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VOL. 4, 2026

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Photo: The Ingalls



Welcome to Volume 4, 2026, 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 cheryl@SOLAbRANDS.com.

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

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Landed Gently



There's a new house in my neighborhood that grieves me every time I walk past it. Facing the road on land that drops steeply, the house has a side-entry garage jutting out in front. To get there, the driveway makes a hairpin turn down the hill, landing hard against the front porch. The house next to it, likely designed by an architect, is positioned slightly farther down the slope, with the garage hidden under the house and a meandering entry stair that passes through a scrim of trees and dense vegetation. Clearly, the builder of the new house took the path of least resistance on a difficult lot, but what a difference a more elegant solution would have made to the neighborhood, not to mention the owners' daily lives.

Most of the projects in this issue take on slopes in one way or another. These expertly placed rural or vacation houses are set near a lake, the ocean, a ski slope, and nature preserves—and yes, often on ample acreage. But the five we feature—one in Utah, one in Illinois, one in upstate New York, and two others in Wyoming and Mexico—all had form-defining site challenges.

Although Kirigami House is on Utah's vast Powder Mountain, Sparano + Mooney Architecture was given an almost urban-sized lot on which to work. Restrictions stating that houses must conform to the land's tilting contours helped to focus the solution on a three-level house. Like a giant gift box, its vertically compact form is wrapped in folded metal planes that vary in opacity and seem to change color with the shifting light.

Spring Creek, by Baldwin Architects, is another three-level house, but disguised as a single story. A direct response to the topography and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) codes, its smart sectional moves resulted in a low-profile presence while welcoming overnight guests under a single pitched roof. You know you've done well when the builder comments that it was "oriented so perfectly that it slipped right into the landscape."

Now, this issue's Case Study house also slips into the land—entwines is more accurate—even though it is undeniably large and languid to suit a sprawling extended family. Its superpower is its lack of ego. Set down on 3.6 acres overlooking Lake Michigan, this project involved a bluff restoration and the construction of a funicular down to the water. The one-story structure's irregular footprint, deep overhangs, and outdoor views at every turn help to quiet the scale.

White Oak Farm also leaves statement-making at the door, in deference to the majestic stillness of woods and meadows. And Casa Maya in Oaxaca, Mexico, contains moments of pure, uncontained joy, with thatched ceilings and clay breezeblocks that positively dissolve the differences between inside and out. What all these houses have in common is an attention to form, light, craft, and the nuances of their natural surroundings. As Celeste Robbins, AIA, the architect of our Case Study, says, "Modern architecture is meant to be flexible, lived in, and open to nature's beauty, which is something that everyone can experience." Happy summer!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Cheryl Weber". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Cheryl Weber
Interim Editor

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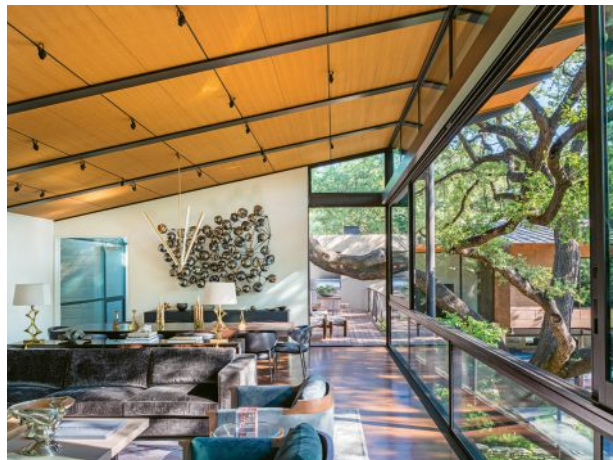
Destination: San Antonio

BY MARK ASHER, AIA

This year marks the 16th annual symposium of the Custom Residential Architects Network. As an event planning group, we rotate the gathering through different regions of the country, reflecting our national presence. This year takes us to San Antonio in south-central Texas, September 23 to 26. San Antonio is about 80 miles south-southwest of Austin and is considered the northern gateway to South Texas. Here, we will explore the development of “Legacy”—the legacy of place, of space, and of the people who have made San Antonio’s vibrant residential architecture what it is today.

