

2210 Aldo merges Art Moderne and International Style

By Ruth Hultz

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When Greg Gartner walked in the sleek Art Moderne/International Style house at 2210 Aldo, he knew he found his home.

"This is it," he said. "I had been looking for something different."

Different is what the house has been since it was built in 1939. Bill Gerdes, who grew up in the unique home, said it has always created a lot of interest in the neighborhood.

The house was built for Clarence Gerdes, then an employee of Michelmann Steel Construction Co. and Tri-State Steel Erectors Inc. It was designed by Charles Behrensmeyer, who was Gerdes' cousin.

Creating the steel and plaster/stucco home was a marriage of Gerdes' desire to fulfill the Michelmann motto "Build Better With Steel" and Behrensmeyer's interest in Art Moderne architecture.

Gartner has made a hobby of restoring old homes. He has converted an 1840s barn into a home, redid several Colonials, an English Tudor and a Cape Cod or two, because he enjoys restoring older houses.

Because of its construction methods and materials, the streamlined house has required little maintenance over



The smooth, metal stair railing and curved walls are reflective of the 1930s interest in technology and the futuristic world of science fiction.

the years.

But when Gartner bought the house, it was time to replace the single-pane, steel-framed windows. When he started that project, he had no idea what he was getting into — trying to replace windows in a steel-framed house. The result, though, was worth it and the Pella Architectural Series windows are true to the original look of the house.

Gartner said working on his Modernistic house was a new experience.

"I am used to working with wood. On this house, we worked with cutting torches and jack hammers," Gartner said.

Jackhammers had to be used to enlarge the opening between the living room and the pecan-ceilinged family room that previous owners — Dr. James and Jeanette Bitter — had added to the house.

Gartner also had the kitchen redone. He had cus-

AT A GLANCE

■ **Original Owners:** Clarence and Octavia Gerdes. During his long business career in Quincy, Gerdes was president of Michelmann Steel Construction Co., chairman of the board of Tri-State Steel Erectors Inc., chairman of the board of Midstates Steel Builders Inc. and president of Mercantile Trust and Savings Bank

■ **Architect:** Charles Behrensmeyer.

■ **Builder:** Russ Allen.

■ **Architectural Features:** Asymmetrical facade, curved canopy over door, coping at roof line, curved corners, flat, steel plate roof, originally had steel casement windows tack-welded to steel studs, block glass windows, second-story floor constructed of steel plates, balcony off southeast bedroom, originally a covered balcony off southwest bedroom.

tom cabinets made by the Amish in Arthur, Ill. The cabinets are made of cherry and stained to match the pecan baseboard trim in the house and the curved edges have the same radius as the rounded corners throughout the house. Hardware and appliances are

stainless steel.

Now that Gartner has completed his work, he can reflect on the three years of living and working on his house with a smile.

"It's been great," he said. "But a year ago, I wouldn't have said that."