

Lars Triesch at his home
in Kleinmachnow



TEN MINUTES TO READ ABOUT THE TRIESCH RESIDENCE

Born in the USA

313
TEN DE / SPRING SUMMER 2025

Photographer ANNE LASS
Text MILLY BURROUGHS

TEN MINUTES TO READ ABOUT THE TRIESCH RESIDENCE



Clockwise from the top: one of the house's many sunny spots; the wall-mounted record player from Dutch company PTP Audio; the music rehearsal room





From the top: the house's sunken lounge area with a log wood fire; the wooden-crafted main bathroom

Located in the sleepy neighbourhood of Kleinmachnow, a few kilometres outside Berlin, the Triesch Residence is a 382m² choreography of glass, California redwood and Douglas fir that emerges from the surrounding forest as an homage to maverick architect and educator Ray Kappe's own iconic Los Angeles home.

The question is, how did this meticulously composed tribute to Pacific Palisades style find its way to the German countryside? For 92 years, the mastermind went his own way, leaving a symphony of beautiful homes in his wake. His architectural fingerprints can be spotted across California's arid landscape, and his legacy includes the design of some of the world's most definitive examples of modern architecture, as well as the founding of the groundbreaking Southern California Institute of Architecture.

When he died in November 2019, Ray and one of his sons, fellow architect Finn Kappe, were in the midst of bringing Europe's first and only Kappe house to life just outside the German capital. The property, completed with Finn's guidance in 2021 – and additional design support from Elena and Paolo Brasioli of Quattro Architettura – is the home of furniture dealer and musician Lars Triesch, artist and teacher Sara Triesch, their two children and Ponti the family dog. Originally from Koblenz, the couple's childhood home, Lars now makes his living as the founder and owner of vintage furniture business Original in Berlin, but credits his first love – music – as the source of his cultural curiosity surrounding the sunny shores of California that Ray called home.

"I started playing in bands when I was around 13 or 14 years old. That went on until I was maybe 30," says Lars, whose music career was defined by his role as the drummer of indie rock band Profession Reporter until the group split in 2009. "I worked a lot of different jobs, but only ever on the side of the band; working to survive. To make money to keep the music thing going." While Profession Reporter cultivated a significant enough following to fund tours and new music, Sara studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy of Fine Arts in Amsterdam. When her graduation

and return to Koblenz coincided with the end of the road for Lars and his bandmates, the couple made the decision to move to Berlin to write the next chapter of their life.

"Sara moved back to our hometown, but there was nothing really for her there," says Lars. "We didn't know where we were going, so we moved to Berlin, where Sara soon became pregnant." With the promise of new life and the responsibility of a growing family, Lars's perspective evolved into something more anchored in stability, but he found himself unable to shake the rebellious need for autonomy the DIY music scenes of the US had imprinted onto him.

Upon the realisation that the key to his future may lie among a collection of design artefacts he had been quietly cultivating since the age of 18, Lars founded his furniture-dealing and restoration business. But how did his former life in music lead him to Ray, specifically? "I was into punk and hardcore when I was young, and then it changed," he explains. "I looked further back in time to see where it all came from; the things that inspired the punk-rock people. There you find The Stooges and you find MC5. Then you ask, 'What were they inspired by?' I really dug into this whole musical history, the literature of the time and those types of people. I would call them the original hipsters. There was the drug scene in California, and the music that came with it: psychedelic rock, Sixties garage bands. Then this all comes together with the design of vintage cars, the movies and the design and architecture of the time. In a way, that was my entrance into this whole world, and I always liked the idea of having that kind of lifestyle."

At some point he stumbled upon the 2012 documentary film *Coast Modern*, which tells the story of modernist architecture on the west coast, traced from 1922 to the present, from LA to Vancouver. This was Lars's first introduction to Ray's houses and their poetry of innovation and romanticism, altering entirely the course of the next years of his life. As the Triesch family outgrew their Kreuzberg apartment, and endless months of house-hunting culminated in disappointment after disappointment, Lars and Sara eventually purchased a hard-to-find plot of land upon which they would soon build their current home. Christened by Ray, the Triesch Residence shares the same naming convention as its Stateside siblings; notably the Kappe Residence, the Gertler Residence and the Keeler Residence – the latter of which was tragically lost to the devastating LA wildfires during the writing of this story.

