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RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

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OF DISTINCTIVE HOMES

VOL. 4, 2021

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## CONTENTS

VOL. 4, 2021

## Features

### 24 CASE STUDY: MUSEUM FOR LIVING

A New York pied-à-terre for art collectors by LUCE et studio infuses the work of great architects, artisans, and artists into a bespoke oasis.

### 34 DESIGN LAB: QUIET TIME

Three carefully crafted retreats restore repose amid the noise of modern life. Nick Noyes Architecture; Hufft; Sanders Pace Architecture.

## Departments

### 8 EDITOR'S NOTE

### 11 AIA CRAN

Jeremiah Eck, FAIA, thinks residential architects should broaden their skills and expand their practices.

### 17 PRO-FILE DESIGN

Richardson Pribuss Architects applies lessons learned at Sea Ranch to maximize the value, function, and delight of the houses they design.

### 62 RD PRODUCTS

Fresh products for your projects.

### 66 PARTI SHOT

With the Mighty House project, the modern masters at EYRC bring high design to 3D printed housing.



On the Cover: West Chelsea Residence by LUCE et studio. Photo: Michael Moran Photography, Inc.





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Our print edition is published every other month. And our newsletter is published twice a month. If you are not already a subscriber and would like to be, please go online to: [ResidentialDesignMagazine.com/subscribe](http://ResidentialDesignMagazine.com/subscribe).

If you have an exceptional single-family residential project you'd like us to write about, or an interesting and instructive business story you'd like to share with other professionals, please email [Claire@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Claire@SOLAbrands.com).

We look forward to having you join our *Residential Design* community.

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## SOLA GROUP

SOLA Group, Inc.  
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847.920.9513

**Publisher**  
Paul DeGrandis  
[Paul@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Paul@SOLAbrands.com)

**Group Editorial Director**  
Patrick L. O'Toole  
[Patrick@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Patrick@SOLAbrands.com)

**Editor-in-Chief**  
S. Claire Conroy  
[Claire@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Claire@SOLAbrands.com)

**Art Director**  
Erika Nygaard  
[Erika@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Erika@SOLAbrands.com)

**Creative Director & Production Director**  
Tracy Hegg  
[Tracy@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Tracy@SOLAbrands.com)

**West Sales Manager**  
Paul DeGrandis  
[Paul@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Paul@SOLAbrands.com)

**Midwest Sales Manager**  
Zach Stenberg  
[Zach@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Zach@SOLAbrands.com)

**East Sales Manager**  
Dan Miklosz  
[DanM@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:DanM@SOLAbrands.com)

**Southeast Sales Manager**  
Dan Agostinacchio  
[Dan@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Dan@SOLAbrands.com)

**Product Resource Section/Classifieds**  
Mike Serino  
[Mike@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Mike@SOLAbrands.com)

**Audience Development**  
Mike Serino  
[Mike@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Mike@SOLAbrands.com)

**Projects Manager**  
Heidi Riedl  
[Heidi@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Heidi@SOLAbrands.com)

**Digital Programs Manager**  
Tim Steingraber  
[Tim@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Tim@SOLAbrands.com)

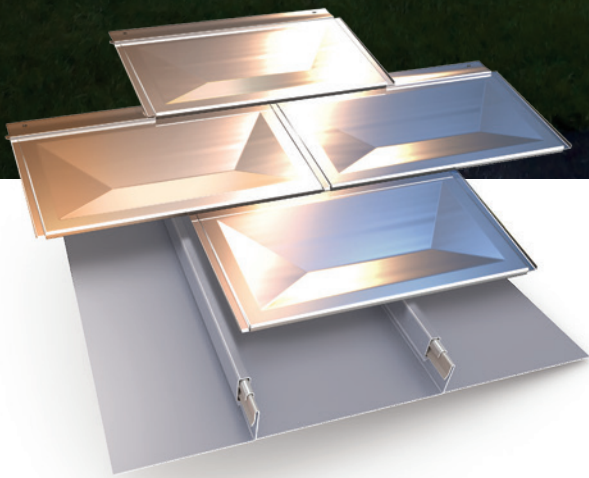
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Mike Serino  
[Mike@SOLAbrands.com](mailto:Mike@SOLAbrands.com)

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# Be Different



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-Tom Deignan, Homeowner

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## Art Appreciation



**It's a coincidence and** it isn't a coincidence that many of the projects in this issue of the magazine were designed for clients who appreciate the creative arts. Chances are, your best custom clients will share your love of making. They may not have the aptitude to do the making themselves, but they understand the importance of endowing it as patrons. By extension, they understand the value of custom residential architecture, tailored to them and specifically designed to facilitate the pursuit of their passions.

Our cover story brings together nearly all aspects of the art of making—architects, artisans, and artists. The project concerns architectural interiors, but the exterior of the building, designed by Zaha Hadid, cast a long shadow over the entire team. Or, perhaps, more accurately, it was an inspirational glow. The building in West Chelsea, which Zaha designed with architect of record Ismael Leyva Architects was also intended to serve as her personal pied-à-terre in New York City. Sadly, she died suddenly before she could move in. Ultimately, architect Jennifer Luce's clients—art collectors based on the West Coast—bought the unit.

Jennifer's clients turned out to be much more than just good stewards of the unit, which was bare concrete when they purchased it. They underwrote a whole cottage industry of woodworkers, cabinetmakers, stone artisans, and even a custom hardware company run by architects—all collaborating on designs by Jennifer and her colleagues at LUCE et studio—to build out the unit. The effort and results were extraordinary. Absolutely everything was custom designed, with the exception (rare for LUCE et studio) of the kitchen system. "Usually we do all our kitchens, but this one—made entirely of glass—was amazing," she explains. Sometimes, the best choice after creation is curation.

Brandon Pace's clients for the French Broad House near Knoxville, Tennessee, had nowhere near the resources of the California couple, but they, too, dreamt of a bespoke house with light and views. Unusual for an area marked by log cabins and rustic dwellings, they wanted a modern house, and thus were art patrons of another sort. However, their budget was very, very tight.

First and foremost, Brandon brought his talent as a creative architect to the project—he devised the clever parti that weaves the house through a scattered stand of beech trees. But the project would have unraveled quickly without his considerable skills of curation. "When you value engineer, you can take a hatchet or a scalpel," he explains. "You have to take big swipes out, otherwise you end up with dozens of inferior choices."

With the blessing of his clients, he eliminated a 600-square-foot chunk of the program, but kept the heart and soul of their dream intact. Now that's an art worthy of appreciation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "S. Claire Conroy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

S. Claire Conroy  
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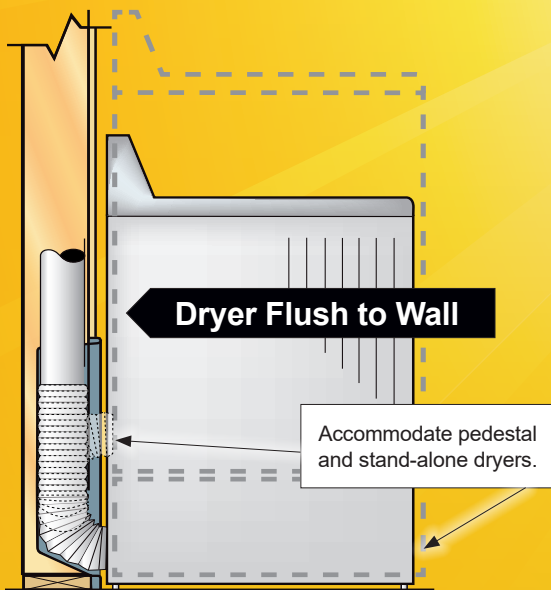
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## Leveraging Your Residential Wisdom

BY JEREMIAH ECK, FAIA



Jeremiah Eck, FAIA

**It's hard to put aside** the pandemic's personal toll but, professionally, residential architects are thriving. It's in times of plenty, however, that it's especially important to remind ourselves that building trends are cyclical. Yes, we're currently benefiting from unexpected prosperity, but the streak won't last forever. I urge you to think ahead now about how to leverage what I call your "residential wisdom" to make your practice more expansive and your firm more resilient.

Don't get me wrong. You may be quite fulfilled in your current residential practice, and that's fine. But if you're curious about another path, you should know that you're already halfway there. Here's our firm's experience:

About 20 years ago, Eck MacNeely Architects decided to make a concerted effort to break out of the residential orbit and seek additional sources of work—in our case, mostly from the academic world. We were looking to grow our firm, diversify our project types, and hedge against the ups and downs of residential cycles. We had some small academic and commercial projects under our belts, but when it came to RFPs, RFQs, and actual interviews, it was hard to go up against the established firms, especially in a town like Boston, where tradition matters a lot. Nonetheless, we began to strategize about how we could crack open the door into larger academic commissions. We began to imagine how we could leverage what we already knew from our extensive residential portfolio.

Somewhat serendipitously, we discovered that a number of homeowners who had hired us also had various connections





*Previous and this page:* For this private school dormitory project, Eck MacNeely Architects applied knowledge gained as residential architects to problem solve. The firm rotated the building on the steeply sloped site, giving it access to the campus at high and low points and increasing its daylighting.

to academic institutions. They were influential donors, on boards or facilities committees, or even just parents of students at prestigious schools. I'm generalizing here by using the term "temperament," but what we came to realize was that the same people with the temperaments to hire us for home design were likely to be associated with good schools. So with patience and goodwill, we began to cultivate those personal and professional bonds we already had with our existing clients and to build them with new residential clients who came to us. We nurtured them.

As a kind of odd but useful example, we had a decent client who hadn't paid us for some time. I wondered why, but remained patient. One day she called and, just as I was just about to say, "Why the hell haven't you paid us," she apologized for being in arrears. She was going through a divorce, but she would send us the money, and oh, by the way, she was on the board of a local college and they were looking for an architect for the renovation of their arts center. We won the project because of her influence on the board, and I learned

an important lesson about nurturing the relationships you already have. The practice of architecture is a long game.

As we looked for other points of leverage, we also began to make connections between the spaces we were familiar with in our residential work and the spaces schools might want in their projects—especially campus housing. One advantage we had was our ability to understand intimate settings—a sense of coziness, if you will.

The next time we earned an interview for a small dormitory, I pushed the point hard by emphasizing our unique understanding of small spaces and how important it was to get that sense of scale right if the larger project was going to be a success. In effect, I argued that, yes, experience did matter, but it wasn't limited to the number of academic projects we had built. I gave them a short slide show of the small domestic spaces we had designed, and we won the project over larger firms.

The lesson was clear: The spaces we design as residential architects are relevant and important across a wide range of spaces in larger projects. In the dormitory example, it wasn't a big stretch for us as a firm, nor did it call for a big leap of faith by the selection committee.

The last point I'd like to make is that you should give yourself credit for how much you've already learned about design and construction complexity from your residential experience. With the exception of a highly technical project, is there anything more complex on a number of levels than residential work? You already understand the importance of siting, planning, detailing, and good communications to name just a few skills, so why not highlight these when applying for academic projects?

As an additional example, when we were invited to interview for another private school dormitory, I did my best to stress the importance of getting the siting just right. Understanding that it was preordained to be a double-loaded, long building, I advocated for simply rotating the building to achieve the most sun in all the rooms, and to shoehorn the structure into the adjacent steeply sloping site, giving them access to their upper campus as well.



