

The buildings of John Thodos are the ultimate reflection of his character and life philosophy. "There's nothing hidden about John," says his wife Judy. "He's a very transparent guy."

Viewing John Thodos' work and meeting the architect—particularly when those occurrences coincide—one is left with the impression of man and building constantly reaching, pushing beyond walls, hungrily bringing the world inside and flirting with the edges of what is possible. The man is constantly probing, questioning, engaging. The second Carmel home he conceived for he and Judy is full of glass structures that project unrestrained by traditional ideas of windows, lending spaciousness to what was a relatively small, traditional Carmel-cottage-size footprint.

His colleagues call him "Doctor Phos." From the Greek for "light," it is an apt description and identifies the architect's main preoccupation. He loves working with glass, and has invented a virtually



seamless method of joining glass panels at right angles using sophisticated adhesives. Lending warmth to the glass, a material that in less capable hands can be cold and

sterile, Thodos makes ample use of inviting, natural wood. He is very attentive to minutiae: He avoids mitering—referring to the 45-degree angle joinery typically used in woodworking—and instead overlaps the edges of corners in order to showcase the end grain of the material. While an apparently trivial detail, fine points like these are what separate artists like John Thodos from other, more workmanlike architects.

Born in Chicago, John arrived in Portland, Oregon at a tender age when his restaurateur father relocated to The City of Roses during the Great Depression. His artistic nature led him eventually to architecture. "You don't really have a choice to be an artist," he says. "It's just something you are." In his inimitable language, though, Thodos says that the key question is: "Can I make enough money to keep my poetry of life going?"