Flanked by slender pine and birch trees and positioned toward the rear of its plot, shy of the

► street, Lars and Sara’s home invites those visiting or passing by to lean in and read each meticulous line and intersection of its structure as a map of the architectural systems Ray is celebrated for innovating. Comprising three floors, four bedrooms, three bathrooms, an open-plan living, dining and kitchen area, a sauna, a music rehearsal room, a studio and a guest WC, Ray and Finn Kappe’s vision for the Triesch Residence was very much their own. Stacked perpendicular to each other with a lightness that sees them appear as if floating on the low winter sunlight, the layers of Douglas fir and California redwood that make up the structure of the building speak to Ray’s signature ways of harnessing the warmth of natural materials, as well as his ability to cater to the needs of his clients with architecturally integrated surfaces, storage and seating solutions that emerge as the bones of the building. From homeowners Lars and Sara, the Kappes received direction only on the quantity and functionality of rooms required, with just one firm instruction regarding the layout and feel.

“What I believe is that Ray’s own house was his strongest, and that’s the one where he had the most freedom, right?” Lars says. “So I said, ‘Please keep your house in mind as your main inspiration for ours.’ Besides that, we gave them full freedom on the design.”

Lars admits that he knew nothing of the more pragmatic details of house-building when he telephoned one of Ray’s sons’ offices to pitch his project, but his dreamer’s determination must have resonated with the ageing but still ambitious architect. In spite of Germany’s restrictive building codes, a language barrier and the noticeable lack of natural materials usually used to build his houses, Ray and his team created plans for the house, got them approved and began construction.

From the moment he founded his own practice in 1954, Ray was committed to developing future-focused and more sustainable construction practices alongside a user-centric approach that he described as designing “from the inside, out”. From the property’s prefabricated walls, to the extensive use of wood and notable absence of inorganic materials, the Triesch Residence – a

project completed after his passing – reads as a self-penned obituary of Ray’s boundary-breaking life in architecture.

Unwavering in his dedication to his own design philosophies, Ray ensured that the Triesch family would be seamlessly and reassuringly enveloped by a home that caters to their habits and rituals. In the kitchen, appliances from Italian brand Smeg are built into Kappe-designed storage systems and surfaces that create informal boundaries within the central open-plan living area. Upholstered cushioning tops window seating that swells from the walls of the house, while an impressive cantilever table shoots out from between the sandwiched layers of the central island, where members of the family can entertain guests, engage each other over coffee or catch up on light laptop work. A swift side-step from the kitchen transports you to a serene dining area, where six

Hans Wegner ‘PP203’ chairs sit, tucked beneath a sprawling red oak table designed specifically for the space by Ray. Positioned at the head of it, in the centre of the space, is one of Lars’s own design choices for the house.

“I have a single George Nakashima armchair at the dining table,” he says. “It’s one of my favourite pieces in the house; an old one, from the Sixties.”

While the materiality and spatial design of the house speaks the visual and structural language of a Kappe house fluently, it is simultaneously and undeniably the Triesch Residence. Lars’s cultural DNA is visible throughout the interior, with many design moments touching on his lifelong love of music and tendency toward California dreaming.

In the sunken lounge area of the main living space, beyond the central fireplace, the focus turns to curating an immersive audio experience. “I’m really happy with our hi-fi system. I found this guy from Wisconsin, Matt Formanek, who makes these amazing amplifiers, and he made ours,” explains Lars. The bespoke cabinetry that surrounds the amplifier has been forged from the same redwood as the building itself – imported from Canada – and the wall-mounted record player was made by the Dutch company PTP Audio, utilising the same Corian that features within the home’s interiors. Below ground, the