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Photos: Warren Jagger

For other campus projects, Eck MacNeely has injected the human scale and “coziness” skills it’s mastered from residential work. This ability to infuse institutional commissions with welcome warmth has differentiated the firm from larger commercial design practices.

It probably will not surprise you to hear that many on the committee had not considered the position of the sun nor how to deal with the sloping site, two of the most fundamental issues in good house design. We won this commission, too, simply by applying our insight from successful residential projects.

But making your way into institutional or commercial work from residential is only half the battle. Understanding how your practice will change and what additional skills or knowledge you may need is the other half. Here are a few points to consider.

- You will have to learn to build a consensus with groups rather than couples or a family. If you work on schools, the administration, faculty, board of trustees, and facilities committees will all need to be aware and even part of your design and construction effort.
- The zoning, building, ADA, and energy codes are more complicated and encompassing for institutional or commercial projects. Find yourself a good code consultant; it’s worth it.
- Apropos of the point above, expand your go-to consultant base dramatically, including structural, HVAC, civil, landscaping, interiors, lighting, acoustics, specifications, and other special consultants particular to larger project types.
- Look at how you form your office teams and whether it is important to recognize the expertise of certain individuals within the firm rather than hiring outside consultants.
- Increase your technical support including computer

programs, server size, and backup capabilities. One day of work lost on a time-sensitive project can be a disaster.

- Have on file a good attorney knowledgeable in construction contracts and law and beef up your Errors and Omissions policy.
- And, of course, fees? I will not say in our case that academic projects are categorically more remunerative than our residential work. But the projects tend to be larger, take more time, and most people involved go home at 5 p.m. On the other hand, academic work can often involve the so-called “summer slammer,” increasing your work pressure during those months to get a project ready for the school year. Overall, larger projects mean more predictability in workload and scheduling, and that can translate into more profitability.

The above list is partial and there are undoubtedly many other ways to leverage your residential wisdom for any number of project types, but my point is simple: If you want to expand your universe of work, don’t be afraid to use what you already know about people, design, and construction. The rest just takes patience, expansive thinking, and some doggedness.

*Jeremiah Eck, FAIA, is the founding principal of Eck MacNeely Architects in Boston, specializing in residential and academic work. He is also the author of three books on house design, a landscape painter, and a former lecturer in architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.*





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# Life Lessons

RICHARDSON PRIBUSS ARCHITECTS  
MILL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

After 37 years in practice, Heidi Richardson has a large body of award-winning work to look back on and learn from. She has developed a reputation for running a design-focused practice that's extraordinarily good at site strategy—a skill she learned from her mentor, William Turnbull, Jr. Heidi and her business partner, Andrew Pribuss, are dedicated to producing timeless, light-filled architecture that forms a strong bond with the natural landscape.

With a staff of 14, and growing, Richardson Pribuss Architects is in the enviable position of being in the right place at the right time. That place is Mill Valley, which even before Covid saw an influx of residents from San Francisco seeking more space and affordability. Even though Marin County's Mill Valley is only a 10-minute drive across the Golden Gate Bridge, the building challenges are different here than in the city, Andrew says. The lots have more land to engage with and complex entitlements—exactly the sorts of things the architects excel at.

Heidi landed here in 1977, but she grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts, a member of an architectural family with a powerful pedigree. Her childhood bedroom had belonged to her great-grandfather Henry Hobson Richardson, famous for pioneering a uniquely American take on European architecture known as Richardsonian Romanesque. Her father, a fine arts major at Harvard, celebrated that legacy. “He used to take me into the Museum of Fine Arts [in Boston] on Sundays, but we'd drive up and down the Back Bay and Commonwealth Avenue, and he'd

point out the things that were Richardsonian or things he'd done,” Heidi says. During summers she worked at the family architecture firm Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott (now Shepley Bulfinch). “My uncle Joe [Richardson] was a mentor; I archived the Richardson stuff before it was handed off to Harvard,” she says. “It was a done deal. I always assumed I would be an architect.”

*Right:* Firm partners Heidi Richardson and Andrew Pribuss. *Below:* Courtyard House takes advantage of a rare flat site in Mill Valley, but looks inward for privacy from adjacent neighbors.



Photo: Thibault Cartier



Renderings: Richardson Pribuss Architects





Photos this page: Thibault Cartier

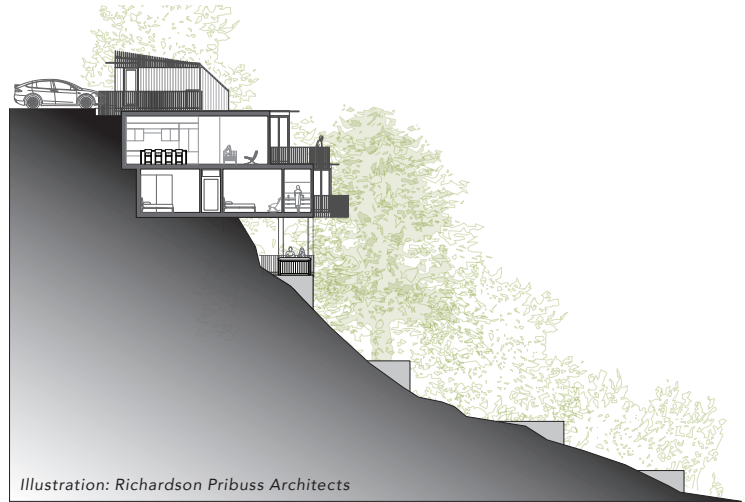


Illustration: Richardson Pribuss Architects



This page: The site for the recently completed Warner Canyon Hillside Residence was so steep that the builder had to belay down to erect access stairs. Nonetheless, the firm managed to create multiple terraces to engage the outdoors.

Her formal path to architecture began with a study of art history at Wellesley, then a transfer to MIT for an architecture degree. In the late 1960s and early '70s, California was the place to be, and she traveled west for graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley, where Charles Moore was her adviser. Toward the end of her program, she told him she'd like to work for William Turnbull Associates. "Bill called me the next day and said, can you come in on Monday," Heidi recalls. "It was 1977, when there had been a recession and everyone was hiring up again. I wanted to travel to Europe, but I wasn't going to jeopardize that offer."

Architecture has given Heidi the opportunity to be creative and practical at the same time. From Bill Turnbull

she learned how to do site planning and grading. At a time when builders weren't used to having women around, he took her to construction sites. "I was the first person they hired in three or four years, so there was no honeymoon period," she says. "I sat right in front of him so he could watch every move, and I was able to learn quickly. It was a real family."

Early on, visiting Charles Moore and Bill Turnbull's Condominium One at Sea Ranch made an impression: "The idea of the condo being a wooden rock perched on the edge of the inlets of the Pacific Ocean, and about leaving the car behind and then entering this realm, and how those 10 condo units operated as one big house. The roof slopes reflect what the windblown hedgerows do," she says, recalling a prominent fea-



“My uncle Joe [Richardson] was a mentor; I archived the Richardson stuff before it was handed off to Harvard. It was a done deal. I always assumed I would be an architect.”

—Heidi Richardson

ture of landscape architect Lawrence Halprin’s master plan. “You have this wooden rock on the outside, and the inside, especially Charles’ unit, was like a colorful geode.”

Heidi also absorbed the Sea Ranch spirit of inventive yet modest houses driven by the natural landscape. Working on other projects there, “before people started spending big money on houses,” she learned how to “pinch inches.” “Bill taught me that the inside of a closet can be 21 inches instead of 24 inches, so you can make a compact but useful fundamental plan. And that you design from inside out: how is it furnished, how do people live in the space, what do you see when you sit in this chair? It’s why his work feels friendly and easy to live in.”

In 1984, Heidi opened her own office in Mill Valley. After an unsuccessful partnership in those fledgling years, she managed the firm alone until 2019, when Andrew became a partner. He had grown up in Mill Valley in a modern, concrete-and-glass house designed by his stepfather, an architect. Andrew’s educational journey was the opposite of Heidi’s—he left California to attend college in New York, before returning to the Southern California Institute of Architecture for a master’s in architecture. After finishing school in 2005, he spent a year in Mexico City working for architect Michel Rojkind, then took a job as an exhibition designer at the Getty Museum. In 2008, he followed his wife to grad school in San Francisco. “The day after we moved, the Bear Stearns news came out and the economy imploded,” he says. Scrambling for

work, he pieced together gigs at various design offices, including Heidi’s, and joined her full-time in 2010.

“The firm has always grown or shrunk a bit with the economy,” Heidi says. “Now we keep growing, concentrating in Marin and Mill Valley because that’s where everyone wants to live. It seems like our sphere is shrinking, but there’s so much money coming in here that we don’t have to go outside. Although we do some work in the city and in Sonoma, most of our new houses are in Mill Valley now.”

### Inside-Out

In some ways the evolution of this idyllic enclave has come full circle. Mill Valley was a summer cottage community before the bridge was built in the mid-1930s, and later became known for its arts culture and laid-back vibe: “hippie lawyers growing pot on the hillsides,” Andrew says. More recently, it was a bedroom community of folks traveling into the city for work. Now it’s a magnet for sophisticated tech industry clients, many of whom are interested in green building and willing to experiment. The firm is often building new homes on spectacular sites. Many are complicated, leftover lots, but Richardson Pribuss isn’t afraid of them.

The recently completed Warner Canyon Hillside Residence is one of the more extreme examples. The land was so steep that the builders had to belay down the site to erect a set of stairs, and there is a 20-foot drop between the street-level garage and the main level. Noting local restrictions, Heidi says that houses here



Photos this page: Jeff Zaruba



This page: The phone is ringing off the hook these days with requests for accessory buildings, such as this art studio. Heidi’s experience with space-efficient Sea Ranch houses has proven key.



Photos this page: Jeff Zaruba



*This page:* If the firm has a superpower, it's in updating older properties. For the Creekside Retreat, the team preserved the wood-clad character while punctuating the house with windows and a second story.

are typically 2,000 to 3,000 square feet—“this is where my pinching comes in.” In a modest 1,970 square feet, the design team fit three bedrooms, two and a half baths, and an office. Inside-out schemes are an integral part of their work. Here the boundaries disappear through wall-height glazing focused on the view over the canyon. The design isn't just about the view, though. It in-

corporates six outdoor spaces, including a barbecue deck off the dining room, a deck off the living room, and another small terrace off the lower-level main bedroom. From there, a stair leads down to a hot tub and an outdoor kitchen. “In part, the success of this project was carving out moments where you could get onto the site, not just a great big deck off the back,” Andrew says.

In exploring their own brand of Northern California modernism, Richardson Pribuss has developed an appreciation for houses as repositories of light and the landscape, an ideal often achieved with height. “We’re constantly trying to express some kind of verticality in these projects,” Heidi says. “Maybe because our height limits are so rigorous.” Restrictions usually dictate a maximum height of 25 feet near the edges of the site and 35 feet in the center, she says, which also leads them to design flat roofs—“what is the point of expressing verticality if you put a cowboy hat on top of it?” Glazed walls create views through their houses, so that the outdoor spaces read as large as possible.

