



House of Steel

Perched atop a 150-ft. cliff eight miles east of Lubbock, Texas, Robert Bruno's home looms like a starship about to pass silently overhead. Since 1974 Bruno has worked alone to bring his steel-plate, sculptural dwelling into being. Unfinished, its steel arches clang together in the persistent west Texas wind. Bruno built preliminary models to determine loading characteristics for this bleak site, with gusts up to 100 m.p.h. and swirling, eroding dust. Beyond the models, there are no blueprints. Tied to an underground rock ledge, the sculpture grows like a crystal in a landscape of more ordinary houses. A Bruno-built crane supports the big $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. steel plates as they're positioned. To weld hard-to-reach spots, Bruno sometimes dangles on windless days from the crane's cable in a small chair, controlling his position with a solenoid umbilical cord, waving to wide-eyed visitors. —C.M.