Those of us who dedicate ourselves to making custom residential architecture know how rewarding and challenging it can be. We engage with art, history, climate, and social issues daily. The CRAN volunteers of the Advisory Group and Executive Committee, along with the local San Antonio chapter, have organized a symposium schedule as diverse as our practices.

It begins on Wednesday afternoon with a roundtable discussion by architects designing their own homes and the lessons learned, followed by networking dinners. Thursday offers a full slate of engaging speakers and educational opportunities, from academic to practice. Thursday morning begins with Helen Thompson. Helen is a nationally



CRAN tour: At the Ravine Retreat, by Tobin Smith Architect, the great room is a bridge straddling the ravine with an operable glass façade.

recognized writer with numerous architectural books to her credit. Her session is titled “Roots of Relevance: Vernacular Modernism and the Evolution of a New American Architecture.”

We continue with Evan Morris, AIA, a partner at the award-winning firm Lake Flato. Kathryn O’Rourke, an author and professor of art and history at Wellesley College, will present the work and legacy of Texas regionalist architect O’Neil Ford. Landscape architect Christine Ten Eyck will discuss her firm’s work and the interaction between architects and landscape architects.

San Antonio-based architect Jim Po-teet, FAIA, will discuss his firm’s adaptive reuse work in design and urban revitalization. Austin-based architects Peter Pfeiffer, FAIA, and Alan Barley, AIA, of Bar-

ley-Pfeiffer Architecture, will discuss their careers as climate-responsive architects in a session titled “Let the Land Lead.”

This year, Carole Wedge, FAIA, will also join our symposium. Carole is the executive vice president and CEO of the American Institute of Architects. She will share what the AIA is doing for residential architects and how residential architects play a unique role in creating homes for people, not just housing.

Learn about the builder’s perspective on constructing custom projects. Also, see what emerging trends and innovations are coming in building technology, AI, landscape, lighting, and more.

San Antonio has a uniquely rich architectural heritage, and we are excited to present its legacy of Western architecture, with roots in the Bauhaus, indigenous materials, and a rugged climate and terrain. Together, these influences form a distinctive aesthetic that begins in the West and now extends far beyond it. We will meet at the Westin Riverwalk in the city’s energetic downtown area for educational sessions, home tours, cocktail receptions, and networking dinners. As always, we cannot thank our sponsors enough. CRAN continues to represent the very best of our profession, and we hope to see you there.



CRAN tour: Lake Flato’s Olmos Park Residence was designed around the site’s live oaks, including a majestic sculptural specimen at the center.



CRAN tour: Cootie Catcher, by Cotton Estes Architect, has an addition that adapts a 1930s bungalow for indoor-outdoor living.



Photos: Mark Menjivar

Photo: Casey Dunn

Photo: Shannon Korta



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Photo: Gunnar Sverrisson



Tryggvi Thorsteinsson, Assoc. AIA, and Erla Dögg Ingjaldsdóttir, Assoc. AIA

Elemental Forces

MINARC
SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

One of the obvious things that distinguishes Minarc, a boutique architecture firm in Southern California, is that the two principals, Erla Dögg Ingjaldsdóttir, Assoc. AIA, and Tryggvi Thorsteinsson, Assoc. AIA, are from Iceland. What may not be obvious is how their background has influenced their practice.

“They are far more comfortable embracing the outdoors and making your outdoor living space part of your regular living space,” says Enzo Der Boghossian, a client for whom Minarc has designed two homes in California, one in Santa Monica and one in Malibu. “There’s definitely an Icelandic influence in the size and scale of their projects and



Photos: Gunnar Sverrisson

their commitment to energy-efficiency and environmentalism. It's personal, but it's also cultural."

Since Erla, a licensed general contractor, and Tryggvi, a licensed architect, didn't grow up in the U.S., they are primed to challenge the status quo. "I think our strength is that if there's something we see that we think should be done better, we tackle it," says Tryggvi (pronounced TRIG-vee).