The architects use taut wood cladding—usually local cedar—to soften and scale down the envelope. In newer work, though, they are specifying fiber-cement siding for fire safety, an urgent issue that reinforces their proclivity for simple roof shapes, which minimize entry points for drifting embers. “To be honest, it’s kind of a struggle for us—how do you create this contemporary building that’s all fireproof and doesn’t feel too slick and soulless?” Andrew



Rendering: Richardson Pribuss



Above: Sometimes preserving the scale of a heritage dwelling means assigning parts of the clients' program elsewhere. Creekside Retreat will soon gain its own complementary accessory building.

says. Heidi adds: "And we can't put landscaping near the house. All these pieces are evolving, and in an exciting way. First we had the seismic challenge, then the energy challenge, and now the fire challenge."

Another specialty has been renovating older or heritage houses, along with the occasional commercial property, such as the iconic Sweetwater Music Hall, currently underway, that helped put Mill Valley on the map. "Many architects don't want to touch renovations because they are wrapped around historic preservation," Heidi says. "We touch all those pieces that comprise what Mill Valley was and is becoming."

Like many California jurisdictions, Marin County has passed ADU-friendly initiatives in recent years to alleviate the scarcity of rentals and affordable houses, and it's been a boon for business. "The phone rings three times a week for a new ADU," Andrew says. "We love them because they're looser, like one-off design exercises, and they help the younger staff build skills." Designing for 500 to 800 square feet, "that's where [Heidi's] Sea Ranch [experience] comes in," he adds, "how

to get a laundry to work in a bathroom, eliminating halls, and bringing the windows to the floor." In fact, the firm is working on an ADU design guidebook for San Joaquin County. The county, east of San Francisco at the northern end of the Central Valley food basket, has also commissioned a prototype for farmworker housing.

## Entrepreneurial Spirit

These smaller projects are part of the roster of about 50 jobs the firm is working on at any one time, and they help alleviate the managerial challenges of large projects that get held up in design reviews and "planning purgatory." Internal teamwork and weekly meetings with a trusted stable of engineering and landscape consultants keep things on track. Heidi has twice chaired the local planning commission, which helped her understand the complex zoning rules and what it's like to be on the other side, she says. A crack facilitator is essential too: "We have the most fantastic business manager and permit technician expeditor, Kristin Silmore," Heidi says. "She knows people in billing departments all over the county and keeps up those relationships."

With the promotion of Andrew to partner two years ago, Heidi has been positioning the firm for the future. Her management philosophy is to delegate as much as she can, which means sharing rain-making work not only with Andrew but with other senior staff,



Photo: Suzanna Scott

Above: Contemporary Hill House employs dark-stained cedar to evoke Mill Valley's history of wood-clad houses. An elevated courtyard directs the center of the house to views of Mount Tamalpais.



Photos this page: Thibault Carlier



“Heidi generated this environment where she delegates and empowers employees to be their own project architect, run their own thing.”

—Andrew Pribuss

too. “It invests them in the firm, and it takes the load off of us,” she says. She enjoys meeting with clients and handles marketing, site and floor planning, and politicking with city hall, while Andrew excels at exterior elevations and does most of the construction administration. They are also expanding the interiors department, which currently stands at four staff. “Many clients, especially on new houses, bring an interior designer with them, but on the smaller renovation work we do, we find that clients love one-stop shopping,” Heidi says. “People are trying to simplify their lives.”

No doubt the firm’s longevity and success stems in part from Heidi’s style of leading by collaboration. “Heidi generated this environment where she delegates and empowers employees to be their own project architect, run their own thing,” Andrew says. “That’s why I stayed; I like being accountable to myself, getting it done.” It’s another early lesson that has stuck. “Bill had final say but allowed people to grow,” Heidi says, “which is important if you want to build a team.”

The intrepid spirit of her great-grandfather and her mentors lives on in her work, marrying the technical aspects with a quality design response. “Our understanding of complex sites and entitlements may contribute to why people come to us,” Heidi says. “We like to think it’s our design talent, too.” Indeed, it’s all part of the DNA.—Cheryl Weber



This page: Modern Bungalow offers a timeless wood-clad face to neighboring Mill Valley houses, while stepping down the hill to live a crisp, modern California lifestyle.





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# Museum for Living

A New York pied-à-terre for art collectors infuses the work of great architects, artisans, and artists into a bespoke oasis.

BY S. CLAIRE CONROY

WEST CHELSEA RESIDENCE  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
LUCE ET STUDIO ARCHITECTS

**Architecture is an art** for Jennifer Luce, FAIA, one she embraces with a sculptor's sensuality and an engineer's precision. Every important decision she and her team at LUCE et studio make on a project goes through a meticulous and probing process of research and development, often resulting in ordinary objects transcending their bounds. For instance, a bathroom sink carved out of a single piece of stone becomes an undulating vessel, and that vessel is the fulcrum for an entire architectural solution. The problem? How do you design an apartment that was originally meant for Zaha Hadid in a building she also designed?

Jennifer's clients, a West Coast couple she's known for some time, had searched extensively for an upgrade to their pied-à-terre in New York City when they stopped by the sales office of this new building on the High Line. With Zaha's untimely death, the unit had been released and Jennifer's clients snapped it up. They called Jennifer right from the sales office with the news and the go-ahead on the project, which eventually tapped artisans on both coasts and a number of stops in between.

The 2,500 square foot unit is located on the quiet side of the West Chelsea building, away from the bustle of the High Line but with access to long-range views. "This unit was high enough and outward enough, it likely had some merit to Zaha," says Jennifer, speculating about why she might have chosen it. "It feels more private than the wing that reaches











The owners from California wanted a sanctuary from the overstimulation of New York’s hustle and bustle. LUCE et studio injected key West Coast elements to make them feel at home, most notably bountiful daylight, natural materials, and views.

toward the High Line.” Although it was earmarked as the famous architect’s apartment, it was a complete blank slate when Jennifer got the keys. All of the other units in the 11-story building were under construction with the developer’s stock interiors, but this one had just a few walls in place—albeit in the wrong places.

With a tabula rasa on the inside, but Zaha’s undulating façade of stone, steel, and glass on the exterior, Jennifer found a perfect balance of inspiration and creative freedom. “We wanted to make something wonderful for our clients. And, as much as it’s our project and not something she would have designed, we felt a need to honor Zaha,” she says.

The Canadian-born architect whose practice is now based in La Jolla has some personal insight and affinity for the British-Iraqi architect. “I met her when I started working with Arquitectonica. She came to give a lecture in Miami, and I was assigned to her at someone’s very elaborate house. I was intensely shy, and it was amazing to meet her,” she recalls. “Later, I invited her to come to Canada to teach and speak there, and we ended up driving for hours through a snowstorm to the airport in Montreal. We were in touch off and on through the years. She was unbelievably charming and empathetic and generous.”





A custom art piece commissioned by Jennifer defines the living area without blocking light and flow. The glass screen is an image of architect Lina Bo Bardi's house in Brazil by German photographer Veronika Kelldorfer. Jennifer's team typically designs all the kitchens in their residential work, but this system by Valcucine provided the fit, finish, and flexibility the space needed.







Space and furniture expands and contracts as needed for the couple or a large gathering. The study can close off to become a guest room. And the dining table expands with curved leaves to accommodate a proper dinner party.

### The Art of Making Art

If Zaha practiced art as a way to unlock a more expressive architecture, Jennifer practices architecture as a way to unlock artistic expression in service to her clients. LUCE et studio's diverse work encompasses corporate headquarters, restaurants, commercial interiors, museums and galleries, custom residences, and much more. Each project taps what's defining about the client and delivers an original, bespoke solution to their needs and desires.

Often that solution combines fine craft with a taut industrial edge, as it does in the West Chelsea Residence. For these particular clients, that combination was especially perfect. "They are art collectors and patrons, but they built an amazing business together around precision. In the days before FedEx, they were shipping and delivering industrial products within 24 hours. One of their goals was to not keep their clients on the phone for more than 60 seconds," she says. "So everything we designed, we did to please their propensity for precision." And she knew SilverLining, Inc., was the perfect builder for the project, she says, "when I first met the site super in the space and he was projecting to the 1/16<sup>th</sup>-inch reveal."

The owners, who also have a stunning architect-designed oasis in Del Mar, California, didn't need a vast footprint in New York, but they did want some of that open, oasis feel in the smaller place. Their primary requirement was for a sanctuary from the city's overstimulation, but with the flexibility to host larger gatherings of other art lovers. To that end, Jennifer and her team removed the misplaced walls installed by the developer. "Coming from California, it was so important for everyone to feel connected to the landscape," says the architect. "Our first goal was to break down those barriers—to







break through north to south and east to west—to light the space. There was something very soothing to that.”

Having eliminated the last vestige of existing conditions, the team set about reinstalling walls—this time with materials sourced from California. “We called Michael D’Angelo, a woodworker I’ve collaborated with for 35 years,” she says. “He took one oak tree and sliced it himself—one tree—and made the floors and wall panels himself.” The wood was then

“Everything we designed,  
we did to please [the clients’]  
propensity for precision.”

—Jennifer Luce, FAIA

shipped to a cabinetmaker in New York who collaborated with him on the install. “Every board is precisely located and brought together with the butterfly joints.”

On the floor, the planks are joined at an angle, something SilverLining—despite all the company’s high-end custom experience—had never done before. “The way those angles are cut on the floor is very unusual for us,” recalls Joel Arencibia, director of operations and partner. “It creates a miter detail

Zaha’s fenestration is lined with steel on the exterior, but the interiors were unadorned. Builder SilverLining mimicked the curved detail in the study and elsewhere in the apartment. Highly custom applications of steel, stone, and wood form the core palette for the project.







LUCE et studio designed the bed in the primary bedroom suite, a sculptural object immersed in the surrounding view. Beautiful and practical, it doubles as a bench for dressing. Custom draperies provide privacy as needed, while echoing the hues of steel-clad built-ins.



that’s unusual for New York, with the planks joined on triangles.” Adding to the challenge, the wood was delayed arriving from the West Coast. “Our biggest challenge overall was scheduling and coordinating all the contributors. At the time, the rest of the building interiors were also under construction, so access to the elevator was another complication.”

The wood wraps the doors and walls (some are moveable), transforming the space into a warm embrace. Handmade hardware from architect-led artisans in New York injects a cool gleam against the wood surfaces and then embeds—chameleon-like—in steel accent walls and doors. The gleam remains, however, because the hardware is polished and reflective and the metal surfaces are patinaed and variegated.

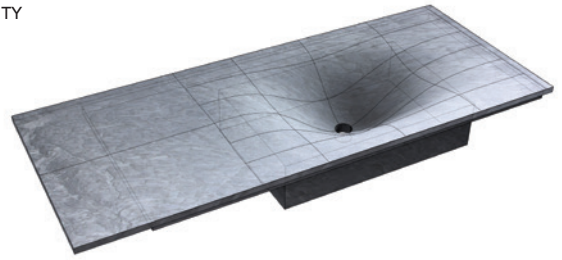
The use of steel throughout the apartment is a major hat tip to Zaha’s façade, while at the same time aligning with the LUCE et studio aesthetic. “We were very much influenced by the building itself and the craft of the metal,” says Jennifer. “Our work is rooted in the industrial. We have a passion for metal, and on this project, we go on a journey of examining that material, celebrating the curves and the arches, and the sinuous 3D aspect of the building itself. Metal is incredibly sensual as a material. The apartment is basically wood, metal, and stone and that’s it.”



