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VOL. 1, 2023

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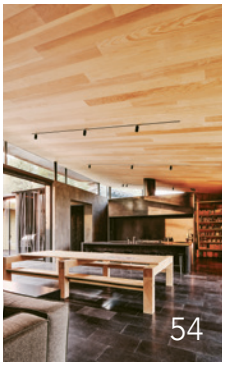
CONTENTS

VOL. 1, 2023

Features

Departments



On the Cover: Suspension House by Fougeron Architecture. *Photo: Joe Fletcher Photography*

Welcome to Volume 1, 2023, of *Residential Design* magazine. We are the only national professional publication devoted to residential architects and custom builders. We're dedicated to providing you with expert insight and substantive information on high-end residential design and construction.

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**.

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**.

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

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223 West Erie, Suite 3SW
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847.920.9513

Publisher
Paul DeGrandis
Paul@SOLAbrands.com

Group Editorial Director
Patrick L. O'Toole
Patrick@SOLAbrands.com

Editor-in-Chief
S. Claire Conroy
Claire@SOLAbrands.com

Art Director
Bill Murphy
Bill@SOLAbrands.com

Creative Director & Production Director
Tracy Hegg
Tracy@SOLAbrands.com

West Sales Manager
Paul DeGrandis
Paul@SOLAbrands.com

Midwest Sales Manager
Zach Stenberg
Zach@SOLAbrands.com

East Sales Manager
Dan Miklosz
DanM@SOLAbrands.com

Southeast Sales Manager
Dan Agostinacchio
Dan@SOLAbrands.com

Product Resource Section/Classifieds
Mike Serino
Mike@SOLAbrands.com

Audience Development
Mike Serino
Mike@SOLAbrands.com

Projects Manager
Heidi Riedl
Heidi@SOLAbrands.com

Digital Programs Manager
Tim Steingraber
Tim@SOLAbrands.com

List Rental
Mike Serino
Mike@SOLAbrands.com

Subscriptions
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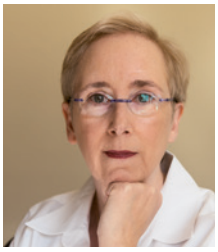


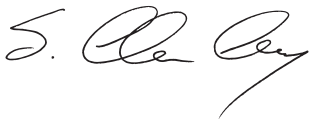
I recently had the honor of serving on the jury of AIA California's design awards program. There's a new format for awards applications originating from AIA National, and California's state component is an early adopter. If it hasn't already arrived at your local, regional, or state AIA component, the Common Application will be appearing soon. It's based on the Framework for Design Excellence the AIA Committee on the Environment uses to judge its COTE Top Ten Awards and bears some similarity to the Living Building Challenge's Petals of building achievement and performance.

The 10 metrics (and all the supporting detail they require) in the application are an admirable attempt to quantify what constitutes "design excellence," which can be an inherently qualitative and subjective determination. Because some of the categories are highly technical, requiring a deep knowledge of various codes and building performance standards, there are now technical pre-screeners who review the applications before the jury sees the entries. The idea is that a building with a very low score in these metrics should not be a strong contender for an award.

But, wait, there's more. There are now multiple types of awards that can be given—ones that acknowledge standout achievements within one or more of the 10 metrics. For instance, a home run in "Design for Discovery," "Design for Economy," "Design for Equitable Communities," etc., can lock in a Special Commendation award. Hit on even more metrics and you might win a Climate Action Award. There are still Honor Awards and Merit Awards, but they are harder now to achieve without a strong showing in the 10 metrics.

For the most part, this new format constitutes progress toward quantifying the value architects bring to design and construction and encouraging more rigorous standards of sustainability. That said, these applications may feel onerous to small residential practitioners already struggling to keep all of the balls in the air for their projects and practices. Honestly, many aspects of the Framework for Design Excellence are best suited to larger-scale projects than single-family custom homes. Yes, we should expect an airport or a state capitol building to meet or exceed all of the AIA's metrics for design excellence, but what about that small, rural vacation home that replaces an obsolete structure on the owners' property? Can that jewel box building never be recognized for its design excellence when evaluated in the same competition as an urban charter school or homeless shelter?

Custom residential projects are always going to lose when measured against more virtuous and impactful building types—even when every effort is made to design and build them more sustainably. And I'm not sure how you solve that problem, except to judge them against each other on their own merits.



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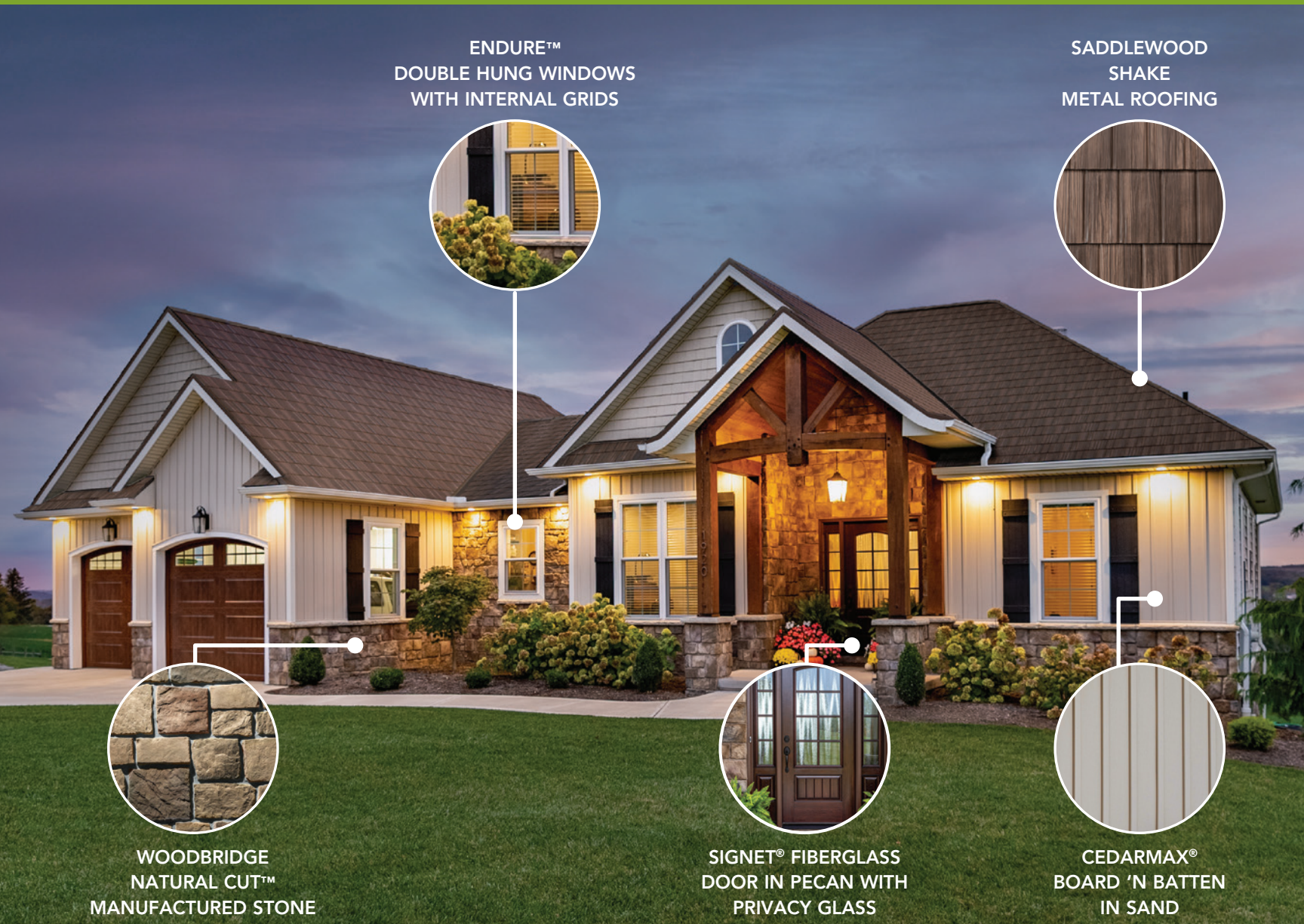

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A Letter from the 2023 AIA CRAN Chair

Stepping in as 2023 chair of the AIA CRAN Knowledge Community, I am filled with gratitude for those who have carried the banner of CRAN during particularly challenging times. Over the past two years, Tom Meiklejohn, AIA, and Blake Held, AIA, have admirably navigated the pandemic, expanded our online offerings for continuing education, and brought our community of residential architects together at our symposium in Chicago for a long-anticipated reunion last fall.

CRAN Advisory Group member Mark Asher, AIA, vividly shared in RD magazine, Volume 5, 2022, his symposium experience from Chicago with descriptions of joyful moments and the meaning of those moments to all of us as residential architects. One of the enlightening moments for me occurred at the CRAN Leader Roundtable, where local leaders from New York, Cincinnati, and Austin shared innovative ideas for bringing together a broader and more diverse collection of voices in our professions. Austin architects Patricia Borowicz, AIA, and Megan Lin, AIA, shared insightful keys to organizing a successful construction site tour program and how these gatherings are happening around their region. Patricia and Megan are newer faces in the CRAN community and highlight the critical value of the diverse network of residential architects across the country who reach out to learn from and share with each other.

CRAN has succeeded as an AIA knowledge community by providing a broad range of continuing learning opportunities, thought leadership, professional development, and advocacy for all residential architects. We must continue to make diversity and equity essential core values in our CRAN community to encourage and ensure that all ranges of voices are heard and respected.

Things to Look Forward to in 2023

I am more than excited to welcome the CRAN community to my hometown of Salt Lake City and the Wasatch Mountain Range of Utah in mid-October 2023 for what we feel will be a transformative AIA CRAN Symposium. Utah has been called the crossroads of the West, and this Intermountain Region has been the fastest-growing region in the U.S. for several decades. The Wasatch is also home to a growing number of young (and older) talented residential architects and, recently, an expanding list of internationally respected architects who are coming here to explore, interpret, and—hopefully—respect the unique environmental quality of the high desert and mountains of the Great Basin.

However, in gathering in Salt Lake City and touring architectural projects in surrounding Park City and Ogden Valley, our goal is that CRAN Symposium ’23 is not just about pristine mountain sites and finely crafted wood frame construction. The West faces the challenges of a staggering deficit of affordable housing at the same moment it contends with one of its most serious climate crises as the region dries up. The Great Salt Lake is shrinking, the Colorado Plateau is parched, and the water of the Colorado River no longer reaches the Pacific Ocean.