The married couple, who launched their firm in Santa Monica in 1999, didn't meet until they were both working in the States. Tryggvi had a more unusual upbringing: he grew up in Iceland's Westfjords region, in a place he describes as "the middle of nowhere." His parents were teachers at a therapeutic boarding school, which was a 40-minute drive from the nearest town, a tiny fishing village called Þingeyri. He spent Icelandic summers of endless sun hanging out with his friends at the school's pool. When he was a teen, his family moved to Iceland's biggest city, Reykjavík. He got



his first summer job at a construction site near his home, hauling bags of concrete up flights of stairs; he started working at BYKO, the Icelandic version of Home Depot, while studying business in college. "I was looking at building plans and doing estimates, and I remember

This page and opposite: The Dansa residence provides generous outdoor views and sheltered outdoor spaces in back. Wood-slatted ceilings absorb noise in the high-ceilinged rooms, and a green hanging chair brings the treeline inside. In winter, the client likes to view the northern lights over the lake from the bedroom.

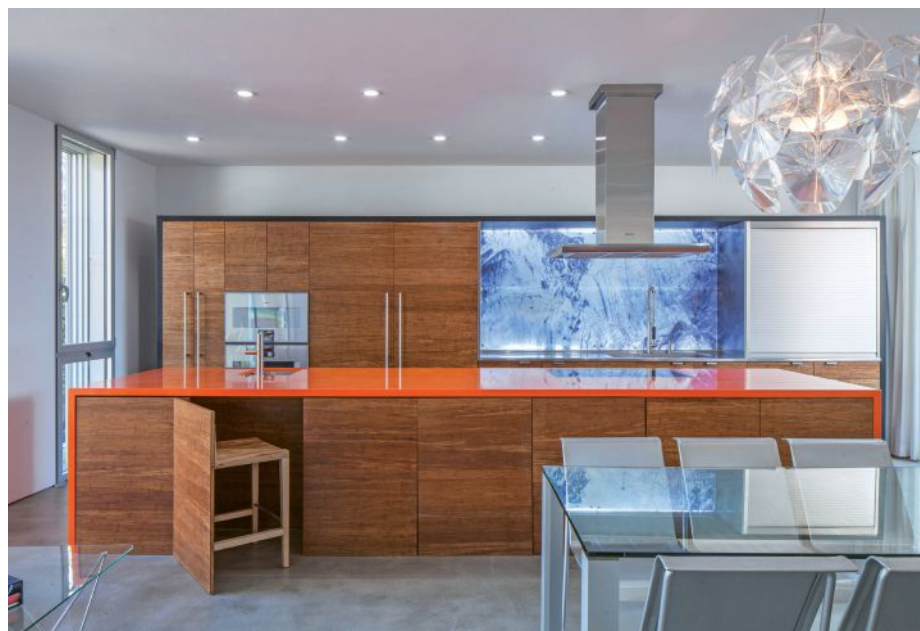
Photos: Art Gray



Big Little Rock is a modern version of Iceland's turf houses, which take advantage of the insulating properties of a thick sod roof. The summer retreat combines wood, glass, steel, and concrete construction.

asking my boss, 'Why are you doing this weird layout?'" recalls Tryggvi. "And he said, 'Maybe you should become an architect.'"

Meanwhile, Erla grew up in a more populous place: Seltjarnarnes, a town of 5,000 people near Reykjavík. Her parents were rarely home—her father was a mechanical engineer who worked on fishing boats, and her mother was a surgical nurse—so Erla's after-school schedule was packed with music lessons. In college, she studied ecology; after graduating, she studied floral design in Denmark and then worked for a florist in Sweden. "Iceland is so isolated that the mentality is, 'Please go away, see the world, then come back,'" says Erla.



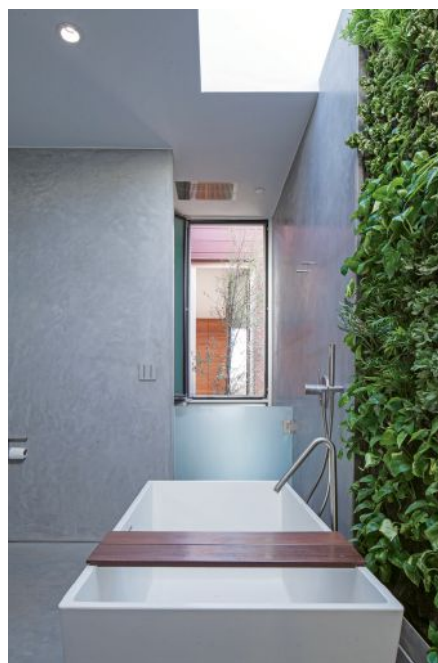
Photos: Art Gray

Dawnsknoll's front gate and garage door are integrated into the façade, creating one large mural of reclaimed wood. Its orange detail, made from an extra strip of Corian kitchen countertop, represents Iceland's lava flows. Kitchen stools disappear into the island when not in use.