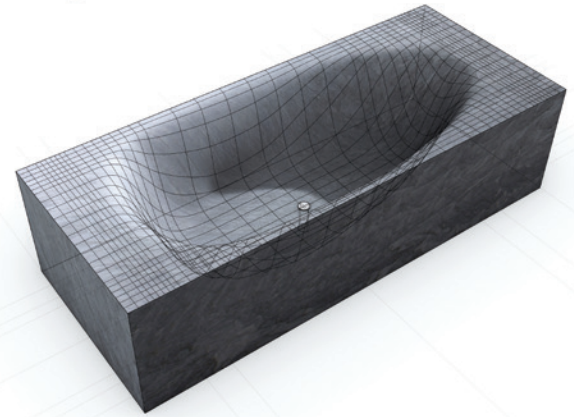
SITE PLAN



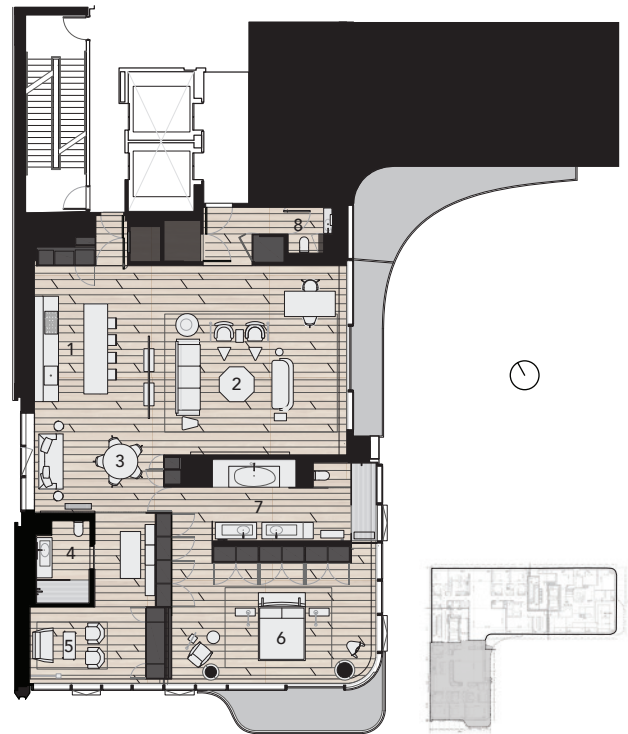
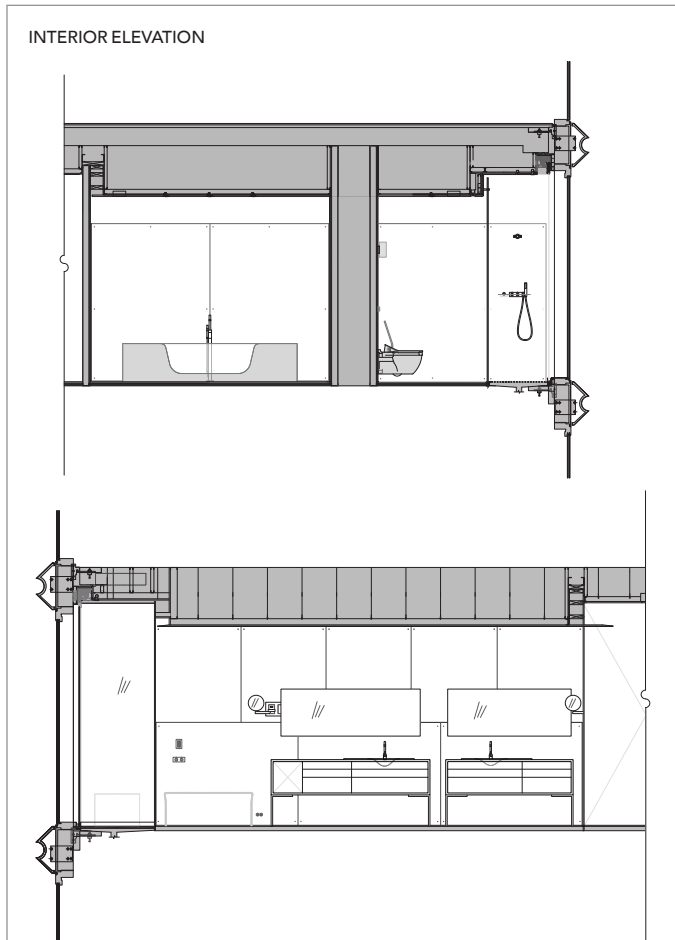
VANITY



TUB



INTERIOR ELEVATION



FLOOR PLAN | 1. Kitchen | 2. Great Room | 3. Dining Room |  
4. Guest Bathroom | 5. Guest Bedroom | 6. Main Bedroom | 7. Main  
Bathroom | 8. Powder Room





Sourced from a single oak tree, all the wood for the floors, walls, and doors came from California woodworker Michael D'Angelo. Jennifer's designs for the solid stone tub and sinks involved "blood, sweat, and tears"—and a conversation while sitting in a tub with her client.

The steel carries through to the interior window detailing, tracing the curves of Zaha's dynamic exterior fenestration. "The exterior of the building was all custom metalwork—all stainless steel," recalls SilverLining's president, Josh Weiner. "But the interiors were not detailed that way, so we installed the custom metal around the curves to match."

### Stone Soul

The custom metalwork is not the only element that curves. In collaboration with Quarra, a stone fabricator in Madison, Wisconsin, LUCE et studio designed bathroom sinks and a showcase tub for the primary bath carved out of solid pieces of Italian stone. The wave-like undulations in the stone cavities evoke the façade, swirling gracefully in a slow vortex.

"There was so much blood, sweat, and tears in that tub," Jennifer recalls. "I had a conversation about the design with my client while sitting in a bathtub. It's like product research; we have to confirm all those details before the cutting begins. We



had to find a block of stone and make sure we could get it in the elevator. Then the process of cutting it took two weeks. Ultimately, we had to shorten it by 2 feet to get it into the apartment.”

The tub was a great effort on everyone’s part for sure, but this is one of the aspects of design Jennifer loves best. Collaborating with artisans on custom solutions informs her work at every scale. “We’re working with Quarra on a piece for the museum [the Mingei International Museum in San Diego debuting this summer]. They’re making a 45-foot-long bench for us,” she notes. “It’s a nice evolution that satisfies me as a maker.”

The West Chelsea Residence is, indeed, an uncanny fulcrum for connections. There was the Zaha/Jennifer connection, of course, and now the apartment owners have made a substantial donation to Jennifer’s museum project. Meanwhile, the owners’ art collection infuses their New York apartment with their own highly curated choices, with the inspired exception of one piece sourced by Jennifer. It’s an installation that brilliantly distills the crossover between art and architecture: A large, translucent glass screen by German photographer Veronika Kellndorfer of Lina Bo Bardi’s Brazilian modern house.

“We placed it at the apex of the space, where morning light from the east, afternoon light from the west, and all-day light from the south coalesce,” says Jennifer. “We commissioned the piece from the photographer and licensed Lina Bo Bardi’s design for the concrete-and-wood stands that hold it.” Precisely situated, it serves as the suggestion of a partition wall between the kitchen and the living area, defining the space while leaving it open.

In the sculpture as in the apartment, art merges with architecture and resonates with the story of women architects’ uniquely collaborative contributions to both disciplines. **RD**



With the stone-clad shower, the immersion in the clients’ earthy California aesthetic is complete. The sanctuary hovers above the city, admiring its virtues while insulating from its vices. “There’s a calm, meditative feel,” says Jennifer, “a sense of a hermetic seal.”

## West Chelsea Residence

New York, New York

**ARCHITECTS:** Jennifer Luce, FAIA, LUCE et studio architects, La Jolla, California

**BASE BUILDING ARCHITECT:** Aditya Karmarkar, AIA, Ismael Leyva Architects, New York, New York

**BUILDER:** Josh Weiner, president, and Joel Arencibia, director of operations and partner, SilverLining, Inc., New York

**PROJECT SIZE:** 2,500 square feet

**CONSTRUCTION COST:** Withheld

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Michael Moran Photography, Inc.

### KEY PRODUCTS

**COOKTOP/OVENS/REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER/WINE UNIT:** Gaggenau

**DISHWASHER/WASHER/DRYER:** Miele

**DISPOSAL:** InSinkErator

**DOORS/MILLWORK/MOLDING/TRIM:** Cousin Furniture; Argent Fabrication; Quarra Stone

**DOOR HARDWARE:** Custom by H. Theophile

**FAUCETS:** GESSI for Valcucine (kitchen); Vola (bathrooms); Dornbracht (shower)

**KITCHEN CABINET SYSTEM:** Valcucine

**LIGHTING:** Kreon

**LIGHTING CONTROL:** Lutron

**MIRRORS:** Agape

**PAINTS:** Dunn-Edwards

**RADIATORS:** Vulcan

**SINKS:** Custom by Quarra Stone; Blanco (kitchen)









# Quiet Time

Three carefully crafted retreats restore  
repose amid the noise of modern life.

BY CHERYL WEBER AND S. CLAIRE CONROY



# Napa Residence

NAPA, CALIFORNIA  
NICK NOYES ARCHITECTURE

**Designed for art collectors** who split their time between Los Angeles and Napa, this project presented a puzzle familiar to many architects: how to incorporate formal art spaces into a house that welcomes guests and grandkids. And although Napa is a well-known vacation destination synonymous with sprawling vineyards, their building lot lacked a strong sense of place, says Nick Noyes, FAIA. “The biggest challenge was to create that,” he says. “What do you do to bring the site alive?”

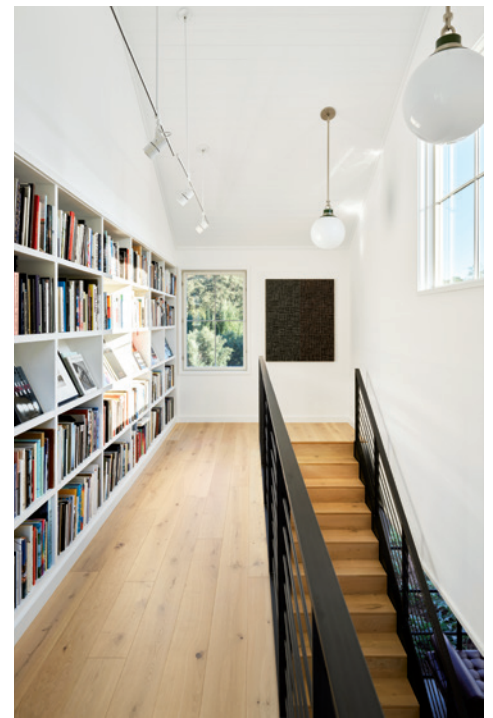
As with all their projects, the architects presented the clients with about eight different design schemes and three strategies for how the house might sit on the land. The one that rose to the top consisted of simple gabled forms that acknowledge the rural archetype. “The clients came to us having seen another project we did that was based on white gabled buildings in the landscape,” Nick says. “They felt that kind of abstract simplicity would be a very nice foil for their lifestyle and the art in the house.”



Simple agrarian forms provide a foil for the owners’ modern art collection. The rural home combines family quarters, gallery space, and an art barn. A glazed entry hall links garage and main house, while allowing glimpses of the landscape beyond. Vertical steel bars set in cement screen the parking court.







The flat-roofed entry hall connects to second-level guest quarters above the garage and to the formal gallery, living, and dining volume. Partition walls funnel small children through fragile formal areas toward more resilient family spaces.