We have difficult decisions to make, and residential architects are in a unique position to address these larger questions: What is the future of living? And what does it mean to live together in close proximity, particularly in an arid, sparsely populated region? How can prefabrication, standardization, and sustainability provide solutions to the climatic and environmental dilemma we find ourselves in? These questions guide us as we organize our symposium this year.

The challenges of our time are daunting and yet the opportunities ahead of us as residential architects and citizen architects give me hope, optimism, and anticipation in working together with you all this year.

In gratitude,
Warren Lloyd, AIA

Photo: Courtesy AIA CRAN

Warren Lloyd, AIA

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The Story of the House

NICK DEAVER ARCHITECT
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Photo: Courtesy Nick Deaver Architect

Left: After toiling on their own, Nick Deaver and his daughter Jes are now working together in the firm Nick launched in the late 1990s in Austin. Kathleen Deaver (not pictured), Nick's wife and Jes' mother, helps run the show.

Architect Nick Deaver, AIA, has deep roots in Texas. He grew up there and went to school at Texas Tech, but then he headed east to practice at the storied firm of Moore Grover Harper in Connecticut. Yes, he is one of the many practicing residential architects who absorbed some of the DNA of the hugely influential and peripatetic Charles Moore.

While at Centerbrook, as the firm became known after Charles moved on, Nick worked on everything from houses to "genetics laboratories." Although working at every scale, his mentors' approach of imbuing each building with a sense of its place, its history, and its culture became fundamental to Nick's goals as an architect.

When the projects became larger and more bureaucratic, with all the heartbreak that brings (multiyear endeavors unplugged at the last minute), Nick decided it was time to return to his home state. He moved his family to Austin and became his own first client in his new small residential practice. "I had the problem of having all my experience and contacts in one part of the country and none here," he says.

He and his wife bought a dilapidated 1919 bungalow in a dense urban neighborhood now designated the West Line Historic District, and he slowly renovated and expanded it into a remarkable house, studio, and rental apartment. Meanwhile, he built his new practice from the ground up, working with builders and doing smaller jobs for clients. "People came to me mostly for space, but it was important to me to introduce them to architecture—even just a little bit." Twenty-five years later, clients still come to him looking for space, but they also seek out the sophisticated architecture that elevates every aspect of its experience.

"We built the practice little by little," he recalls, but the firm got a big boost

Photos: Whit Preston

Nick's remodel of a dilapidated 1919 bungalow for his house and office preserved the best period details—and character of the neighborhood—while inserting a modern addition underneath at the rear.

Photos: Casey Dunn

RaveOn, the firm's award-winning resuscitation of a notable Midcentury house by Arthur Fehr and Charles Granger, uses modern material, methods, and ingenuity to realize its full potential.

from Austin's long-running house tour program. "It's one of the oldest in the country. We ended up getting a house on that tour and then later, four or five. Because of that, it's given us publicity and exposure. What it's meant, is that we've stayed busy since that home tour in 2003."

Big Inside, Little Outside

His own house and studio ended up on the tour, and it represents a number of the firm's strengths: a respect and sensitivity to existing community, context, and culture and a special talent for preserving them while injecting a modern sensibility. He applies, to both renovations and new construction, modern materials and methods, adroit choreography of contemporary patterns of life, and a deft handling of spatial relationships within the house and the adjacent outdoor living areas.

It's readily apparent from looking at the progression of the firm's projects that it's perfectly capable of the kind of showcase architecture that grabs attention in the media. But while the work is always architecturally compelling and rigorous, it's unusually modest as well. It doesn't scream "look at me" as much as "look at a job well done."

This is a very deliberate direction Nick and now his daughter Jes Deaver, who joined the practice five years ago, have chosen to take. They don't want their architecture to overwhelm and recharacterize the neighborhoods they occupy. This set of priorities is especially important as Austin's population has grown, putting tremendous pressure on existing housing and fueling quick and often careless new construction. Builders and developers are incentivized to scrape off older houses and replace them with high-end houses that max out the buildable envelope and the potential sales price. It's a ruinous trajectory for small-scale, older neighborhoods.

And the problem is not confined to new builds, Nick points out: "It's

Photo: Casey Dunn

Shibui was little more than a fishing shack when the firm took on the clients' tight budget and lofty goal of a modern house immersed in its natural setting by the Blanco River in Wimberley, Texas.

> "People came to me mostly for space, but it was important to me to introduce them to architecture—even just a little bit."
>
> — Nick Deaver, AIA

becoming fashionable to put a modern addition on a historic house here, but it often results in a severe juxtaposition. Our thought is, even though we like the departure, we think we owe our clients the larger context. Even the modern addition needs to belong to the original structure. Even if it's dramatic, it needs to belong to that house alone."

Nick took the challenge to heart with his own house. He kept the bungalow character intact as viewed from the street and inserted a modern studio space and rental apartment underneath at the rear. A new covered porch in back also keeps the basic bungalow gable but articulates it in an abstract screen of "wind-driven vertical aluminum louvers." Throughout, new interior spaces are bright and airy and clean, with a mix of careful, traditional detailing and fresh modern touches.

Every choice he made was about right-sizing the new and existing spaces, and avoiding unnecessary extra rooms—or volume for the sake of volume. "We're trying to show how we can fit within this existing context with proportion and scale. We wanted to show a modern house can belong in a historic neighborhood," he says.

His house was not in a national historic district when he began work on it, but ultimately it was made so. So far, Austin's historic districts have been tolerant of progress, he says, as long as it's implemented with respect to the existing fabric.

"Not every client that comes along is completely aligned with our sensitivities," he observes. "Sometimes it's difficult for someone to give up tall ceilings and extra rooms. But we have techniques to give them vaulted spaces, while keeping the eaves in proportion with the scale of the neighborhood—to create a big inside and a little outside. We want to protect both the clients' interest and the neighborhood's interest."

Photo: Jonathan Jackson

Photo: Roger Williams

Designed for a novice builder and friend, Walkabout takes its cues from an old shed on the Cedar Park, Texas, property. The house and studio make economical use of materials while providing opportunities for outdoor enjoyment throughout every part of the day.

Photo: Casey Dunn

Quite a bit of the firm's magic is invisible to the eye. For LeanToo, an award-winning remodel and addition, they negotiated an easement swap so they could guide surface water under new floating terraces.

Story Time

Nick's daughter, Jes Deaver, AIA, has brought her own sensibilities to the firm, honed by her work with a West Coast architecture firm but even more so by her background as a filmmaker and writer. Her perspective has sharpened the firm's dedication to the process of custom design and construction, as experienced by the clients. Nicks calls it "an architectural discovery mission."

And often that means including neighborhood stakeholders, too, so their voices and concerns are heard. This helps diffuse the adversarial relationship that can develop when change happens around the neighbors, Nick says. Adds Jes, "One thing that's nice about that, is it allows the neighborhood to have a meaningful connection to that house. It's a lasting relationship."

"When we do that with the neighbors, the zoning people, and historic commission, the only problems we are left to tackle are what to do with the land," Nick concludes.

With clients, Nick and Jes aim for a good balance of letting them in on some of the challenges of design decision making, but not so much they lose confidence. "They are part of our architectural team—we don't want design to be a mystery. We want to go on a journey with them," says Nick. "They will watch us struggle, but not so much that they get discouraged or worried."

During that process, Nick and Jes try to tease out memories from their clients that they can use to make their home more personal and resonant. A case in point: "We were designing an addition to a client's grandfather's house," Nick recalls. "She recounted a tree she used to love that was no longer there. So we designed in a detail that evoked a tree. And now every time she walks through the house with someone, she always tells that story. It became a part of the story of the house."

> "We want to protect both the clients' interest and the neighborhood's interest."
>
> — Nick Deaver, AIA

"By connecting clients to the story we're telling through the design, it gives them a story to tell and a language to describe how they love their house that they can share with others," says Jes. "It adds to the excitement they have when others experience the spaces, too."

—S. Claire Conroy

Illustration: Jes Deaver

Nick and Jes' design for an addition to a cottage in the Travis Heights' historic district lowers its roofline below the existing house's and cantilevers the new living area over protected live oak trees.

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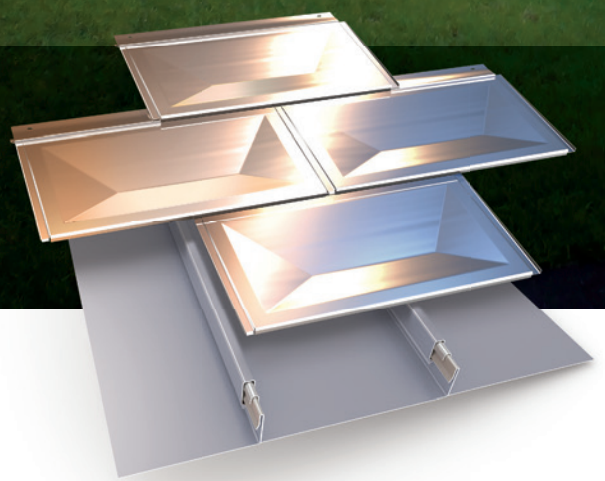

"I'm always looking to do something different. When I saw the cupped metal tiles, I said, 'Wow, I want to use this on my residence!'"

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VINEYARD ROAD RESIDENCE
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NICK NOYES ARCHITECTURE

Everyone wins when locally harmonious building materials dovetail with the demands of a modest budget. Napa is largely rural, after all, which suggests a history of humble buildings that provide shelter in the most practical way. The area's older agricultural buildings had uniform shapes that were economical to build and were made of off-the-shelf materials such as wood and metal. When new houses are constructed, these precedents provide grist for the design mill. Yet while all good architecture elevates the ordinary, it takes a skilled guide to bind the basics into something entirely beyond. These clients turned to Nick Noyes, FAIA, whose San Francisco firm is known for environmentally sensitive designs that work wonders with tight budgets.

You could call the Vineyard Road Residence a starter house, at least in the architectural realm. The young couple had owned the land for years and were living in a small apartment in Sausalito. When they were ready to start a family, they decided to build on this 3-acre property that adjoins a small family vineyard on the west and a larger vineyard on the north. "They wanted something straightforward and simple but with a charm

When the budget is lean, Nick likes to leave the ceiling exposed to add detail to the interiors. "You have to pay for it anyway," he says.

befitting the Napa Valley—something modernized and customized for them," Nick says. It almost goes without saying that the must-haves focused on fire resistance and environmental and maintenance ease.

