *Northern Home and Cottage* magazine featured the Douglas House in their Dec/Jan 2010 issue. *Global Architecture* revisited the Douglas House for an article in 2009, in preparation for the book "Residential Masterpieces" to be published in 2010.

The American Institute of Architects included the Douglas House in its list of 150 favorite buildings in the world and included it in its top 10 favorite American houses. McBride Construction is pleased to have been selected by Michael McCarthy and Marcia Myers, the current owners, to provide repairs and preservation to one of the top homes in the world.

As McCarthy explains, "We like Dave McBride's company as they integrate all trades and provide professional project management that adds value for high value properties. The McBride group does not try to have all skills in-house, but subcontracts to (and professionally manages) only high quality craftspeople."

You, too, should feel confident in choosing McBride Construction when your "castle" needs remodeling. How may we help you with your home maintenance needs?

Check our website regularly for the latest photos showing the progress on the Douglas House. www.mcbrideconstructioninc.com



www.mcbrideconstructioninc.com
2125 M-119 • Petoskey, Michigan 49770
231-348-2749 Ph • 231-348-2748 Fax