While there were not many trees on the nearly flat lot, a few heritage oaks dotted a dry creek bed to the south, and that topographical feature became the focus for the house. The long structure faces due south, creating opportunities for passive heating and cooling, and lines up with the geometry of a vineyard to the east.

Nick's sketch was fleshed out as two gabled living spaces with a glass connector, and a detached art barn. From the gravel parking court, you enter the house through a flat-roofed, glazed section with a metal ceiling and steel windows and doors. On the left is the two-story garage, with stairs leading to an airy, bookshelf-lined hall, two guest rooms, and a gym/bunk room. To the right of the entry, a bar-shaped volume with exposed rafters and steel tie rods contains the art gallery, which also







The central gallery space combines fine art and formal entertaining, while bookending in the home's natural bounty.



serves as the formal living and dining room. “The entry connector was a simple way to knit two gables together, and it’s pretty elegant to have this slice through the house where you get to see the landscape beyond,” Nick says.

To keep the long gallery space separate from the rest of the house, two central partitions divide the gallery’s living and dining areas, creating a cross-axial pass-through from the entry hall to the more domestic side of the house. “They didn’t want the visiting kids and grandkids getting too muddled up in the art,” Nick says. “The ceiling goes all the way through the dining room, central space, and living room, so you get a sense you’re in

a big gallery-like volume, but you can pass through quickly.”

Once you do, a relaxed vibe reasserts itself. This long, perpendicular gabled volume contains the kitchen, study, and main bedroom suite, with a shed-roofed family room and loggia leaning against

it. “The kitchen looks into the family room, which is a shed leaning against a gabled building,” Nick says, “a simple vernacular form.” The glassy family room

opens to the loggia—a columned porch with an outdoor kitchen, fireplace, and dining area facing the pool. Across the pool is the art barn, which holds an office and an exhibition space. Its 11-foot-high plate and 17-foot ridgeline accommodate large-scale pieces of art.

“The biggest challenge was to create that [sense of place]. What do you do to bring the site alive?”

—Nick Noyes, FAIA





Casual family spaces emphasize visual and physical connections to the outdoors. A monochromatic palette and streamlined detailing in the open kitchen blur its distinction from the family room. An outdoor loggia with shed roof provides sheltered living and dining space adjacent to the pool.







The main bedroom carries over the simple detailing of the rest of the house, albeit with a richer palette of materials for the main bathroom—including generous use of luxurious veined marbles. Still, the rooms’ subtle hues allow nature to claim center stage.

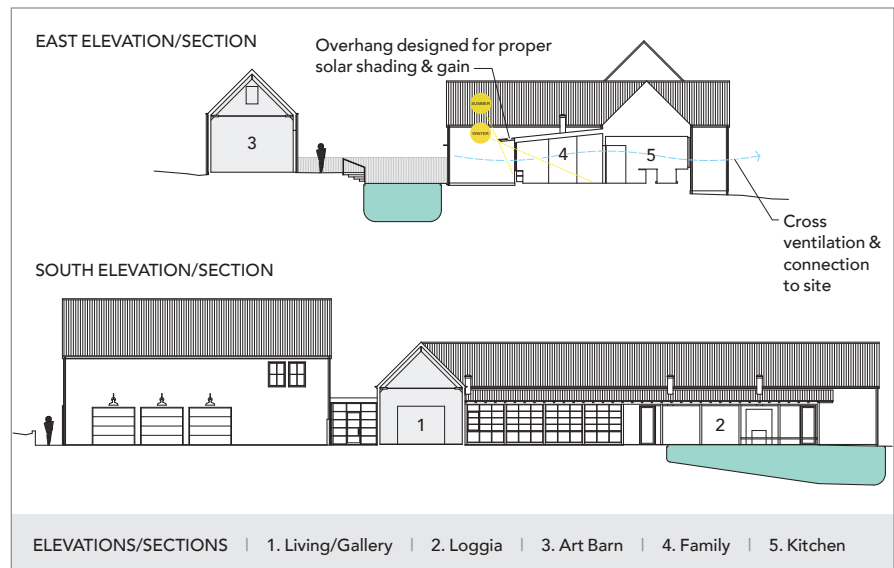
### A Collection of Details

These basic forms, in service to the art, inspire not a nostalgia for farm buildings but an appreciation of how they touch each together and are rendered in a modern way. “The builder, Tim Agapoff, is a phenomenal craftsman,” Nick says. “The quality we get from him is just staggering.” Cladding on the main house is fiber-cement lap siding with a 4-inch exposure, which reinforces the crispness of the white buildings and references New England, where the client is from. Most important for a vacation house in this wildfire-prone region, the siding and light gray corrugated metal roof resist fire and don’t require much upkeep. The art barn, wrapped in redwood, has the same roof pitch as the house.

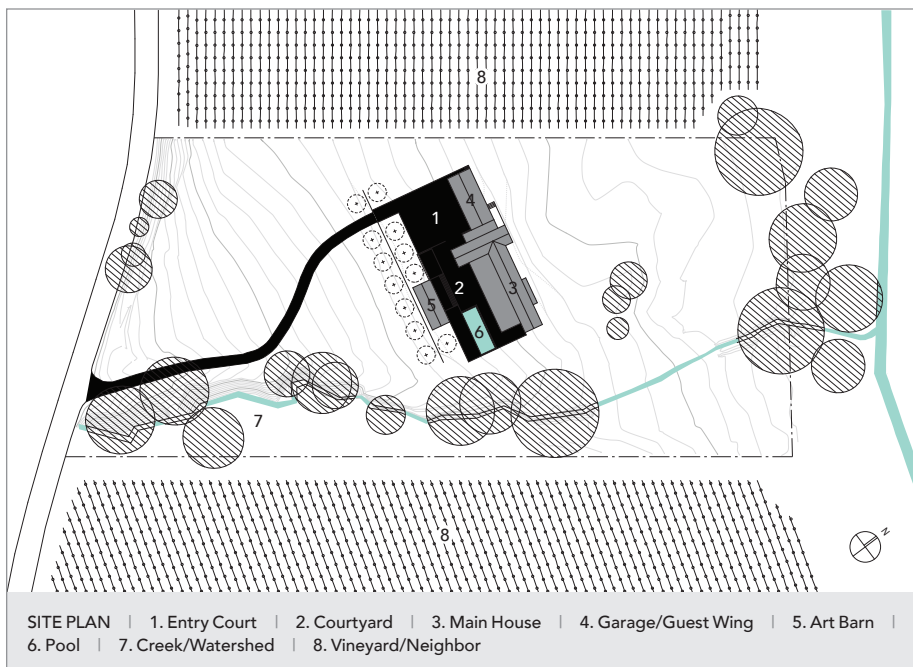
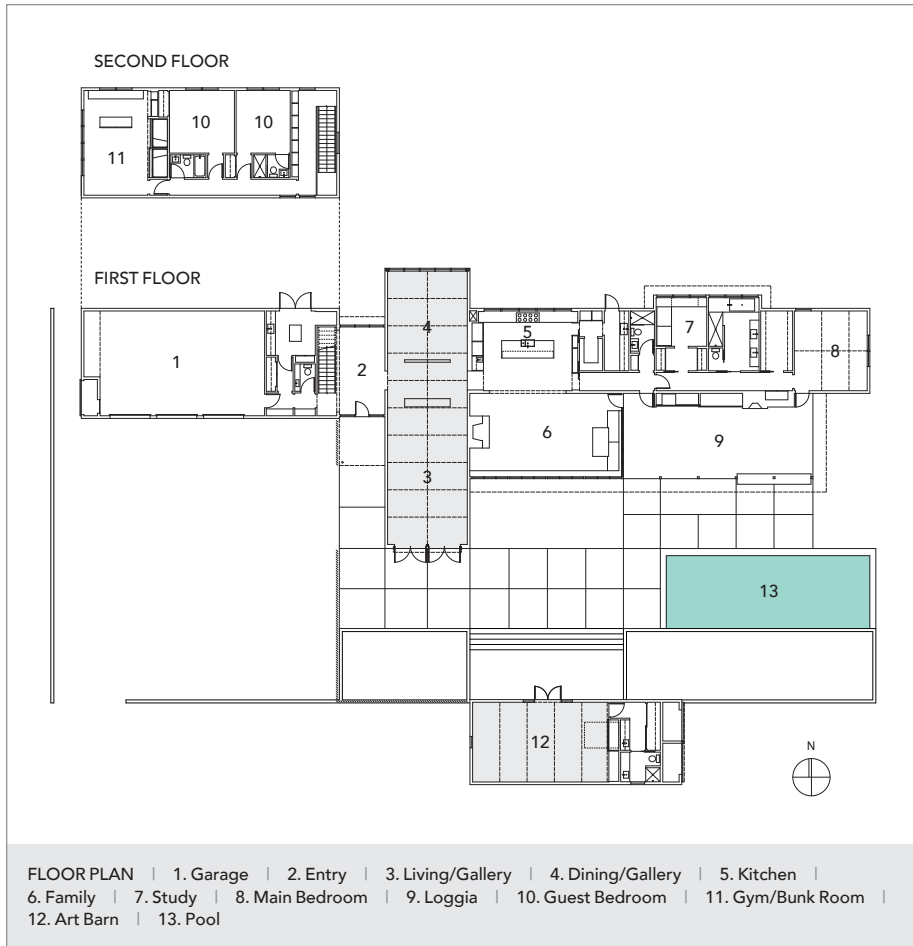
Both of the gallery spaces—formal living and dining volume and art barn—have concrete floors, gypsum board walls, and an exposed ceiling structure with white-painted steel tie rods. “To make the vaulted ceil-

ing work, you are reverse-building everything compared to standard construction,” says Tim Agapoff. “You have to build one roof system, then all the subs are on the roof adding electrical.” The large, steel-framed windows in the entry hall and art barn were

another exacting construction challenge that required “putting the frames together and glazing them in place after the install,” Tim says. Adjacent to the entryway, the steel staircase railing leading to the guest quarters echoes this material.







## Napa Residence

Napa, California

**ARCHITECT:** Nick Noyes, FAIA, principal in charge; Michael Perkins, senior associate, Nick Noyes Architecture, San Francisco

**BUILDER:** Tim Agapoff Construction, Calistoga, California

**INTERIOR DESIGNER:** ABD Studio, San Francisco

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Roche + Roche, Sonoma, California

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Duncan Engineering, Mendocino, California

**PROJECT SIZE:** 6,100 square feet

**SITE SIZE:** 5 acres

**CONSTRUCTION COST:** Withheld

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Matthew Millman Photography

### KEY PRODUCTS

**CLADDING:** James Hardie

**COOKTOP:** Wolf

**COOKING VENTILATION:** Modern-Aire

**DISHWASHER:** Thermador

**ENTRY DOORS:** Crittall

**FAUCETS:** Rohl, Franke, PHYLRICH

**FIREPLACE:** Isokern

**LIGHTING:** WAC, Halo, Lutron

**OUTDOOR GRILL:** Wolf

**OVENS:** Thermador

**PAINTS/STAINS:** Benjamin Moore

**REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER:** Sub-Zero

**ROOFING:** Metal Sales Corrugated Roofing

**SINKS:** O'Brien Sinks

**TOILETS:** TOTO

**TUB:** Hydro Systems

**WASHER/DRYER:** LG

**WINDOWS:** Marvin, Crittall





Once you move into the everyday sides of the house, its plain white exterior belies the richness inside. Here the material palette has a more sumptuous quality with white oak floors, built-in furniture and bookcases, and painted wood windows and ceilings. Kitchen cabinetry is painted the same color as the ceilings and walls, so it becomes part of the trim. In the main bath, the veined marble countertop and tub surround add a luxurious touch. “When the forms are this simple, it really comes down to the details,” Nick says. “We think of it as a collection of details that, in the end, we’re happy they’re in each other’s company.”