One approach to a low-cost floor plan is to create an open main living area with cellular bedrooms around it. Nick drew that concept as linear living and sleeping wings that bend where they connect, following the parallelogram property lines. This canted footprint enabled a central garden courtyard that guides visitors to the front door— they enter between the bedroom wing and a detached garage and guest house for family who visit from Europe. The arrangement creates a village feel that establishes a sense of place on the relatively featureless lot. It also addresses the lot's unique location, at the cusp of the rural and suburban. Turning its back

on a housing development that lies roughly east across the street, the house has a direct relationship to vineyards on the north and west, and to a tree-lined creek that crosses the property on the north side.

High/Low

Inside and out, the materials balance a minimally rendered design with more animated moves. The driveway passes between two tall cedar fences (a nod to the property's redwoods and oaks), where the bedroom wing and the garage/guest house partially screen the living wing from the road. Clad in lapped white fiber-cement siding and corrugated galvalume roofs, the volumes are reduced to simple gabled forms befitting the agrarian surroundings.

Only the entry façade is wrapped in dark-stained redwood. "The east side of the main house is a saddlebag zone that on the outside is clad in beautiful redwood that we stained," Nick says. "As you approach the house, at the entry you're given a richer material experience." Inside, this zone is wrapped in a wall of alder wood casework that contains the living spaces' programmatic functions: a pantry, display shelving, cabinetry that hides a TV, and a board-formed-concrete fireplace. "Essentially, that zone gives you the opportunity to have an area of detail and craft," Nick says. Alder panels also wrap the sides of the kitchen island, topped with engineered quartz, while standard-issue subway backsplash tiles and flush-panel painted white cabinetry fit out the cooking space.

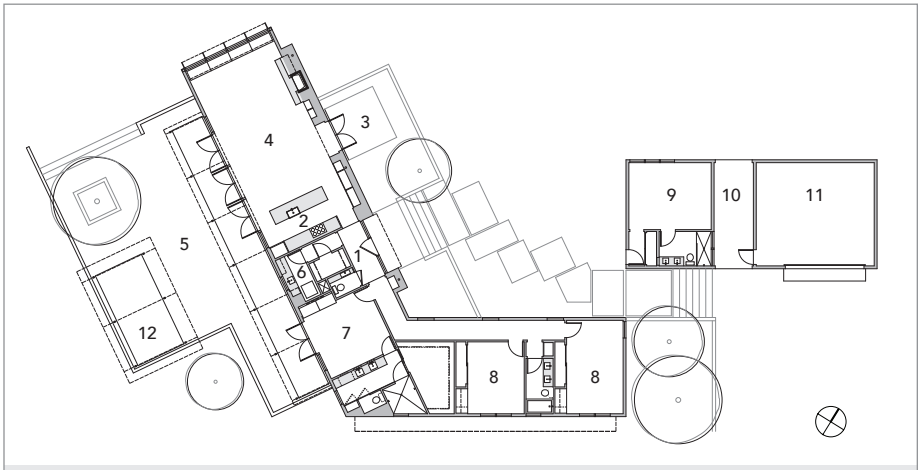
Other surfaces in the living area were tagged for special treatment, too. "In simple buildings we like to expose the ceiling structure, because you have to pay for it anyway," Nick says. "We do these beautiful steel tie rods for a sense of detail and scale in the ceiling, and painted wood above that. If you can expose and detail structure in an interesting way, you will get some bang for your buck."

"We're always trying to figure out how we can reduce costs in one area and spend some extra money in another," Nick adds. Another calculated splurge was the steel-and-glass curtain wall on the living room's gabled north elevation. "It's a window system from England, which was less expensive than having it made here because they've been making steel windows for 400 years," Nick says. Attached to the out-

Alder casework, a built-in bench, and budget-friendly wallpaper and subway tiles trim out important interior spaces.

side are steel fins, painted red, that act as vertical sunshades while supplying a dramatic flourish both inside and out.

Passive solar strategies were even more important on the long western elevation—the result of positioning the house for views and complying with the watershed setback. To mitigate the harsh late-afternoon sun, the design team attached a steel-and-wood trellis along the length of the house outside the living areas and primary bedroom. It is elegantly, yet thriftily, fitted with a white curtain that can be drawn across to reduce the sun's glare and keep the house from heating up in the summer. In winter, the lower winter sun warms the interior.



FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry | 2. Kitchen | 3. Front Terrace | 4. Living/Dining | 5. Rear Terrace | 6. Laundry | 7. Main Suite | 8. Bedroom | 9. Guest House | 10. Breezeway | 11. Garage | 12. Trellis

In the primary bedroom, a built-in, leather-covered bench offers a polished place to retreat and look out on the vineyard. This room and its en-suite bath form the knuckle where the main living wing bends toward the bedrooms. "Something had to live in the turn," Nick says. "It's the primary bathroom shower and closet that navigate the change in direction there." They are hidden behind a paneled wall opposite two sinks and a vanity area. The rest of the bath is finished simply with readily available penny and subway tiles. A powder room near the entry contains an off-the-shelf round mirror and is covered in floral wallpaper—"a fun way of really elevating a room like that without spending a ton of money," Nick says. Throughout, engineered oak floors tie the rooms together.

Moving out past the curtained trellis, a low, board-formed concrete wall defines a gravel courtyard that runs along the house. A counterpart to the indoor dining area, a freestanding wood-and-steel trellis shelters an outdoor table. It looks directly into a gentle slope planted with native cactus, and the family vineyard beyond.

Designed with a close reading of budget, land, and climate, the house is a happy fusion of the standard and distinctive. As such, it succeeds in delivering magic within its means.

—Cheryl Weber

Vineyard Road Residence

Napa, California

ARCHITECT: Nick Noyes, FAIA, principal in charge; Michael Perkins, project architect, Nick Noyes Architecture, San Francisco

BUILDER: Tim Agapoff Construction, Calistoga, California

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Duncan Engineering, Mendocino, California

PROJECT SIZE: 3,400 square feet

SITE SIZE: 2.9 acres

PHOTOGRAPHY: Cesar Rubio Photography

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WASHER/DRYER: LG

WATER HEATER: Bradford White, A.O. Smith

WINDOWS: Milgard, Kolbe, Crittal Steel Windows

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Thermador


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Defying Gravity

A mediocre dwelling is masterfully reimagined in response to the strict regulations on its extreme site.

BY CHERYL WEBER

SUSPENSION HOUSE
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
FOUGERON ARCHITECTURE

It takes an ambitious architect and a steady client to rebuild a house that spans an active creek. The property Anne Fougeron's clients purchased in California was every bit as daunting as it looked, yet you couldn't blame the previous owner, who was also the builder, for laying claim to this prized parcel. The house bridges two landscapes: Its sunny front faces the region's quintessential yellow hills and live oaks, while the jungle-like backyard contains a natural waterfall that can roar in the rainy season.

The new owners, too, fell prey to the site's power, but they found the house too prosaic, and potentially unsafe. Built in 1968, it had small windows, stained glass accents, and a roof that pitched down toward the waterfall. More troublesome, it rested on concrete columns embedded in the creek bottom, prompting concerns that the gigantic logs that sometimes course through could take out the columns. "The contractor who built it got one permit," says Anne, FAIA. "In those days they let you do anything."

The couple, who work in the tech industry, were up for the challenge, as was their architect. Several of her houses perch rather precariously on Northern California's spectacular sites, but this was the first to span a body of water, which is no longer legal for new construction. What the clients were es-

The steel superstructure is bolted into the creek banks, entirely suspended on steel caissons and 3¼-inch rods drilled horizontally into the stone.

sentially asking for was a new house, but demolition of the old one was prohibited. Moreover, any additions had to be within 100 feet of the creek, which disqualified most moves.

"If we saved 50 percent of the building they'd let us keep it the way it was, and it couldn't be more than 50 percent bigger in volume," Anne says. "It became a game of, what can we save, while making it better and also safer structurally." The redesign had to follow the exact outline of the old house and decks, but the rules could be bent, if not broken. The new third-floor cantilever was permitted because an existing lower deck had come out that far.

Reconfiguring the design was like solving a Rubik's Cube. "We had this 3D volume we could work within, and we ended up doing things you might not do," Anne says. "The limitations of houses are sometimes their brilliance. We didn't feel horribly constrained but were just really paying attention." In the end, only a few walls of the old house remained—mostly in the lower-level office, although with the insertion of large windows they are altered beyond recognition.

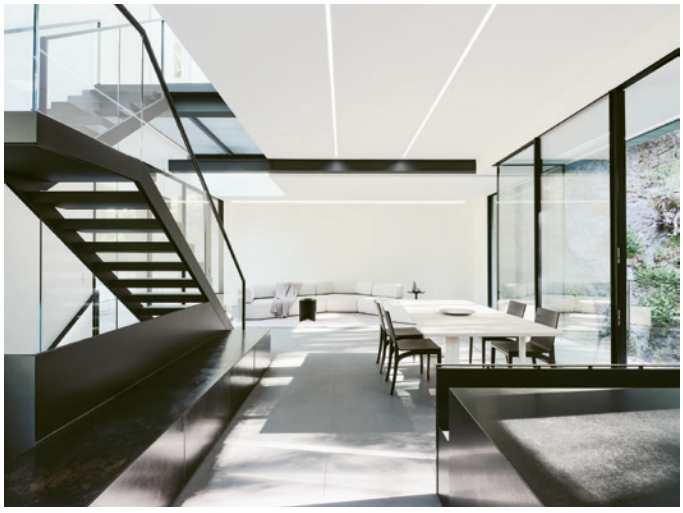
Full Transparency

The new home drinks in its unusual setting. On arrival you encounter a three-story structure that appears almost see-through. Its glass walls and light-colored zinc cladding are held in exposed steel framing, as if it were alighting on the creek. A stainless-steel-grate bridge leading from the creek bank to the front door lets you see down to the water and keeps the material load light—a priority throughout the project. "The house has a certain weight and couldn't go over that or it could fail, so we were always trying to lighten it up," Anne says. "But we loved the idea that you could see down to nature, to remember where you are because it's so exceptional."