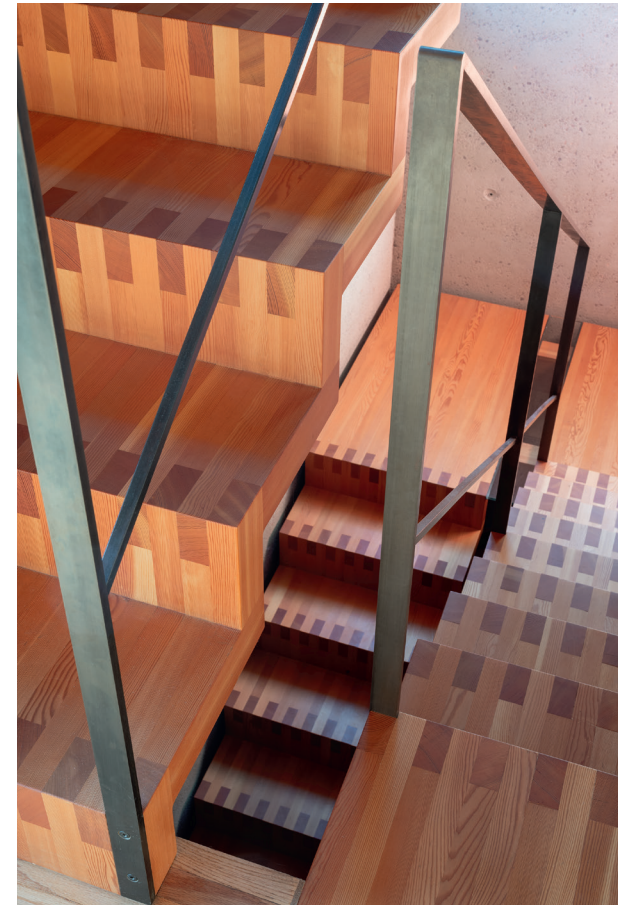
“What I believe is that Ray’s own house was his strongest... I said, ‘Please keep your house in mind as your main inspiration for ours.’ Besides that, we gave them full freedom on the design”

lower floor of the Triesch Residence includes a guest bedroom, sauna and bathroom, as well as a spacious music rehearsal space where Lars plays his vintage drum kit uninhibited by any fear of creating a disturbance.

He explains that he and a handful of his own carefully selected contractors designed and realised the interior features of the basement level in order to manage the budget of the project. This includes the sauna, with walls clad using leftover wood from the main staircase, and the bathroom space, which features an elegant, Japanese-design-inspired bathtub created by Santa Fe-based woodworker Andrew Brant. “I couldn’t afford to get more designs from [the Kappes],” says Lars. “So we took care of the rehearsal room, the sauna and the guest room ourselves.”

A second bathtub, oversized with a blue-sky view thanks to a section of strategically positioned glass roof, can be found in the impressive ensuite bathroom of the minimal master bedroom. Two additional bedrooms, inhabited by Lars and Sara’s two children, are served by a third communal bathroom that sits on the same upper level as the pair’s own sleep quarters and boasts the same elegant natural stone tiling by Austrian company Rauriser. A deeply personal collection of artwork, displayed throughout the house, inspires the recollection of anecdotes drawn from different planets of the solar system Lars’s family spins within. Paintings by Sara’s late theatre-designer and artist father bring nostalgia to intimate spaces such as the dining room, while a signed print by Nan Goldin from her seminal 1985 body of work *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, a print of Edward Colver’s 1981 ‘Wasted Youth Flip’ photograph and original works by American sculptor Stan Bitters hint at Lars’s impressive network of cultural acquaintances.

Following the completion of the Triesch Residence in 2021, Lars continues to enjoy a unique friendship with Ray’s son Finn. With his family’s permission, Original in Berlin is now the exclusive producer and distributor of Ray Kappe-designed furniture pieces; for which Ray designed a number of bespoke pieces, as he often did for his projects.



“I was collecting stuff from the street that people threw away, and I got into this whole thing of looking up the designers and then researching the design history of different countries”

Becoming the first person to licence the work of one of the world’s most recognised architectural masters is a far cry from Lars’s humble beginnings, which saw him, in his teenage years, studying discarded furniture in an attempt to advance his design acumen. He recalls: “[The business] started with no money. I was collecting stuff from the street that people threw away, and I got into this whole thing of looking up designers and then researching the design history of different countries.”

While Ray never got to witness the completion of his one and only European project, the gratitude and

fondness with which Lars speaks of their lives’ unlikely convergence suggests that his vision will be emphatically imparted on anyone lucky enough to explore the Triesch Residence and those who came together to build it. ●



Above: one of the house's serene master bedroom; the house's exterior flanked by slender birch trees