California Dreaming

They found their separate ways to Los Angeles, where their graduate education in architecture was generously subsidized by the government of Iceland (the country had no architecture school at the time). Tryggvi arrived at SCI-Arc in 1990, and Erla went to American Inter-Continental University in 1997. After graduating, they both ended up working for the Santa Monica office of two European architects, Regina Pizzinini and Leon Luxembourg. “We were going to get our degrees and go back home. And then we found each other,” Erla says. Tryggvi adds: “L.A. is an amazing city. If you stay here for five years, it captures you.”

They named their firm Minarc, a combination of the words “minimalism” and “architecture.” Over the last 25 years, they have designed residences and commercial spaces in California, Iceland, and other countries. They have also developed several custom products, including bar stools that disappear into the kitchen island, a bathroom sink whose graywater is used for flushing the toilet, and a sink basin



made from recycled rubber. They are inspired to recycle materials that are typically discarded.

“Many of our pieces we’ve done just to start the conversation or see what other people can do with it,” says Erla. “We don’t really know where our trash goes. Why don’t we use it? Things can be really beautiful even though they’re



not traditionally used that way.”

In 2007, they designed their own system of prefabricated structural panels, an alternative to stick-built construction that was ahead of its time. The heavily insulated, energy-efficient panels were rigid foam framed with lightweight recycled steel. For more than a decade, Minarc ran a manufacturing facility,



The Zen House façade is opaque to the busy road, and a water wall on the other side of the fence mitigates street noise. The architecture encourages outdoor living: pocketing doors open the kitchen/dining area to an ADU across the courtyard. A big cross-brace supports the main house's cantilever.



producing panels for its own projects as well as those of other architects.

After the devastating Pacific Palisades wildfire last year, the architects wonder if it's time to raise the standards for home construction from Type 5 (wood-framed) to Type 2 (non-combustible materials like steel, metal, and concrete). "We are a big believer of using steel in residential construction. It's the only material that's recyclable, and it doesn't provide fuel for fires," Tryggvi says.

When they begin a project, Erla and Tryggvi take their cues from the site. After figuring out the code restrictions

and what the client wants, they look at the sun and wind orientation. Says Erla: "The land gives us the options to work with. And that tells us where we can have certain areas." Tryggvi notes, "The cheapest square footage you can get is outside space. Most of the time you want to be able to sit outside."

Icelandic Architecture

Iceland is a small country with hardly any timber, a robust domestic concrete industry, and highly variable weather. For a friend, Minarc created a primary residence named Dansa, which faces a lake near Reykjavík. The



Photos: Art Gray

4,000-square-foot house is designed for enjoying the outdoors in all weather.

"The weather is what we call 'window weather'—it's beautiful to look at, but it's ice-cold," says Erla.

To create a grand picture frame for contemplating the lake, the architects designed a second floor of steel and glass over a concrete first floor. The site slopes upward, so there is a patio off the back of the second floor, which is shielded from the wind coming off the lake.

The 15-foot-tall second floor has a dropped ceiling of wood slats with fabric that absorbs sound. "It's really important when you have clean lines and hard surfaces to control the acoustics," says Tryggvi, noting that the client is a musician who is particularly sensitive to noise.

Big Little Rock is another of Minarc's projects in Iceland. This summer home for Erla's family is in rural Bláskógabyggð, where the country's famed Golden Circle is located. Inspired by traditional turf houses that have sod roofs, this modern *torfbær* has a living roof of grasses. The 1,000-square-foot structure is built from concrete, glass, and wood, and the interiors are paneled with Norwegian fir.

“The turf houses are A-frame houses. So, the concept here is as though you cut one in half and opened up one side of it,” says Erla. The shed roof shields the adjoining outdoor space from the wind and the cold. “On a nice day, that area of the house is completely still—there is no wind,” she says.