As an extension of the house, the landscape received the same detailed



Across the pool and courtyard, the art barn’s 17-foot ridge-line and 11-foot-high plate accommodate larger-format pieces from the owners’ collection. Detailing echoes the main house—exposed, painted rafters, painted collar ties, and steel windows.





attention. Vertical steel bars set in concrete, a riff on traditional wood fencing, mark the entrance and partially screen the parking court. “The client had seen something like it in London,” Nick says. “As you walk around it, you get a different sense of layering and being able to see through it at an angle. It was a fun detail that got rolled into the project.”

The firm also designed the outdoor hardscape, including low, board-formed concrete walls at the pool, while

“Formal spatial and material richness—that’s really what we were thinking about.”

—Nick Noyes, FAIA

the landscape architecture firm Roche + Roche supplied the meadow-like plantings that wave in the wind—a natural foil for the taut architecture. They also brought in large oaks and olive trees,

which form a double row at the front of the property.

Balancing the need for displaying a large art collection and spaces that bring the family together, the design reflects the clients’ vision for combining a serious interest with a relaxed home life. “Formal spatial and material richness—that’s really what we were thinking about,” Nick says. “The design is based on a formal idea about the plan and courtyard, something holding it all together.”—*Cheryl Weber*





## Terraced House

RIDGEDALE, MISSOURI  
HUFFT

**Perched high above** Table Rock Lake in the Missouri Ozark Mountains, the Terraced House proves there's more than one way to set up a view. The clients, who live with their young child in Chicago, were looking for some basic requirements of a destination house—compact, sturdy, and low-maintenance. And, of course, a prospect from which to enjoy their spectacular slice of the meandering lake, which spans two states.

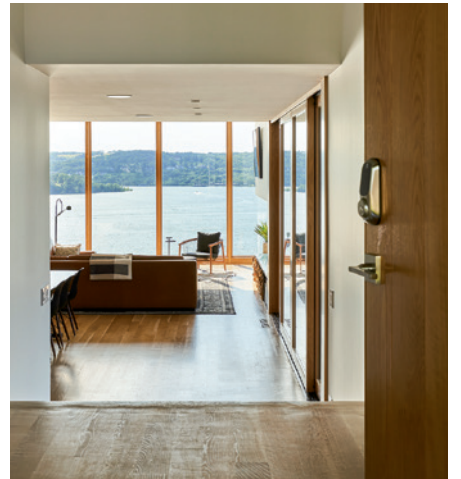
The traditional way architects treat a panorama is to design a long, horizontal

building parallel to the view so that every room can enjoy it. In this case, however, the lot inclined rather steeply to the cliff's edge. And while a rear walk-out scenario with bedrooms at the top of the house and living spaces below would have worked, the owners wanted to feel more grounded. "That led us to explore rotating the orientation to be long and linear perpendicular to the lake," says Scott Miller, RA, and introducing a series of outdoor terraces on different levels—launch points for the house. The resulting





For a steeply sloped site along Table Rock Lake in the Ozark Mountains, Hufft elected to go with the flow. Instead of meeting the view broadside, as is typical, the house steps down the hill, creating multiple points of engagement with lake vistas. Keeping the carport attached to the house allows it to fill a number of roles, including portal to the view and covered outdoor living space.







design steps graciously down the hillside in tandem with adjacent terraces on three levels—a living and dining patio, a pool, and a swath of lawn.

In his first sketches Scott studied the idea of a detached garage, but attaching it led to the home’s most eye-catching feature: an elegant carport that frames the view. “It also serves as a covered outdoor space when it rains,” he says. The carport organizes the terraces that spill down the slope behind it. “From there you walk four steps down to the main outdoor lounge with a firepit, which is connected to the dining and kitchen area, then down to the pool, and a few more steps to a large green yard,” Scott says.

With its fascia clad in Corten steel, the carport’s cantilevering roofline extends to become a porch over the front entry. Inside, “as soon as you walk into the foyer, you see through to the lake,” Scott says. Several steps down in the open plan is the kitchen and dining room, and beyond, the living room with 12-foot-high windows. “It’s one of those jaw-dropping moments of wow, this is a pretty special spot,” he says.



Several steps down from the entry level provides full access to the lake view from the open plan great room and its 12-foot-tall window wall. A cool steel frame underlies the warm, wood-clad stair treads.





The light-filled house has a minimal interior palette: the vista is the show. The kitchen bumps out from under the cantilevered second level, providing its own glazed view of the lake. Steps down lead to the lower-level main bedroom suite and private terrace.







A staggered upper level pulls apart to reveal a steel-and-wood stair, and adds welcome volume to the living area below. The kids' bunk room is on the mezzanine level, creating an acoustical buffer for the guest quarters on the next tier up.



### Mini Split

Sectionally, a split through the middle of the house echoes the topography. Outside, this elevational shift is expressed as a glass slot between the boxy second story's upper and lower volumes. Inside, it takes the form of an open-to-below void between the bunk room in the front of the house and the slightly higher pair of guest rooms facing the lake. "We tried to create zones of privacy—the primary suite is in the basement—but even with that break of the vertical space between the two bedrooms and the bunk room, which is kids' zone central, they can be loud," Scott says. "In the opening between them, you step up into the level with the two guest rooms; instead of being in the same hallway, it creates these zones that feel more private." Cantilevering about 5 feet over the back of the house, the upper volume shades the living room's western exposure. Downstairs, this volume registers as a higher ceiling in the living room,





Above: A cantilevered top level inserts guest rooms directly into the view, and helps shade the living area below. Below: The primary bedroom tucks into the bottom level of the house, with access to close views of the lake and a private side terrace. Custom built-ins by Hufft add utility and interest throughout the house.

creating a sense of interior depth and vertical relief. A glazed section of kitchen wall, close to the shift, lets the cooks enjoy the view too. The main bedroom is ensconced on the walk-out ground level, with a private patio facing the view.

The light-filled house has a minimalist interior palette: the vista is the show. “Keeping it simple, durable, and of its place were our main drivers,” Scott says. White oak floors, a local material, are a mixture of rift cut and quarter-sawn boards. Cabinets are rift cut oak; and the granite countertops resist wear and tear.

A steel-framed staircase reinforces the home’s clean lines. Premanufactured bent steel forms the base of the stair, with wood treads and risers on top. “Looking up at the slot, we wanted to keep the stair as minimal as we could and just have that profile of steps with a handrail springing from it,” Scott says. “You can see the bent steel plate from behind the stair.”







The main bathroom lies behind a partition wall from the bedroom, allowing the two rooms to share light and views. The bathroom and dressing room are a study in contrasting palettes against the backdrop of locally sourced white oak floors.

### Skin Deep

Cedar siding satisfied the owners' wish for a warm, rustic exterior. The subject of intense study, according to Scott, the cladding mixes two sizes of cedar boards in an 8-foot repeating pattern to create a unique carved look. "One of the boards is thicker and denser," Scott says. "The wood has such character and grain that the variation is difficult to pick up on. In

"Keeping it simple, durable, and of its place were our main drivers."

—Scott Miller, RA

the end maybe we overthought it, but we wanted to make sure you couldn't tell the pattern was replicated."

All this attention to the skin produced more than just an appealing aesthetic effect. In his workshop, builder Tom Caruso coated the boards with a natural wood preservative mixed with a gray stain to get just the right color. It should last a long time without reapplication.





## Terraced House

Ridgedale, Missouri

**ARCHITECT:** Scott Miller, project architect, Hufft, Kansas City, Missouri

**BUILDER:** Tom Caruso, Masterpiece Builders, Branson, Missouri

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** PLAID Collaborative, Kansas City, Missouri

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Stand-SEI, Overland, Kansas

**PROJECT SIZE:** 2,954 square feet

**SITE SIZE:** .57 acre

**CONSTRUCTION COST:** Withheld

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Hufft

### KEY PRODUCTS

**CABINETRY:** Hufft

**CABINETRY HARDWARE:** Schoolhouse

**CEILING FANS:** Big Ass Fans

**COUNTERTOPS:** Caesarstone

**DECKING:** Ipe, concrete

**DISHWASHER:** Thermador

**ENTRY DOORS:** Baldwin

**FAUCETS:** Graff, Kohler

**FIREPLACE:** Earthcore Industries

**FLOORING:** 1'x 6' oak

**ICEMAKER:** General Electric

**LIGHTING:** BEGA, Edge Lighting, USAI, Louis Poulsen

**RANGE:** Thermador

**REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER:** Thermador

**SINKS:** Blanco, Kohler

**TILE:** Daltile

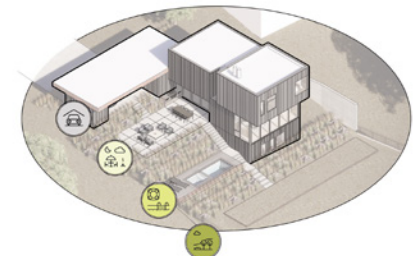
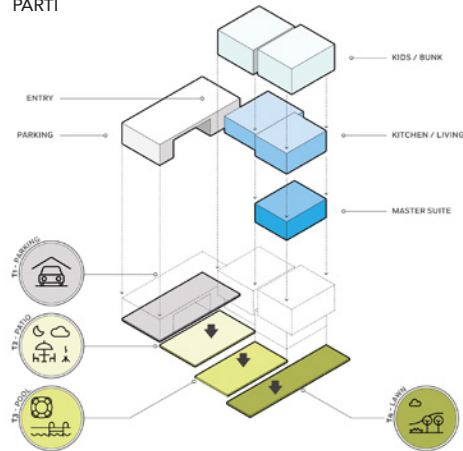
**TOILETS:** TOTO

**TUB:** Kaldewei, Kohler

**WINDOWS:** Marvin

**WINE REFRIGERATOR:** Thermador

### PARTI

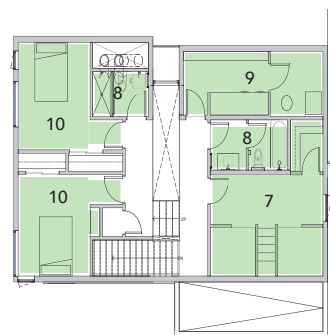


TERRACE EXPERIENCE PARTI

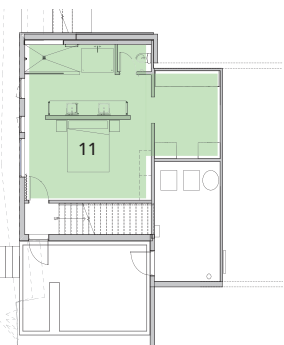
### MAIN LEVEL



### UPPER LEVEL



### LOWER LEVEL



**FLOOR PLAN** | 1. Entry | 2. Laundry + Powder Room | 3. Kitchen + Dining | 4. Living | 5. Patio | 6. Pool | 7. Bunk Room + Closet | 8. Bathrooms | 9. Laundry + Mechanical | 10. Guest Rooms | 11. Main Suite





Each terraced level is its own experience and delight. The lower lawn was a happy accident, driven by the need to expand the septic system at a late stage of design. The owners asked for a rustic exterior and Scott responded with two sizes of cedar boards in a meticulous pattern repeating every 8 feet. The boards are treated with a preservative and a gray stain for low maintenance.