The lowest level, which can also be reached from stairs on the entry porch, comprises an office/guest room, along with utilities and floating decks on the front and back. Although its ceiling is only about 8 feet high because of the huge beams required to hold up the house, it enjoys a close view of the waterfall and a rear deck that hovers over the creek.

> "We loved the idea that you could see down to nature, to remember where you are because it's so exceptional."
>
> —Anne Fougeron, FAIA

Keeping the house as lightweight as possible was imperative. Steel grating, stone veneers instead of slabs, and other careful specs help keep the house aloft.

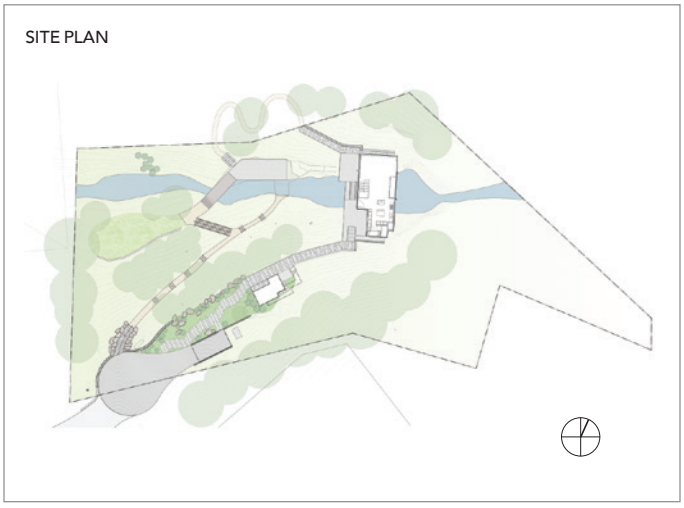


The great room on the second floor engages two entirely different views of the site. A large terrace soaks up the sunny side facing the yellow hills and live oaks, while a Juliet balcony takes in the jungle-like waterfall side.

In fact, the waterfall became the design's reference point. "We thought it was important to have a place where you could see the waterfall, so the whole back façade is almost all glass," Anne explains. The larger, second-level entry floor contains the living spaces—kitchen, dining, living—including a cantilevered terrace off the living room in front and a rear Juliet balcony off the dining zone. "In the area behind the kitchen we had to keep some walls without windows as a place for storage and a half bath," she adds. "Having solidity in that area allowed the open living room to face both ways."

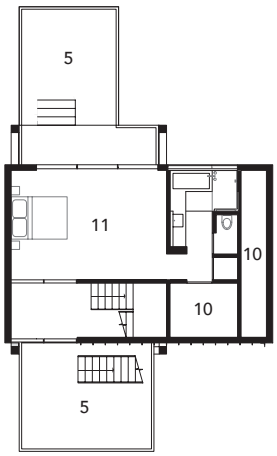
Solidity is just a suggestion on the all-new third floor, where two bedrooms are housed in a glass box rotated 90 degrees for views and to reduce the house's mass. This top piece was allowed to project as far as the lower decks on the front. Its roof pitches up at one corner to capture more light, resulting in ceilings that rise from 9 feet to 14 feet, while keeping the roof height within the required 35 feet of the lowest deck.

Imbued with the site's drama, the diaphanous primary suite opens onto a rear roof terrace, where that view takes over again. A large skylight in the terrace floor invites light into the kitchen below. "The deck is their place to sit out or do yoga and see the waterfall," Anne says. "You don't get as much light on this side of the house because of the tall canyon walls, so the skylight fits right over the island." The daughter's

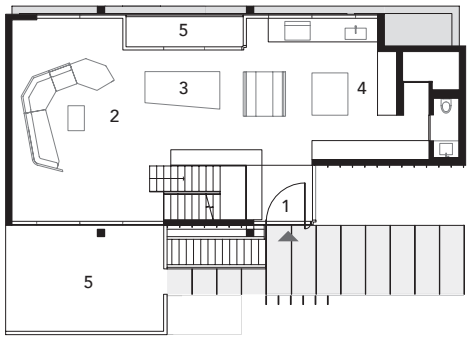


The clients' preferred palette of black and white puts the focus on the lush scenery outdoors. Skylights and open stairs brighten interiors; stone veneer floor tiles affixed to aluminum sheets help keep the weight in check.

FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entrance | 2. Living Room | 3. Dining | 4. Kitchen | 5. Deck | 6. Bedroom | 7. Main Suite | 8. Roof Deck | 9. Flex Space | 10. Utilities | 11. Guest Suite

bedroom and a playroom sit across a hallway, whose stainless-steel-grate floor sifts additional light and views into the main living level.

Heavy Lifting

These airy, spacious volumes have a gravity-defying footing. To allow for the expansion of the third floor and to remove the previous structural columns in the creek bed, a steel structure was inserted underneath the existing floors. This superstructure is bolted into the creek banks, entirely suspended on steel caissons and 3¼-inch rods drilled horizontally into the stone. They too are part of the aesthetic design. "The rods and clips, which also bear seismic loads, are beautiful on their own but very much what they are," Anne says. "We asked if the clients wanted us to hide the big moment frames on all the floors, but it would have made the house look twice as big and there were places where it still wouldn't work, so we said let's expose it all."

One reason to hide it, she adds, would have been to mitigate thermal transfer from the colder exterior steel. Their waterproofing consultant came up with the solution: A layer of thick thermal paint on the interior steel and four or five feet of the exterior steel prevents cold transfer and condensation issues. The zinc cladding, however, has hidden clips, resulting in a simple seam where the panels come together—a job that took

Occupying a large swath of the top floor, the main suite opens to an expansive terrace, with a skylight that ushers light into the kitchen.

the sheet metal subcontractor seven months to complete. Zinc also wraps the deck ceilings and around the roof.

Indeed, the subs' work and that of builder Dermot Barry made all this look effortless, although the reality was quite the opposite. How does a suspended construction site work, anyway? Like bridge building, it turned out. The crew built a 50-foot-by-3½-foot walkway on which to carry all the materials. "We set a lot of the structure manually with old-fashioned chain blocks, but we were able to purchase a small spider crane to drive down there and lift some of the steel into place," Dermot says. "The bolting to the bank was done manually with a drilling rig, temporarily supported off the existing rock face."

Because large trucks couldn't get down to the construction site, concrete for the suspension system, walkways, and driveway was pumped from the neighbor's driveway 200 feet away. In addition, the crew built a temporary substructure between the office level and the creek to keep things from falling into the water during construction, and to finish the underside of the house.

Light Touch

As well as a bravura engineering response, Suspension House is fine-tuned like a Swiss clock. "The clients are very educated and were very controlling of everything that went into the house, studying every detail, down to the joints in the cabinetry on a SketchUp model," Anne says. They were so hands-on, in fact, that one of them built a virtual-reality device to help them better understand the design, using files from SketchUp. It ended up benefiting both parties. "We asked for the specs

Suspension House

Northern California

ARCHITECT: Anne Fougeron, FAIA, Fougeron Architecture, San Francisco

BUILDER: Dermot Barry, Barry Builders, San Francisco

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Johnson Bullard and Bernard Trainor, Ground Studio, Monterey, California

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Paul Endres, Endrestudio, Emeryville, California

CIVIL ENGINEER: Steven Brown, Adobe Associates, Santa Rosa, California

GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER: Linda Liang, Rockridge Geotechnical, Oakland, California

BIOLOGIST: WRA Environmental Consultants, San Rafael, California

PROJECT SIZE: 2,505 square feet

SITE SIZE: 1.08 acre

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Joe Fletcher Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

CABINETRY: Poliform, with Fougeron Architecture and Myers Cabinetry

CLADDING: RHEINZINK

COOKING VENTILATION: Miele

COOKTOP: Gaggenau

COUNTERTOPS: Da Vinci

DISHWASHER: Miele

ENTRY DOORS: Sky-Frame

FAUCETS: Agape

FLOORING: Folio Stone

GLAZING: Supreme Glass

HOME CONTROL SYSTEMS: Lutron

HOME THEATER COMPONENTS: Sonance

HVAC SYSTEMS: Mitsubishi

INSULATION: Denim Insulation

LIGHTING: Aion LED, Sugo

PASSAGE DOORS: Rimadesio

PAINTS/STAINS: Benjamin Moore

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Gaggenau

ROOFING: RHEINZINK

SHOWER ENCLOSURE: Duravit

SINKS: Agape, Blu Bathworks

THERMAL AND MOISTURE BARRIERS: Gaco

TOILETS: TOTO

TUBS: MTI

SHEATHING: DensGlass

SPECIALTY APPLIANCES: Gaggenau

WALKABLE SKYLIGHT: Glass Flooring System Inc.

WASHER/DRYER: Miele

WINDOW SHADING SYSTEMS: Hunter Douglas

WINDOW WALL SYSTEMS: Sky-Frame

and built a box like that ourselves," Anne says. "We use that program all the time."

The clients' Asian sensibilities drove many of the interior decisions. They wanted everything as neutral and environmentally friendly as possible, with no off-gassing finish materials. In the foyer is a long, low cabinet reminiscent of a genkan, the Japanese word for the transition zone between indoors and out where people leave their shoes. The seat-height cabinet allows them to sit down, take off their shoes, and slide them inside. Throughout, minimal, monochromatic finishes and thin, field-glazed steel windows keep the focus outside the house. "For them, the outside was the bling," Anne says. The kitchen's Poliform system was mimicked on other black or white casework, countertops are soapstone, and the Italian bathroom vanity sinks are abstracted with hidden fixtures—water is released by flipping down a black panel.

> "We don't usually do black-and-white houses, but it's OK because of the lookout—the landscape provides the color."
>
> —Anne Fougeron, FAIA

Another sleek touch, the main level's open staircase is steel with glass railings and limestone treads—the latter material repeated on the floors and outdoor decks. Because normal limestone slabs would have added too much weight to the house, the Italian-made indoor stone is thinner and laminated onto aluminum sheets. "They didn't want any exposed wood," Anne says. "We don't usually do black-and-white houses, but it's OK because of the lookout—the landscape provides the color." Fine-mesh panels that come down from the ceiling of the living room terrace can turn it into a screened porch. "It gets buggy at night," Anne says. "We are always interested in finding ways to modernize a traditional idea, like a screened porch."