Fire and Ice

In Santa Monica, Minarc designed Dawnsknoll for Enzo and his family. Unusual for Southern California, the house doesn’t have air-conditioning and relies on passive cooling. “They were very thoughtful about siting the home, doing sun studies, and thinking about solar heat gain,” says Enzo. In addition to lots of windows, the home has a water feature in the entry courtyard, which serves double duty by masking street noise and providing evaporative cooling. The homeowners often keep the front gate closed but leave the front door open so that ocean breezes can blow over the water feature and help cool the house. To give the clients a sense of privacy since the lot is hemmed in by neighbors, the house opens into another courtyard.

The clients also wanted their home to have a sense of Iceland’s spectacular natural beauty, including its volcanic activity. Touches of orange throughout the 2,200-square-foot house represent lava, beginning with the front façade, which has a thin orange stripe of repurposed kitchen countertop within a rich pattern of reclaimed wood siding. An outdoor lounge has an orange-upholstered daybed and curtains.

In the kitchen, the orange countertop is paired with a backsplash that, at first glance, looks like some sort of marble, but is actually a photograph of a glacier in Iceland, taken by one of the clients. The kitchen’s bar stools are hidden in the side of the island—

one of Minarc’s custom designs. “We use those chairs on a daily basis—they work really well,” says Enzo. “When people come over, they have a wow factor.”

The architects unlocked the outdoor lifestyle enabled by Southern California’s temperate weather for another family in Manhattan Beach. Their property faced a busy road, so there was lots of activity and street noise. Minarc designed a 3,500-square-foot Zen House and a 450-square-foot ADU around a 2,500-square-foot courtyard.

The kitchen/dining room opens through pocketing glass doors to a patio, which is shaded by the overhang of the cantilevered upper level. “We do a lot of these overhangs,” says Tryggvi. “We love to use the building as the shading device for the outdoor spaces.”

The main house brackets one side of the courtyard, while the ADU on the other side screens the courtyard from the neighbors in back. “The house is very private,” says Tryggvi. “It has this central courtyard, with this beautiful old olive tree that sits in the middle.” Adds Erla: “It’s very, very big outside. The clients talk about how their kids really enjoy it—they have bikes and skateboards, and the pool.”

What comes through is that although their architecture looks cool and sleek, Erla and Tryggvi are warm and personable people who are passionate about making homes that function remarkably well. “They are very opinionated, which comes from a clear and realized vision in their heads,” says Enzo. “They’ve thought deeply about what’s going to work for you—they’re going to advocate for their point of view and try to convince you. I appreciate that. There’s something special about their commitment to their clients, and they are more than happy to make you part of their design family.”—*Lydia Lee*