“The product, called Lifetime, looks like seeds that you put in water,” he says. “We used the same process for Bass Pro cabins 10 to 12 years ago and it still looks pretty much the same.”

The Corten steel on the carport fascia was also pre-weathered by a local manufacturer so that rust wouldn’t drip onto the siding. The terrace edges are clad in Corten too, so as you move up through the landscape, “the carport is the final movement where that edge of terrace is lifted up,” Scott says.

By far, Tom’s greatest challenge came even before the house’s foundation was laid. After the septic system plan was approved, they discovered

it needed to be bigger. To create the septic field, footings were dug in the ravine to build a 14-foot retaining wall on the edge of the cliff. “In the end, it’s the best thing that happened because they have a huge, terraced lawn that completes the hangout zone for them,” Scott says.

Unexpected or considered, the result of all these moves is a house with multiple points of access to the land and unobstructed views of the sparkling lake. Scott’s shaping of both structure and landscape gives the house a light and relaxed presence—exactly what a weekend house should be.—*Cheryl Weber*





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# French Broad House

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RIVERDALE, TENNESSEE  
SANDERS PACE ARCHITECTURE



**The French Broad River** is one of the oldest in the world—it twists and turns its way through the ancient Appalachian Mountains in North Carolina, then continues on through Tennessee to Knoxville, where it combines with the Holston River to form the Tennessee River. Just a short drive west out of Knoxville, along a scenic bend of the French Broad Basin, Brandon Pace’s clients wanted to build a modern house.

The clients owned a 5-acre property adjacent to the wife’s sister’s place, creating the opportunity for a private family compound. Their lot was the high ground, a forested ridge with seasonal views of Mount Le Conte and distant glimpses of the Great Smokies. Its other notable feature was a stand of handsome beech trees, lovely to behold but clustered like autocross hazards across the ridge.

The sinewy house snakes through a stand of beech trees to glimpse distant mountain views. Tucked under a continuous roofline, porches and covered walkways help knit the three-volume plan together.







Located between the garage module and the bedroom module, the central great room accesses two porches at the elbow joints. Natural materials elevate the spare interiors. White oak floors, maple flat-panel cabinetry, and painted pine shiplap ceilings strike a calm and composed modern feel.



They approached Sanders Pace, an award-winning generalist practice in Knoxville, with their ample wish list and very tight budget. It was an astute choice. The firm is known for its modernist sensibilities and its talent for value engineering. Still, even for Brandon Pace, this one was a strain on his team's resourcefulness. The value engineering began almost immediately.

"The initial budget was \$500,000, but they had a pretty big program," Brandon recalls. "The original project called for a music studio, in addition to the two-bedroom house and garage. And we knew, given the budget, that we needed to keep the project at \$250 a square foot." Other challenges to the





The tight budget eliminated the husband’s wished-for music studio—at least for now. But to soften the blow, the architects designed a special custom built-in dedicated to his passion. The built-in’s maple cabinetry echoes that in the nearby kitchen area.

goal were those lovely beech trees and the tricky access to the site. They could bring power in from the sister’s lot, but everything else factored into the construction costs—including septic, a geothermal system, and a new driveway approach to the site.

Still, the firm did its due diligence on the wish list, devising a number of schemes that included the studio. “We had a sinewy option that worked its way through the stand of trees and placed the music room above the garage. Then we put it through pricing,” says Brandon. “We were building too much square footage to hit the budget—600 square feet too much.”

It’s a little heartbreaking to have

those disappointing conversations with your clients, the ones where an important part of the dream has to go, but Brandon believes it’s superior to a slow death by a thousand cuts. “When you

**“We always want to keep the language considered and consistent.”**

—Brandon Pace, FAIA

value engineer, you can take a hatchet or a scalpel,” he explains. “You have to take big swipes out, otherwise you end up with dozens of inferior choices—like cheap flooring. We all decided the music room would have to wait for a later

phase. We worked together to get the house smaller—to stretch the quality of spaces over quantity.”

Even with these efforts, the square footage price hit \$300 instead of the \$250 goal and the construction cost reached \$600,000. Part of the bloat was attributable to the difficult site and the pace of the small-scale builder who led the project. “He was a toolbox builder, not a laptop builder,” says Brandon. “And it ended up taking him 18 months instead of 12.” Slow and steady wins the race, however, as he pulled off the difficult, modern detailing with considerable skill. “We still saved money using him, but it does cost more in design fees to manage a toolbox contractor.”



### Dream Weaving

Although the music studio ended up on the cutting room floor, the “sinewy option” that snakes through the stand of beeches prevailed. Brandon’s team pulled apart the winnowed program into three modules, linked by a continuous, overhanging roof and a series of shallow decks and deeper porches. The roof shelters the decks, and those protected outdoor spaces extend the home’s perceived square footage while also framing wooded and mountain views. The overhangs also eliminate all but one run of gutters over the front door.

The garage module and bedroom module flank the central living, dining, and kitchen module. Covered porches serve as elbow joints between the volumes. The resulting twists and turns maximize and optimize the property’s long- and short-range views while tip-toeing around the beech trees.

In the interest of budget and low maintenance, the material palette is straightforward but deployed with art and precision. On the exterior, there’s



Large-format windows were not in the budget, so the architects specified 8-foot-tall units and topped them with transoms to accomplish the effect of more generous openings.





## French Broad House

Riverdale, Tennessee

**ARCHITECT:** Brandon Pace, FAIA, principal in charge; John Sanders, FAIA, Daniel Jones, AIA, Alec Persch, project team, Sanders Pace Architecture, Knoxville, Tennessee

**BUILDER:** Joe McNabb, McNabb Modern Construction, Knoxville

**PROJECT SIZE:** 1,979 square feet

**SITE SIZE:** 5.25 acres

**CONSTRUCTION COST:** \$300 a square foot

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Keith Isaacs Photo

### KEY PRODUCTS

**CABINET/DOOR HARDWARE:** Emtek

**CABINETS:** ArtHouse & Co.

**CLADDING/ROOFING:** Metal siding and roofing, Central States Mfg.; James Hardie HardiePanel; cypress; cumaru

**COUNTERTOPS:** Caesarstone (kitchen); Corian (bathrooms)

**DISHWASHER/REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER:** Bosch

**ENTRY DOORS/WINDOWS:** Weather Shield

**FAUCETS:** Delta (kitchen); Hansgrohe (primary bathroom shower); Mirabelle (guest bathroom)

**FIREPLACE:** Empire Comfort Systems

**GARAGE DOORS:** Haas Door

**HVAC:** ClimateMaster geothermal heat pump

**LIGHTING:** WAC Lighting

**LIGHTING CONTROL:** Lutron

**MOISTURE/THERMAL BARRIERS:** Huber ZIP System

**PAINTS:** Sherwin-Williams

**RADIANT FLOORING:** Schluter

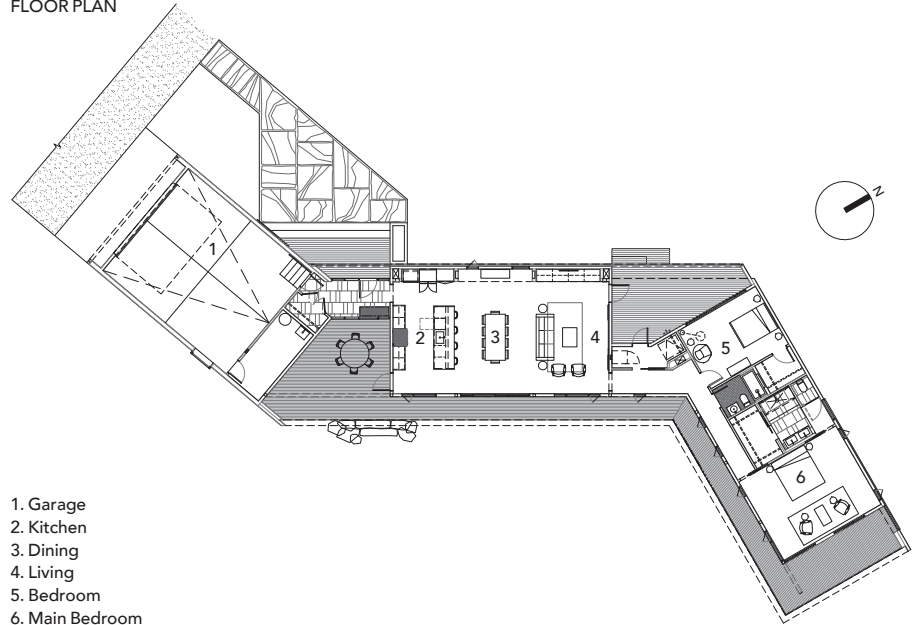
**RANGE/WALL OVENS:** GE

**ROOF WINDOWS:** Supreme Skylights

**TOILETS:** TOTO

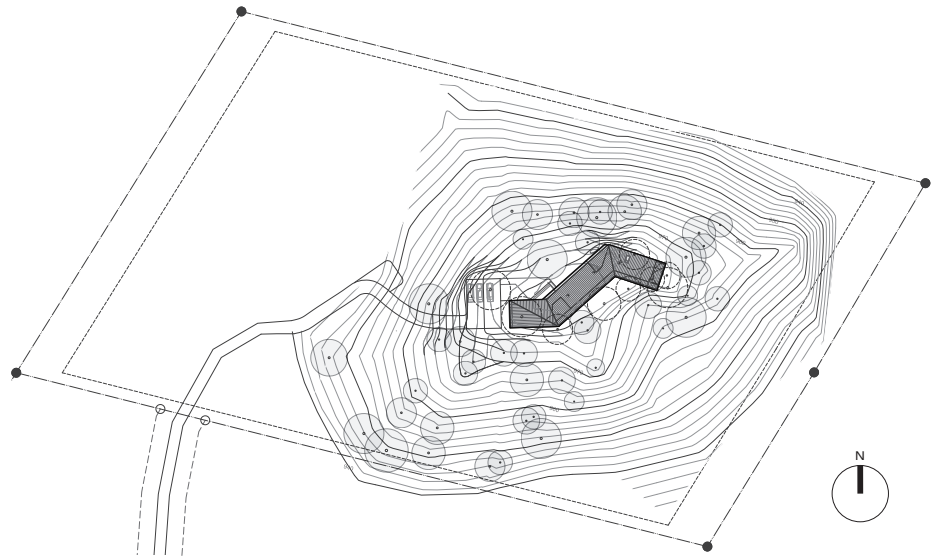
**TUB:** Kohler

FLOOR PLAN

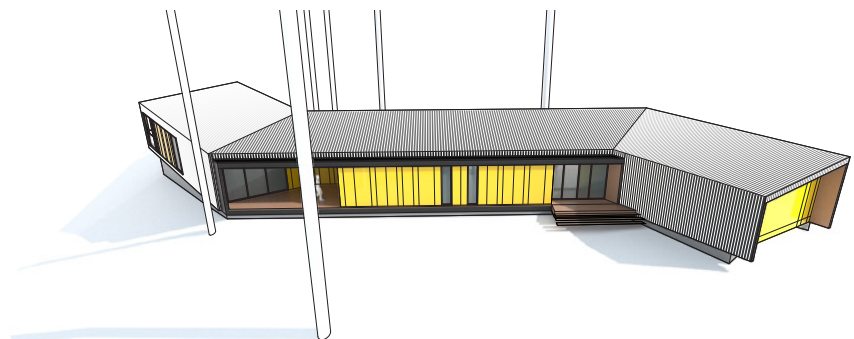


1. Garage
2. Kitchen
3. Dining
4. Living
5. Bedroom
6. Main Bedroom

SITE PLAN



3D DESIGN SKETCH







Exterior materials aim for low maintenance—metal roof and cladding, cementitious panels, cumaru decking, and cypress screening, soffits, fascia, and skirt boards. The cypress screening, reinforced with metal from behind, provides a measure of privacy for the primary bedroom. Exterior colors mimic the forest’s fall tapestry of hues.



a careful logic as to how windows are placed, detailed, terminated, and how metal siding and cementitious panels clad the remaining planes. “We always want to keep the language considered and consistent,” says Brandon.

