

DESIGN
WITHIN
REACH

JOURNAL



MODERN IN CONTEXT

FALL 2023

Tower House

A striking treehouse takes root in the Catskills.

By Rachel Filipinas

When you picture a weekend home tucked away in the forest, what comes to mind? Subverting the idea of a rustic cabin in the woods, architect Thomas Gluck and the GLUCK+ team designed Tower House: a tall, sleek, and striking family retreat that offers a stairway to the treetops.



Barcelona® Couch \$14,212–\$16,196 and Chair \$8133 | Yanagi Butterfly Stool \$1183–\$1520
I Beam® Coffee Table \$2495 **\$2121** | Pallo Flatweave Linen Rug \$545–\$2095 **\$464–\$1781**

The goal was simple: Create an energy-efficient home with beautiful views of the Catskills. Within these constraints, GLUCK+ designed a structure comprised of two intersecting volumes – one set vertically to minimize the home's footprint and impact on the wooded site, and the other horizontally elevated about 40 feet above the ground to overlook the treetops.

This unusual form sparked an exploration of materials. “We’re playing with this juxtaposition of the geometry, which is very artificial, and this environment, which is very natural,” Gluck says. To emphasize this contrast, Tower House is fully enclosed in a mix of transparent and back-painted glass to reflect and camouflage – it simultaneously blends in with and stands out from its environs.



“YOU REALLY FEEL LIKE YOU’RE IN
A TREEHOUSE.”

– THOMAS GLUCK

Edel Grand Table \$4495–\$4795 | Møller Model 57 Armchair \$1895–\$2295 and
Model 77 Side Chair \$1495–\$1895 | Vitra Cork Stool \$715 | Sheepskin Throw \$130–\$510 **\$111–\$434**

Tower House also turns the idea of a traditional family home on its side, literally. The vertical tower’s first three levels each include a private suite with floor-to-ceiling windows. In lieu of a hallway, each floor is connected by a stairway that offers the feeling of scaling the trees as you climb up the steps. Stretching across the cantilevered fourth level is the shared living and dining area, painted white from floor to ceiling to keep the focus on the outdoors and amplify the experience of being surrounded by

the woods – an ever-changing view that’s in constant dialogue with nature. “You really feel like you’re floating,” Gluck says. “Just being able to experience that deep of a view, the changing weather – it’s not a singular experience.”

The vertical design also facilitates a built-in passive heating and cooling system. Bathrooms and kitchens are arranged atop each other, which creates an insulated central core to reduce energy use in the wintertime. In warmer months, a stack effect keeps

the house comfortably cool without air conditioning: The glass-clad stairwell faces south to create a solar chimney in which heated air rises to the top, while north-facing windows open to draw cool air in and throughout the house.

No matter the season, Tower House offers a chance for Gluck and his family to recharge and unwind. “It’s such an encompassing sensation,” he says. “You really feel like you’ve been away for a long time, even if you’re there for less than 24 hours.”