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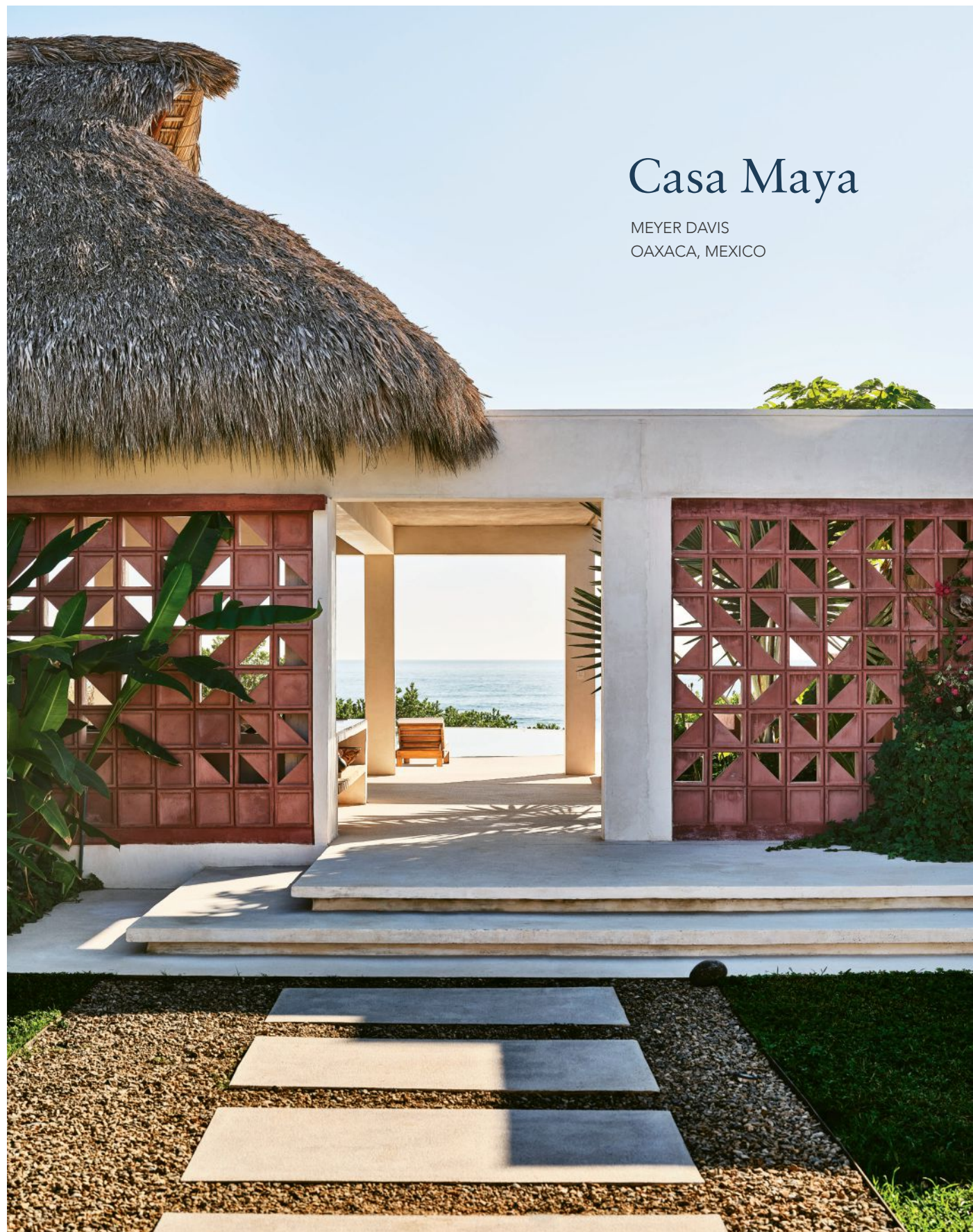


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Casa Maya

MEYER DAVIS
OAXACA, MEXICO



The third time was the charm for Will Meyer, co-founder of the New York firm Meyer Davis. For his own family's retreat on a rugged stretch of land on the Pacific Coast in Oaxaca, Mexico, he had contemplated at least three fully formed and very different designs. He and his family had been traveling to the Mexican state known for its culture and artisanship for more than a decade, and his familiarity with vernacular architecture and construction methods at last manifested Casa Maya, a 10,925-square-foot, two-story residence made for the local environment and climate.

A portal frame entrance opens immediately to the ocean views granted to nearly every room due to the home's west-to-east alignment with the water. In the shade of a south-facing overhang, the open-air living





Casa Maya blends Mexican modernism with Oaxacan culture and climate. Its 25-foot-tall palapa structure of local thatch naturally insulates the home. Clerestory openings at the eaves and clay breeze blocks allow air to circulate through the interior while adding visual interest.



areas gaze at a yawning pool, oval in plan but circular in perspective. “You can see the sun rise on one side, pass across the sky during the day, and set on the other,” Will says. “The idea was to have every major part of the house face out.”

To the west of the main entry, guest suites line the main horizontal axis. To the east, a palapa roof covering the living and dining spaces draws eyes up to its double height. A kitchen and bar serviced by a separate receiving entrance tuck into the corner of the L-shaped floor plan, which turns and ends with the primary suite outstretched toward the ocean.

Balancing Act

Casa Maya’s low profile belies its grand scale. The one-room-deep structure hosts extended family and friends in spacious common areas that enable relaxed coexistence. Under the 25-foot-tall palapa structure, a 35-foot-long



Left: Striated doors of macuil wood slats separate the kitchen and dining room. A polished, poured-in-place concrete counter displays locally crafted ceramics and art. *Bottom:* A covered pine walkway to a rooftop guest bedroom traverses a garden below.

sectional paired with individual and small group seating options hosts simultaneous chatter, reading, and board gaming. The space, Will notes, “is not singularly dimensional.”