Originally, the team envisioned a yellow color palette for the cementitious panels, but a site visit in the fall steered them in a different direction. “When we arrived for that meeting, our client had spread out a collection of fall leaves from the site,” he recalls. Her wishes carried the day: Red-toned panels blend with golden cypress elements (soffits, fascia, skirt boards, screening) and reddish-brown cumaru decking to evoke an autumn tapestry.





### Pieces of the Dream

Inside, more species of woods make appearances. There's painted pine shiplap for the ceiling, white oak flooring, and maple semi-custom cabinetry—a big savings over custom. “We generally don't like using semi-custom cabinets, because we don't get the information we need from the companies,” says Brandon. “But when it means the difference between \$10,000 and \$40,000 in cabinets on a budget-driven project, sometimes we have to make it work.”

Other savings came from specifying 8-foot windows and topping them off with stock transom units, mimicking the effect of much more expensive 10-foot units. And cost-effective track lighting integrates with the shiplap ceiling. “At this point in our firm, we know

what dials to turn to bring in savings,” says the architect. “The value we bring is in streamlining choices for our clients and curating information.”

“At this point in our firm, we know what dials to turn to bring in savings. The value we bring is in streamlining choices.”

—Brandon Pace

Certainly that's true, but then there's also the immeasurable value of inserting a little extra delight. The husband lost his music studio, but in recompense, the team designed a

custom, maple-clad built-in for his music collection—complete with a cozy listening nook.

Complete involvement in the process and the lives of the clients are what draw Sanders Pace to even price-constrained projects like these. For careful, considerate architects there's tremendous opportunity to make a meaningful impact on people's lives. There's artistic payback, too, in the granularity of decision-making that residential design affords. “It's a little bit selfish, really,” Brandon explains. “With these houses, we have an opportunity to get involved in every aspect of the project from site selection down to the doorknob. It's a great experience for everyone in our 14-person office.”  
—S. Claire Conroy



# Hues You Can Use



1



2



3



4

## 1. TRÈS LEJOLY

With the introduction of D-Neo from Belgian designer Bertrand Lejoly, Duravit has a budget-balancing solution for bathroom specifications. The handsome collection offers 13 finishes, including three wood species. [Us.duravit.com](http://Us.duravit.com)

## 2. ICONIC COLUMNS

Custom residential design is all about choice, and now BlueStar expands those choices with new, culinary cooling options. Refrigerator and freezer columns can be sized to clients' priorities and placed together or separately anywhere in the space. [Bluestarcooking.com](http://Bluestarcooking.com)

## 3. NEW RENDITIONS

Some applications are better suited to a wood substitute to lower maintenance and enhance durability. Royal Building Product's new Cedar Renditions 6-inch soffit product complements its 8-inch siding solution for a seamless segue around the house. [RoyalBuildingProducts.com](http://RoyalBuildingProducts.com)

## 4. GOAL-ORIENTED COLORS

Sherwin-Williams' Living Well collection sorts the company's most popular shades into 11 clusters of hues aimed at enhancing quality of life. Create, Balance, Focus, Inspire, Unplug, Recharge are just a few of the 11 color groupings. [S-w.com/living-well](http://S-w.com/living-well)

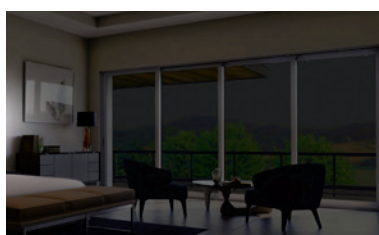
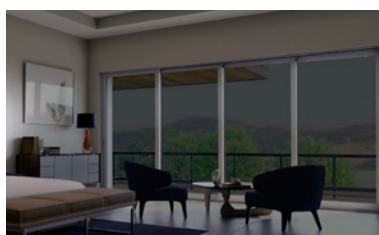
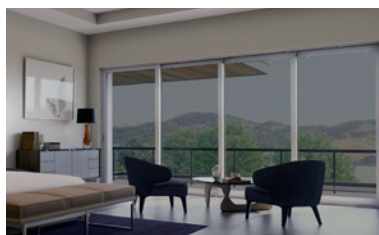




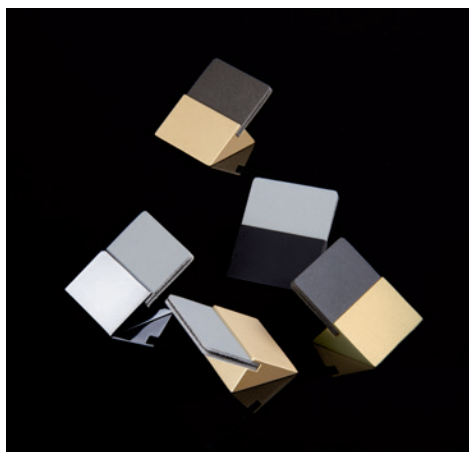
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**5. 1,000 LUMENS OF LIGHT**  
 Recessed fixtures are rarely a thing of beauty. More often than not they contribute to the “Swiss cheese” effect much maligned in lighting design. To combat the problem, USAI Lighting introduces the LittleOnes—tiny, architectural-grade fixtures that can deliver more than 1,000 lumens and be installed and serviced from below the ceiling.  
[Usailighting.com](http://Usailighting.com)



6



7

**6. DARK VICTORY**  
 The promise of switchable glazing has been dangled for a very long time, available to just a few high-end commercial applications. Now Marvin is partnering with Halio, a leader in the technology, to bring this useful smart glass feature to its product lines for the home.  
[Marvin.com](http://Marvin.com)

**7. BEGIN THE VEGAN**  
 Footwear manufacturers have vegan product lines nailed, but building product manufacturers have trailed the trend. Door and cabinet hardware company Schwinn catches up with the new Vegan by Design collection of handles and pulls made largely of linoleum. Profiles include several by Michael Graves.  
[Schwinn-group.com](http://Schwinn-group.com)



8

**8. GESSI WORKS**  
 Gessi calls itself a “private wellness company” focused on bathing creations that soothe and transport. Its Afilo shower heads aim to do just that by combining “chromatherapy” and hydrotherapy. Fixtures come in a number of shades and shapes and can be recessed or exposed.  
[Gessi.com](http://Gessi.com)



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# Mighty Maker

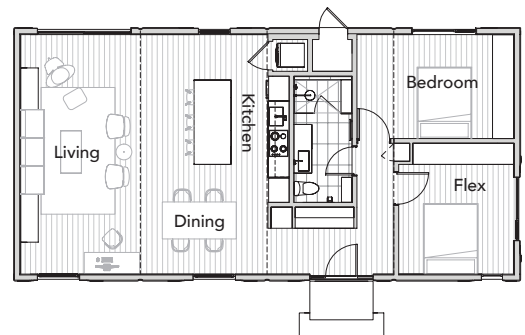
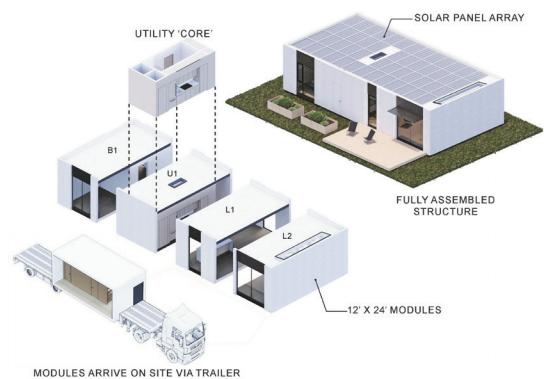
MIGHTY HOUSE  
EYRC WORKS  
LOS ANGELES

**EYRC knows its** way around iconic modern houses—whether it’s renovating them or designing them from scratch. The firm is also expert in dense, multifamily housing. Applying that breadth of knowledge to the realm of cutting-edge building technology was an obvious next step. In the case of Mighty House, the technology is a synthesis of 3D printing and modular developed by a company called Mighty Buildings.

The module schemes range from 864 to 1,440 square feet, answering needs as diverse as an accessory unit to the quintessential 3/2 family house. “One of the fun things has been learning about the tech. The panels are a resin-impregnated, powderized stone—not unlike Corian,” says EYRC’s Mathew Chaney, AIA. “They’re hardened with UV lights, which catalyze and cure it. We celebrate what the process does to the material in the design.”

Once the site is prepped and a foundation laid, Mathew says the modules should take 4 to 6 weeks to build, versus 6 to 12 months for conventional construction. Bathrooms and kitchen are contained in a prefab pod.

With the optional solar panels installed, Mighty House should reach net-zero and satisfy the project goal of a sustainable, more affordable solution for high-design housing. But, as EYRC understands, the structure itself is only half of the equation. “As excited as we are to be developing the product, what makes it an actual home is the site and the placement,” says Mathew, who will consult on the deployments.  
—*S. Claire Conroy*



Project: Mighty House, Los Angeles; architect: EYRC Works, Culver City, California; builder: Mighty Buildings, San Francisco; project size: 864 to 1,440 square feet; renderings: Ehrlich Yanai Rhee Chaney Architects



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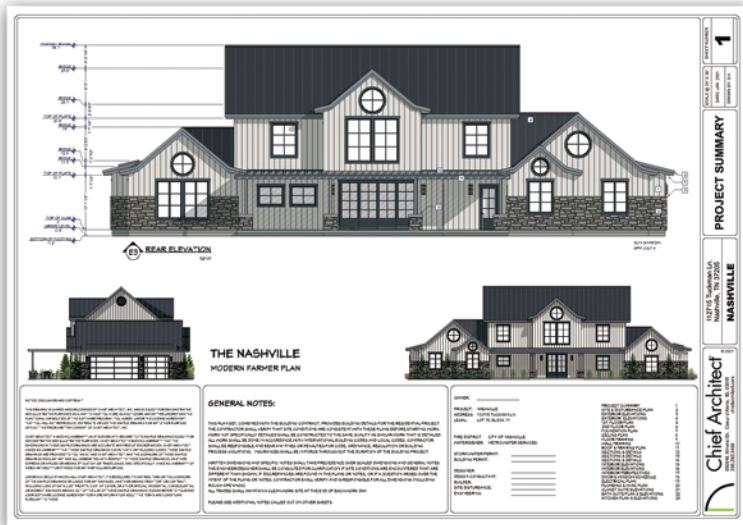
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