Looking beyond the house, thoughtful redevelopment of the entire property tied together the natural and manmade elements of this lush place. In a nod to the remnant stone from the old house and existing landscape walls, masons used local stone, cut and pieced with very little mortar, to extend walls and define outdoor spaces. And the riparian zone was restored. "The landscaping was a big deal," Anne says. "A lot of what was there before wasn't very natural. Landscape designer Bernard Trainor put the landscape back to what should be there, replanting everything, except trees, with natives."

Near the house, a new guest cottage replaced an existing one. In addition to housing an upstairs art studio, it provides a place for utilities, including a purifying system for the well water, solar panels, and a bank of batteries so the house can be off the grid.

Rather than bearing down on the creek, the new dwelling is in harmony with it. And opening the house with floor-to-ceiling windows, outdoor terraces, and floating staircases allowed the owners to enjoy the water features from all angles. "We love designs where the relationship of building to site is one that can never be forgotten, so for us the ultimate great building is doing something that doesn't belong anywhere else," Anne says. "That's essential and what interests us. The interaction with the client and site kept us very motivated, but it was also exhausting because thousands of conditions had to be thought about and articulated. Finally, when it was done, it was what we both wanted it to be." RD

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The best rural houses refresh our senses and reconnect us to our place in the natural order.

BY CHERYL WEBER AND S. CLAIRE CONROY

East Dover Residence

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
MACKAY-LYONS SWEETAPPLE ARCHITECTS

"Our firm makes fabric, cultural fabric," says Brian MacKay-Lyons, FRIBA, Hon. FAIA. "All culture comes from the poor, and all the best ideas are created by cultures over time. We're just participating in making a larger landscape or streetscape." His firm's new house, on a peninsula near Halifax, does seem to absorb the qualities of the small fishing community it overlooks. Situated above a harbor dotted with "funky small boats," it is adjacent to a village Brian calls "the fishing version of the family farm," where inshore water workers ply their trade close to home.

His clients bought this piece of land 16 years ago and hired MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple to design a family house. But the project was put on hold after

Conceived as two pavilions—one for sleeping and one for living and entertaining—East Dover Residence hovers above its rocky site, capturing long-distance views for key rooms.

Instead of a wall and roof, the exteriors have what Brian jokingly calls a "woof," a continuous application of the same material. Minimizing material changes and eliminating overhangs strengthen the building against the often harsh climate.

the couple decided the cost was out of their reach. When they came back 13 years later, their ideas had evolved, and so had Brian's. While the original design was a single building scribed to the land, the new scheme hovers over it and is split into two Monopoly-like pavilions that slide past each other, connected by an entry piece. The forward-most volume on the left houses three bedrooms and a study, while the receding volume on the right contains the open living, dining, and kitchen areas, plus a powder room and laundry.

Influenced by Glenn Murcutt's Marie Short House, the firm has designed several houses organized, like this one, into living and sleeping pavilions. For Brian, it's a way to make a building less intrusive in the landscape, as well as to create micro-

Representing the firm's "Usonian" side, East Dover employs many of the same spacemaking techniques it uses on big-budget houses, but with a more economical deployment of square footage and finishes.

climates and sheltered spaces in what can be a harsh climate. His larger Smith House, designed in 2019, is an example of this on a more luxurious scale. "We go back and forth between very rural projects like the East Dover Residence and spiffier projects like the Smith House," Brian says, drawing a parallel to the relationship between Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House and his Usonian Jacobs House. "It's the same parti at two scales and with two kinds of budgets. I prefer the Usonians. Those of us who grew up on bread and water think it's character-building, so when we get a chance to design a more expensive house, you kind of know about restraint as an aesthetic idea about economy."

Frugal Chic

That ethic of economy drove the house's large and small moves. Tall,

The house has no decks or screened porches, but sliding doors with screens open the great room entirely to the fresh sea air.

taut, and bronzed, its rectangular forms are topped with common gang-nailed roof trusses, and the entire envelope is wrapped in Cor-Ten steel to make it as seamless as possible. "So in a way you have a 'woof' instead of a roof and a wall," Brian says. This one-material solution makes sense in a climate with frequent freeze/thaw cycles, where buildings tend to leak when two different materials pull apart. Eliminating overhangs also prevents ice dams; venting occurs at the roof ridge and the bottom of the walls, rather than the eaves.

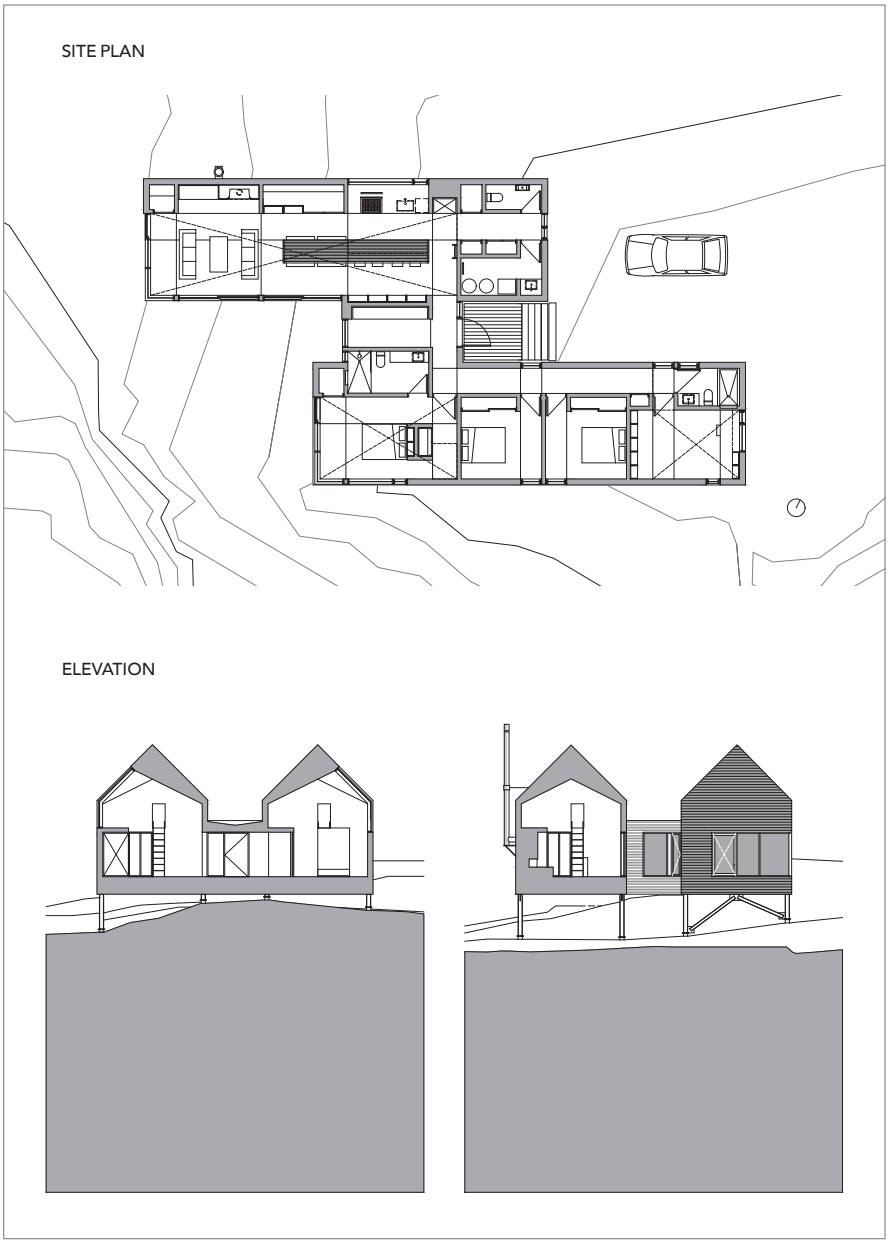
Organized around views, the sun, and elements of surprise, these spare-looking enclosures are far more than the sum of their parts. The project exemplifies what Brian calls "the good generic," strategies that make custom architecture more accessible to ordinary people. For example, the view from the cross-axis entry hall reveals two cuts through the rooflines. Looking right toward the great room, you see a

An asymmetrical array of windows opens sculptural slots of view while resisting wind shear.

skylight that folds down past the eave, and to the left is a mirror image in the bedroom wing. "Because of the truss roof structure, the interior ceiling and outside have different angles," Brian explains. "When you cut through it, you get a sculptural slot through the building. It's a thematic detail that ties the two pieces together in terms of light and orientation—creating an effect out of nothing."

Another special effect made "out of nothing" is the asymmetrical window placement. From outside, the kitchen window is offset from the skylight, and on the front façade a small loft window "pinwheels" with the study window below. "It's a dynamic composition I learned from looking at fishing shacks—it's how they handle wind shear," Brian says. "If you tie the windows together in these pinwheeling relationships, it creates white space, or rifts, and makes a minimalist and a kinetic effect. Everything seems to be moving; one window slides past another one; it's essential to our work."

In what may be seen as a typically Canadian show of good citizenship—but in Brian's hands has become an architectural language—both pavilions present their blank side or "dumb end" to the public. In the living pavilion, a laundry and mechanical room face the driveway, and in the bedroom pavilion it's a sequestered study with a ladder to a loft in the gabled roof. "In Nova Scotia we don't put our gonads on the front lawn," Brian says. "We believe in the importance of impersonality in the public domain." That said, he adds, "While you might want a blank public side, you need to have an idea who's driving up the road. I learned that designing a house for a woman who'd been abused as a child. At the study you can see who's coming, and in the kitchen, a little window faces in the public direction. Both of these buildings have an eye in the back of their head."



Instead of resting on concrete cubes, the house anchors through steel plates directly into bedrock.

That lack of architectural "clutter" is evident on the interior, too. Brian says his firm has "never obsessed about craft," but that doesn't mean it's missing. Borrowing an idea from Charles Moore, he says that elements such as bookcases, hearths, kitchen islands, and stairs can be "totems" that give a space focus by attracting finer materials and craft. Here, that is embodied in the thick north wall of the great room, where a bank of birch plywood kitchen cabinets continues into the living room, defining display cubbies and the fireplace wall. No-fuss concrete floors further unify the spaces.

East Dover Residence

MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple
Halifax, Nova Scotia

ARCHITECT: Brian MacKay-Lyons, principal in charge; Alastair Bird and Diana Carl, project architects, MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects, Halifax, Nova Scotia

BUILDER: Gordon MacLean, Halifax, Nova Scotia

PROJECT SIZE: 2,000 square feet

SITE SIZE: 5.5 acres

PHOTOGRAPHY: James Brittain

KEY PRODUCTS

CABINETRY: Baltic birch plywood, painted MDF, solid laminated birch

CLADDING: Corrugated weathering steel

COOKING VENTILATION: Bosch

COOKTOP: Bosch

COUNTERTOPS: Caesarstone

DISHWASHER: Bosch

ENTRY DOORS, HARDWARE, LOCKSETS: Tiltco Architectural

FIREPLACE: Stûv

LIGHTING: RAB, Sonneman

OVENS: Bosch

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Bosch

ROOFING: Corrugated weathering steel

SPECIALTY APPLIANCES: Bosch built-in coffee maker

WASHER/DRYER: Bosch

WINDOW WALL SYSTEMS: Tiltco Architectural

WINDOWS: Tiltco Architectural

Democratic Design

One element notably absent from the diagram is a deck extending any of these elevated rooms into the outdoors. Instead of attaching this "view killer" to the house, "you're on the deck when you're in the house," Brian says. The great room has a sliding door with a screen, and screened casement windows in the bedroom wing extend the sense of levitation.

Indeed, he considers the space between the bedrock and the belly of the building as the deck, and it's his favorite place to sit. Perched on stilts, the house sits lightly on the land, thanks in part to the workaround that builder Gordon MacLean created from the engineer's drawings. Rather than landing the galvanized steel posts on clunky concrete cubes, he devised a template for core-drilling on a plate bolted to the bedrock. "I had taken a picture of a boat in the local harbor that someone used as a cottage by drilling a hole directly into the bedrock," Gordon says. "It was pretty cute, and I thought, we have to come up with a way to make it cleaner, rather than having these concrete cubes. We had a steel plate fabricated that we could level over each hole and accurately locate the holes with the core-drilling machine. The house has been through a couple of hurricanes and is pretty solid; it doesn't shake, rattle, or roll." It doesn't shut down when the power goes out, either. A field of solar panels keeps the house humming and sends excess energy to the electrical grid.

Floating above the bedrock, this modest house bows politely to the village vernacular, while making space for lichens and red conifers to grow under and around the building. "We are hopelessly democratic about our architecture," Brian says. "Wherever I travel in the world I look for the ordinary, the everyday. In Australia it's corrugated buildings, in Nova Scotia it's fish shacks. It's a form of resistance—resisting the effects of globalization. By being conservative, we're being radical."—*Cheryl Weber*

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Roxbury House

ROXBURY, CONNECTICUT
DESAI CHIA ARCHITECTURE

When art and architecture come together, wonderful things can happen. For this home in Roxbury, Connecticut, the idea was to build a weekend getaway and an incubator for artistic inspiration. Desai Chia's clients own an apartment and a gallery in New York City devoted to Latinx art, but they wanted a more expansive place to regroup, reflect, and restore their creative juices.

They found their canvas in a 12-acre property, marked by woods, meadows, a ruin or two, an obsolete older house, and several manmade retention ponds.

The entry courtyard negotiates a level change on the lot and sets the scene for the art-focused experience to come. Interiors are a play of lights and darks, with the fireplace a central focus.

From its entrance to the north, the site tumbles down a south-facing hill—and so does all the water on the property. As it turns out, directing and conveying runoff also tapped the creative resources of the design team.

"Different jurisdictions have different requirements about retention ponds," says Kathy Chia. "This one is very restrictive about even manmade ones. We think they were used for grazing on the property at one point. So we restored those ponds as part of the natural restoration of the entire meadow area. And we used rain gardens elsewhere, along with other drainage strategies, because it's a steep hill and a lot of water comes off of it."

The firm doesn't just exploit the sites it works on, it seeks to replenish and improve upon them—an even higher order goal than simple preservation. For that same reason, the architects kept the new house in the same location as the

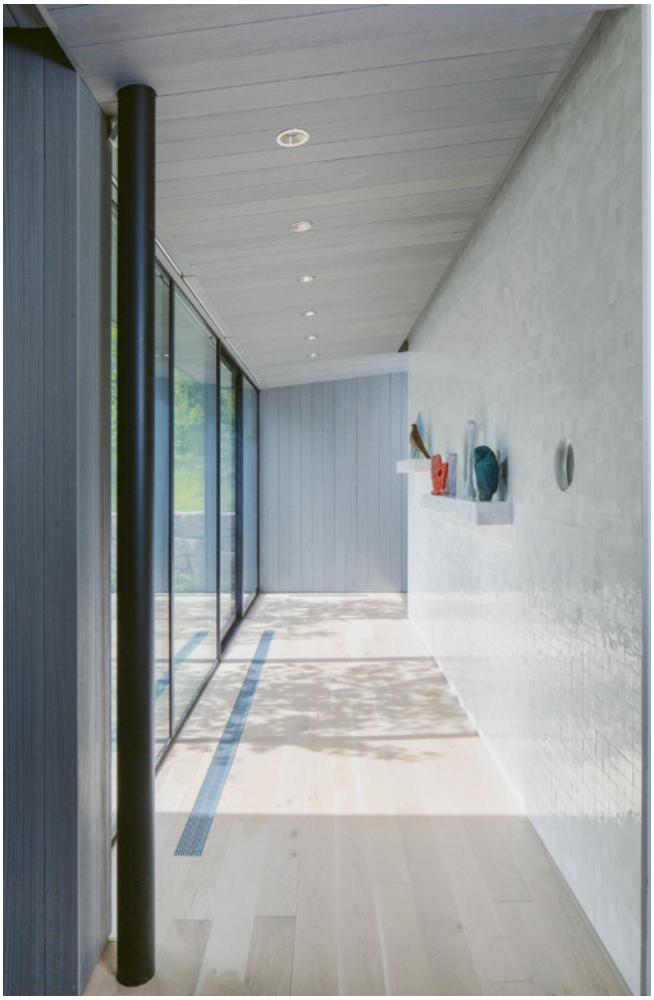
Wire-brushed oak wood introduces texture and movement to a built-in desk. And hallways, which Desai Chia usually avoids, "are a journey around the house" with their art-filled floating shelves.

old one, leaving the rest of the property for the clients to enjoy on its own terms.

"As we talked with the landscape architect Chris LaGuardia, we learned that Alexander Calder had lived very close by," Kathy recalls. "He put all of his art in the meadow. Chris got very excited about this idea. And that got us thinking about these outdoor moments and indoor moments. We also thought about Storm King Art Center, with its massive rolling hills, meadows, and fields for outdoor art. We thought, 'this could be a microcosm slice out of Storm King.'" Located in New York's Hudson Valley, Storm King art museum sprawls across some 500 acres, but even on a much smaller site, the notion of larger scale art placed outside in nature was inspiring to both architects and clients alike.

Layered Experience

The program called for a main house, guest house, garage, and pool. The architects organized the main house in three small volumes around a front courtyard, which helped them mitigate the level change from the driveway



while beginning the curated entry experience. A stone retaining wall marks the transition from the motor court, cleaving to reveal several steps down into a gravel area dotted with grassy plantings of sinewy white birches. Large, irregular-shaped stepping stones establish their own sculptural personalities as they convey visitors over the gravel.

"It's a little bit of a journey moment, a portal—walking on a natural piece of stone from a local quarry," Kathy observes. "In architecture, there are big gestures but also small ones like going from a pea gravel driveway through a birch garden in a cleansing moment of arrival. In the forest, those are special moments when you see those white birch tree trunks among the darker trees. We thought they were a beautiful graphic moment against the darker exterior—almost like brushstrokes."

While admiring the birch trees in the courtyard, visitors discover another layer of galleries just inside the house. Framed by the home's dark shou sugi ban exteriors, window-lined sculpture halls flank the courtyard. They display the clients' art against a backdrop of iridescent walls of handmade tile from Mexico. Turning the gaze a few degrees reveals sight lines through the house on each side leading back into the wooded landscape.

Aligned with the courtyard steps, there's another sight line that runs from the front of the house through the great room, across the covered patio at the rear, and on to the meadow. The stacked perspective tantalizes, hinting at the broad sweep of the property beyond.

The main bedroom's display niche offers another opportunity for art, while the tile-lined bathroom is a calming oasis away from distraction.

Roxbury House

Roxbury, Connecticut

ARCHITECT: Katherine Chia, FAIA, and Arjun Desai, AIA, Desai Chia, New York

BUILDER: Paul Reiss, Berkshire Wilton Partners, Darien, Connecticut

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Christopher LaGuardia, LaGuardia Design Group, Water Mill, New York

LIGHTING DESIGN: Christine Sciulli, Christine Sciulli Light+Design, New York

CIVIL ENGINEER: Paul Szymanski, Arthur H. Howland & Associates, P.C., New Milford, Connecticut

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: James Quinn, Murray Engineering, New York

PROJECT SIZE: Main house (2,697 square feet); guest house (496 square feet); garage (320 square feet)

SITE SIZE: 12 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Paul Warchol Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

COOKTOPS: Gaggenau

COOKING VENTILATION: Gaggenau

DISHWASHER: Gaggenau; Miele (guest house)

FAUCETS: CEADESIGN (kitchen), Vola, Dornbracht

GARBAGE DISPOSAL: InSinkErator

OVENS: Gaggenau

PAINTS: Benjamin Moore (interior)

PHOTOVOLTAICS: Tesla

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Gaggenau; Sub-Zero (guest house)

SINKS: Lacava Corian

SPECIALTY APPLIANCES: Gaggenau

TOILETS: TOTO (main bath); Duravit (secondary)

WASHER/DRYER: Miele

WINDOWS: Fleetwood

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

Walking west along the path from the courtyard takes you to the main entrance. Continuing past the entrance accesses the garage and separate guest house. Between the guest house, main house, and garage is another courtyard intended for outdoor sculpture that directly engages the meadow view to the rear.

During design development, the idea of an artist-in-residence emerged, and that guided the location and conception of the guest house. At just under 500 square feet, with a kitchenette, full bath, bed area, a sitting area, and a small workspace, it's a flexible space that can serve the pool as an outbuilding, as a studio for artists, or as guest quarters for visiting artists or family. The guest house is detached but there's a covered walkway that links it to the main house. "They could have an artist work and stay there, but not need to get into the main space," Kathy explains.

Deliberate Design

"Our clients lived in the previous home for about a year before they decided what they wanted to do with the new house," Kathy continues. "And we visited a number of times. We observed different animals coming in and out of the woods. And it was clear there were aspects we wanted to preserve, enhance, and support. They were all part of the experience and part of the view corridor."

Capturing and focusing those view corridors was job No. 1 for the main house. The great room projects forward of the two bedroom wings into the view. Its glass window wall opens to a south-facing patio, shaded by a deep roof overhang.

Each of the main house components and the guest house have roofs that slope in different directions—to harness their best view opportunities, to protect from solar heat gain, and to guide water runoff away from undesirable areas.

FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry | 2. Gallery Hall | 3. Living Area | 4. Dining Area | 5. Kitchen | 6. Media Room | 7. Guest House | 8. Bedroom | 9. Bathroom | 10. Walk-in Closet | 11. Storage | 12. Garage | 13. Deck | 14. Gallery Courtyard | 15. Pool

"Managing water off the roof is a huge responsibility for the architect," Kathy notes. "It can cause big problems for the owner and the building. And it's something people don't give much thought to." Here, the team chose a standing seam roofing material and integrated a recessed channel at the low end of the slope. "Downspouts are embedded in the façade and lead to a series of outlets. We have drywells in the gravel pad where water is collected and dissipated underground at a very slow rate, so it doesn't erode the ground. We worked really closely with the civil engineers on this. We have no visible gutters."

Contrast Study

Although the shou sugi ban exteriors are deeply charred—allowing the house to recede into the view—the interiors play with the entire scale of dark to light. Shou sugi ban wood in a lighter gray char comes inside the house as walls and ceilings, establishing a mid-tone for contrasts in either direction. "We worked with Delta Millworks to get the color just right," says Kathy. "The lighter char and color bring a warmth and softness—an intimacy—inside. You feel that physical size is compatible with the space—whether alone or with 25 people."

> "In architecture, there are big gestures but also small ones like going from a pea gravel driveway through a birch garden in a cleansing moment of arrival."
>
> —Kathy Chia

The showcase dark element for the interior is the fireplace wall. Kathy explains the design intention: "When not in use, fireplaces can look like an oddball thing, so we wanted to give it a presence that helps anchor the room." Dark porcelain slabs and knife-edge details for the firebox give it that presence, which changes through the course of the day as light moves through the room.

At the opposite side of the great room, an all-white Corian kitchen is more self-effacing. "We thought it could be the quiet piece in the room," she says. "We wanted it to still have a sculptural feel to it, but in counterpoint to the fireplace. When you have a kitchen in the living and dining room, you want it to have a quiet feeling when not in use."

Bringing all the contrasts together are the warm hues of the white oak floors. "They are slightly desaturated," the architect notes. "We had to balance out all these different tones and colors—mixing and matching different materials and curating which were dominant and which were subservient. We wanted the floors to bring in more light. They are intentionally not the same gray as the ceilings."

Balancing visual and textural contrasts, interior views, and inspiring vistas of the site is a synergy of art and science that—in talented hands—has a surprising power to affect our spirits and well-being. Says Kathy, "The main house was an effort to create a beautiful flow." And that it does.—*S. Claire Conroy*

CAMPout House

TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA
FAULKNER ARCHITECTS

CAMPout House is situated in Martis Valley, a planned community on the north shore of Lake Tahoe in the Sierra Nevada. As mountain houses go, it could hardly be considered isolated, yet it expresses an assertive desire to engage with its natural environment, in the shadow of an 8,000-foot extinct volcano. Dotted with tall sugar pines, the land slopes up to the south, with views of the ski runs on Lookout Mountain and down to the valley on the north. Impervious yet open to the elements, it straddles the lines between exposure and enclosure, rusticity and rigor.

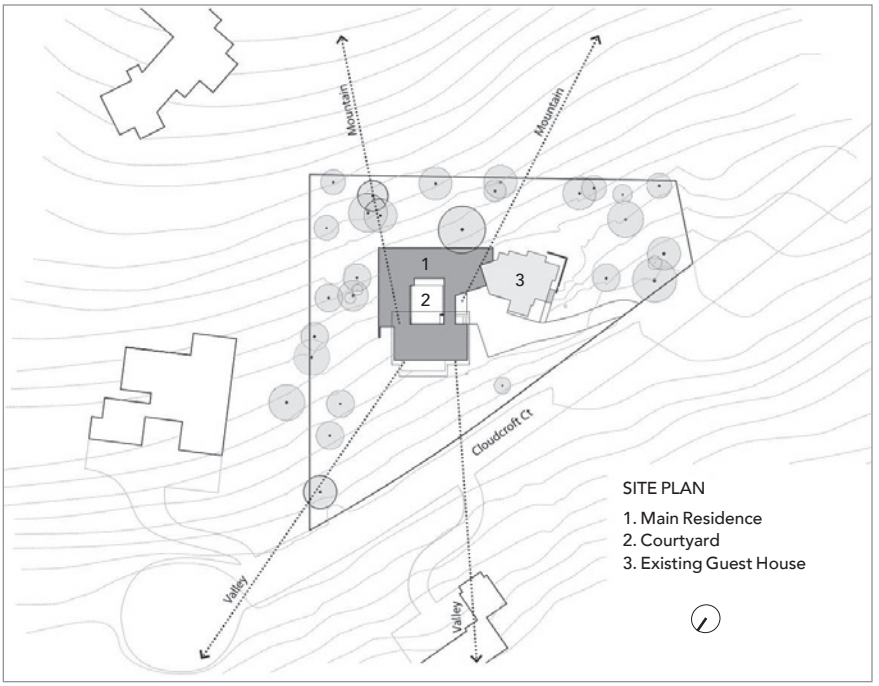
"The lot is surrounded by neighbors," says Greg Faulkner, FAIA, whose firm has built a handful of houses in this enclave. "Their initial request was how to find outside space that's private. That generated the courtyard and started off the diagram."

The house's courtyard plan fortifies it against wildfires and views of the neighbors close by. Bedrooms are built into the hill and all key rooms open through glass walls to the courtyard.

Privacy strategies often dovetail with fire protection, and that is true here. The threat is too close for comfort: In 2021, the Caldor Fire came within 25 miles of this community and destroyed a thousand structures. The challenge, then, was to fortify the house against wildfires and unwanted neighbor views without making it feel like a fortress.

Greg used the slope to achieve some of these goals. Diagrammatically, the house reads as a living pavilion on the north view side, while four bedrooms to the east and south are built into the hill. Those bedrooms, the living pavilion, and an entry hall and garage on the west lay out around a central open courtyard—the answer to both privacy and wildfire survivability. Each built section faces the courtyard through glass walls, most of which slide away seamlessly.

Rugged, unfussy materials match the landscape—sugar pine ceilings, basalt floors, black steel, black granite, rift-sawn oak, concrete, and glass.



This structure also responds to—and lightly touches—a small guest house that sat on the property. "We wanted to blend the new house into the land as much as possible so we weren't adding a lot of bulk to the existing guest house," Greg says. "By making the privacy a courtyard wall—i.e. the bedrooms built into the slope on the south and retaining the earth—it earned the space for the courtyard." Positioned south of the living pavilion, the void captures the sun's angles, while the entry hall on the west "separates the cabin from that guest house and allows it to stand on its own. It makes the project seem humbler—you can't tell the courtyard is there until you enter the house."

A service kitchen behind the open kitchen hides clutter and unglamorous appliances, leaving the great room to focus on family, friends, and long-distance views of the valley beyond.

The entire house is built inside the glazing along the courtyard, allowing the glass to be pulled up to the very thin line of the roof.

Sense of Release

Strategic sectional moves open the house to the sky and alpine scenery. While three sides have flat roofs topped with gravel ballast, the living pavilion's rusted steel roof pitches up to the south, scooping in sunlight. A clerestory wraps three sides of the pavilion, filling the gap between the walls and roof slope. In this way, the steel-sash glazing is minimized where it meets the combustible surroundings and maximized in the glass-lined courtyard, where light and pine forest views can safely penetrate the interior.

In effect, it's a place to decompress. With its glazed access from all points in the house, the courtyard becomes a metaphorical campfire for the sleeping rooms and main pavilion gathered around it. "The client is a very extreme mountaineering person and takes the kids out," Greg says. "He skis up that mountain every day in winter. He has a high-stress job as a CEO in San Francisco, and the intention was for the house to give him that feeling of release and a sense of discovery. It's more of a camp in the sense of Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West than a tent camp, with the concrete built into the earth and a tilted-up steel roof that almost feels like a canvas."

In truth, of course, that barely-there feeling was achieved through a high level of design and detailing. The entire house is built inside the glazing along the courtyard, allowing the glass to be pulled up to the very thin line of the roof. "It's as if you were building in a remote area and didn't have the process of building a thick roofline," Greg says. "It makes the architecture more delicate in the way it relates to the landscape. There's not this friction of busy planes meeting the sky, so the overall assemblage feels light."

FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry | 2. Pavilion | 3. Deck | 4. Courtyard | 5. Main Suite | 6. Media Suite | 7. Laundry | 8. Office Suite | 9. Guest Suite | 10. Mudroom | 11. Garage | 12. Existing Guest House

"It is one of those courtyards you use, but it also provides energy, light, focus, and orientation to the rest of the house."

—Greg Faulkner, FAIA

Builder Eben Schreiber pieced it all together flawlessly. "People say floor-to-ceiling windows, but ours go up inside a pocket and go to the roof," he says, "which made waterproofing, insulation, and window installation challenging. The tolerances were as close to zero as I've ever worked on." The wood ceilings take a vertical upturn into the structural steel roof plate, creating not just a sleek architectural detail but a pocket for roller shades.

On the house's outer edge, 8-inch-thick double concrete walls, with foam insulation between, will stop wildfires and airborne embers in their tracks. The formwork was lined with smooth plywood panels and held together with ¼-inch-diameter fiberglass rods rather than industrial snap ties. "They kind of go away; it changes the whole feel of it and is more expedient, as though you were building in a remote area where you didn't have a lot of technology," Greg says. Inside and out, a sandblasted finish gave the walls the desired texture.

CAMPout House

Truckee, California

ARCHITECT: Gregory Faulkner, AIA, principal in charge; Christian Carpenter, project architect; Jenna Shropshire, project manager; Ann Darby, AIA, Faulkner Architects, Truckee, California

BUILDER: Jim Morrison Construction, Tahoe City, California

INTERIOR DESIGNER: NICOLEHOLLIS, San Francisco

CIVIL ENGINEER: Shaw Engineering, Reno, Nevada

MEP: Sugarpine Engineering, Truckee, California

SURVEYOR: Webb Land Surveying, Tahoe City, California

GEOTECHNICAL: Nortech Geotechnical Consultants, Reno, Nevada

TITLE 24: Monterey Energy Group, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California

PROJECT SIZE: 3,500 square feet

SITE SIZE: 1 acre

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Joe Fletcher Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

CABINETRY: Wire-brushed charred wood

CLADDING: 16-gauge Cor-Ten

COOKTOP/VENTILATION/OVENS: Wolf

COUNTERTOP: DaVinci Marble black granite

DISHWASHER: Bosch

FIREPLACE: Cornish Masonry Stoves

FLOORING: Haussman Natural Stone, honed fine hole basalt

HOT TUB: Zen Bathworks

LIGHTING: Bega, Brendan Ravenhill, Commune, Anglepoise, Onefortythree, Viabizzuno, Lucifer

OUTDOOR FIREPLACE/FIREPIT: Paloform

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Sub-Zero

SKYLIGHTS: CrystaLite

STEAM SHOWER: Thermasol

THERMAL AND MOISTURE BARRIERS: VaproShield

VANITIES: Westgate Hardwoods

WASHER/DRYER: LG

WINDOWS: Dynamic Fenestration

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

Toward the back of the lot, the attached garage abuts the existing guest house's single-car garage. Capping the small building's stone wainscoting with a smooth concrete and wrapping its existing deck in perforated steel helped the traditional wood building blend with the new garage's perforated metal siding and doors.

Rooted in Place

Inside, a durable but utilitarian aesthetic reinforces the camp theme. Radiant-heated basalt flooring and sugar pine ceilings take their cues from the boulders and trees on site. "We didn't put a finish on the pine, so you smell it as well," Greg says. "Once we make a decision like that, the materials aren't up for grabs; the house is treated as a single deployment of materials—wood, stone, and concrete. It's like when you arrive at a certain landscape, there's always a climate species or shrubs depending on the moisture they want."

Devoid of fancy light fixtures, the finishes are minimal, continuous, and calm: rift-sawn oak casework, black steel on some of the cabinetry and above the range, and black granite countertops. There is nothing that jars this concept: appliances are relegated to the pantry behind the kitchen, and open shelves are reserved for display. Outside in the courtyard, wire mesh partially screens a cook station.

"The kids hang out and play there," Greg says. "Family members came and stayed in the guest house during the pandemic lockdown, and they would meet in the courtyard. It is one of those courtyards you use, but it also provides energy, light, focus, and orientation to the rest of the house."

In short, there's nothing arbitrary about the design of this earth-sheltered house that both resists and celebrates nature. Its focus on material durability, passive energy, and wildfire survivability ensures that it will be around for a very long time.— *Cheryl Weber*

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Mitch Lehde | Director of the Carolinas | MHK Architecture & Planning | Greenville, SC

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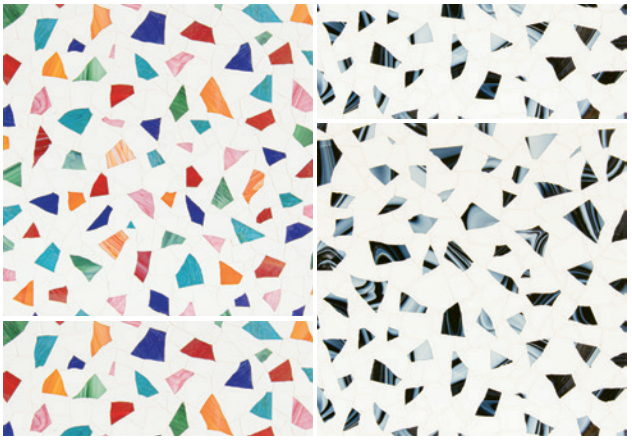

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1. NO SHRINKING VIOLET

Had enough of greige? Pantone to the rescue with Viva Magenta, the 2023 color of the year from the color standards group. This year's hue, also known as 18-1750, "vibrates with vim and vigor," according to the company. Stay tuned for its cheerful influence out across various industries.
Pantone.com

2. GROOVY KITCHENS

German company Häcker Kitchens, which calls itself "the first carbon neutral kitchen cabinetry" maker, introduces a new wood veneer front in 3D relief. The surface, AV 6023 GL, is constructed of five layers of grooved veneer over a wood base. Available in various wood species and 1,900 colors.
Hackerkitchensnorthamerica.com

3. SUPER SUPPORTIVE

Architectural products maker Feeney now offers a minimalist intermediate picket for its DesignRail line. For applications where posts are more than 3 feet apart, the stainless steel picket slots in for stealthy support. Available in various sizes, it's also field trimmable.
Feeneyinc.com

4. MAD ABOUT MOSAICS

Mosaic tilemaker New Ravenna celebrates its 30th anniversary with the new Heritage Collection, a trip through various eras of the company's design development. Shown here is Memphis Raku, a series of jewel glass elements on a base of Absolute White Sea Glass.
Newravenna.com

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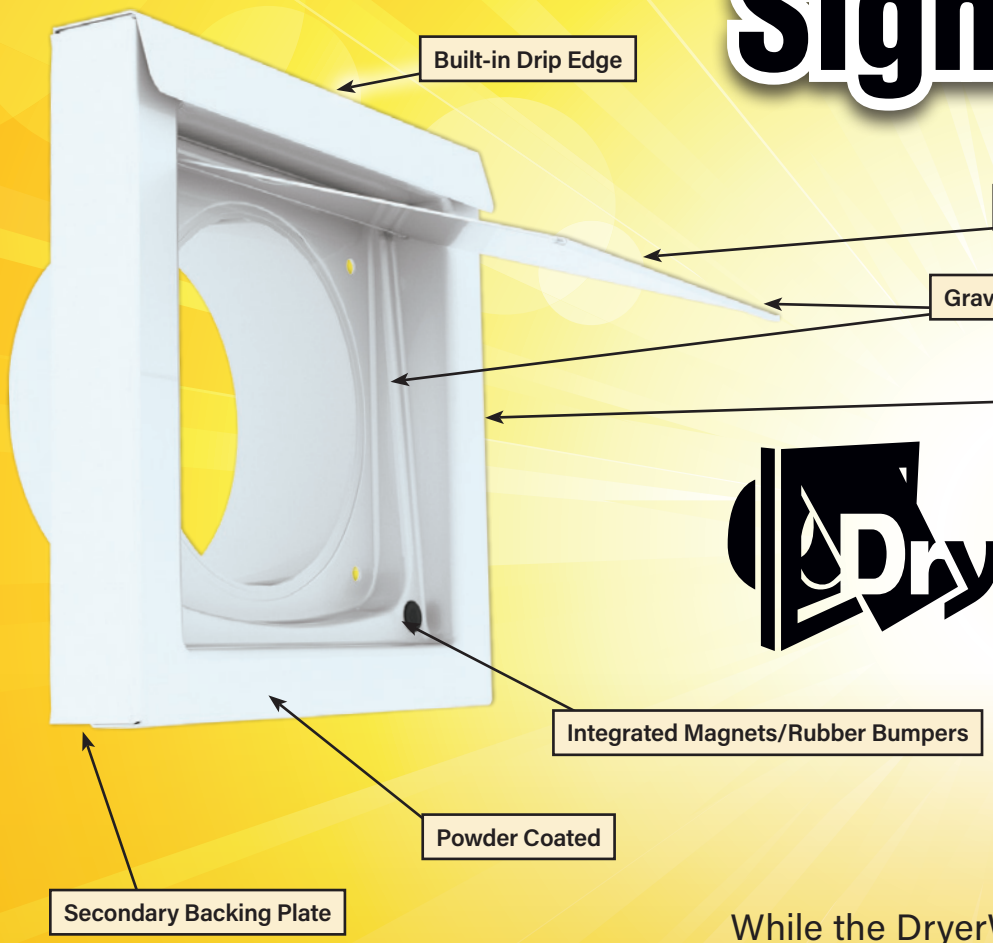
Sight To See



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Product Resource Section/Classifieds
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(847) 440-3000 ext. 102
Mike@SOLAbrands.com

Midwest Sales Manager
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Nature's Turn

CURVEBALL
CARMEL, CALIFORNIA
FELDMAN ARCHITECTURE

Working largely on the West Coast, Feldman Architecture already faces some of the strictest building codes in the nation, but several years ago the firm decided to stretch even further by adopting The 2030 Challenge of carbon neutrality. And now with Curveball, a new home in the Santa Lucia Preserve in Carmel, California, the architects are attempting one of the most rigorous building standards there is: The Living Building Challenge. Says project architect Anjali Iyer, "Our personal agenda as a firm is to drive sustainability, and our clients want to be a positive influence on community."

The Preserve is like-minded, with vast set-asides for land conservancy called "Wildlands" and much smaller sites allotted to development called "Homelands." Even for buildable parcels, the guiding principle is subservience to the land.

The firm's design preserves the most scenic aspects of its Homeland area, including a precious meadow, and places the house up against a steep hill. Says Anjali, "The design concept is of two curved volumes and one gently emerges from the hillside, minimizing the visual impact of the building on the land. They allow us to carve out a courtyard between these interlocking forms." A small guest house will have its own courtyard, so each building has privacy and a different experience of the outdoors.

With photovoltaics on the roofs, the house will generate its own power. Materials, including reclaimed steel, will be carefully chosen for fire resistance and sustainability. Water collection systems will reduce consumption well below targets. "We're hoping to hit at least some of the petals," Anjali says, referring to Living Building standard components. "As a firm, we want to be ambitious and push ourselves to try to reach it. It's not just about the certification; we're going to learn a ton we can apply across our projects."—*S. Claire Conroy*

Project: Curveball; architect: Jonathan Feldman, AIA, project principal; Anjali Iyer, project architect, Feldman Architecture, San Francisco; builder: RJL Construction, Pacific Grove, California; landscape architect: James Munden, MFLA, Healdsburg, California; sustainability consultant: Corey Squire, AIA, Dept. of Sustainability; project size: 5,437 square feet; site size: 6.8 acres (Homeland: 2.1 acres); renderings: Feldman Architecture

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