A 17-foot-long dining table made of lava rock sits near a kitchen

passthrough window with a wide polished concrete counter and striated sliding door of local macuil wood.

Living Systems

The palapa structure, comprising a thatched hiped roof of tightly woven

dried palm leaves supported by a wood frame, sits atop a modernist concrete post-and-beam structure with clerestory openings to circulate air at the eaves. “The system is built for cooling and drying itself out,” Will says. Following a rain event, the palm leaves “start to breathe and dry out.”

The comfort of the residence also relies on cross-ventilation through nearly a thousand breeze blocks that filter wind and sunlight. Stacked floor to ceiling along a corridor and exterior walls, the 260-millimeter-square, 150-millimeter-thick clay units reference the region’s weaving tradition and provide endless variations in light and shadow. The textural walls utilized only two modules, both designed by Will: one solid and closed, and one half-open and bisected with a solid





Concrete floors, stucco walls, and locally sourced wood slats imbue a sense of craftsmanship throughout the residence.

triangular plane. “Arranging them in a way that feels random was an interesting exercise,” Will says. “Just when you start to see a direction or pattern, it falls away.”

Like the palapa structure, which exhales rising hot air, the breeze blocks offer a passive ventilation strategy in a tropical area where electricity and water can be scarce. During the day, prevailing winds from the ocean flow through the permeable walls and cool the house. At night, mountain air from the north returns through the breeze blocks like “a giant register,” Will says. Insect screens and ceiling fans help deter insects from the interior, which is unconditioned except for a pantry area and one enclosed room useful during storms.

Palette of Art

Casa Maya draws its materials and colors from the land. Its concrete flooring and pool deck match the warm tones of the nearby beach sand. The rich terracotta of the clay breeze blocks reappears in the central dog-legged stair. Natural light reflecting off the white stucco finish of columns and walls helps illuminate interiors and minimize heat gain. On the exposed, warm gray concrete ceilings, traces of the sweeping, circular motion of hand trowels underscore the craftsmanship Will admires: “The house doesn’t feel machine-made. It is rationally conceived and manually realized.”

The natural materials’ expression in large geometric forms—rectangular planes, a triangular planter and wading pool, and the oval swimming pool—

sets the stage for the arrangement of kindred materials appearing in intricate and decorative art forms. Sculptures, ceramics, dining ware, and textiles locally sourced by Will’s wife, Kerstin, humanize Casa Maya. Behind each piece is an artist’s story and livelihood. A favorite of the Meyers is master ceramist José García Antonio, who has lost his eyesight over time but continues to sculpt works of animals, objects, and his wife from memory.

For Will, the spirit of place distinguishes Casa Maya. “In our other works of architecture and design, it is all about precision,” he says. “If you can see movement, you have [the builder] redo it. Here, if we didn’t see movement, we had to redo it because it doesn’t seem right for the area.”—*Wanda Lau*

Casa Maya

Oaxaca, Mexico

PROJECT CREDITS

ARCHITECT: Will Meyer, Meyer Davis, New York

BUILDER: Patricio Sodi and Samantha Redfern, Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca, Mexico

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Will Meyer, Meyer Davis, New York

LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Ramses Alexander; Edwina Von Gal, Perfect Earth Project, Bridgehampton, New York

LIGHTING DESIGN: Pedro Garza, Grupo MAI, Mexico City

PROJECT SIZE: 10,925 square feet

SITE SIZE: 1.7 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: The Ingalls

KEY PRODUCTS

CEILING: Locally crafted palapa

CEILING FANS: Hunter

CLOSET DRAWERS/UNIT: Wood slats

COUNTERTOPS: Concrete

FAUCET: Kallista (primary bedroom)

FLOORING: Concrete

FURNITURE: Decova (chairs, round loungers, lounge sofa, living room side tables); Arca (living room coffee tables)

LIGHTING: Areca (primary bedroom); Tseebal (lounge); Taller Hormiga (dining room)

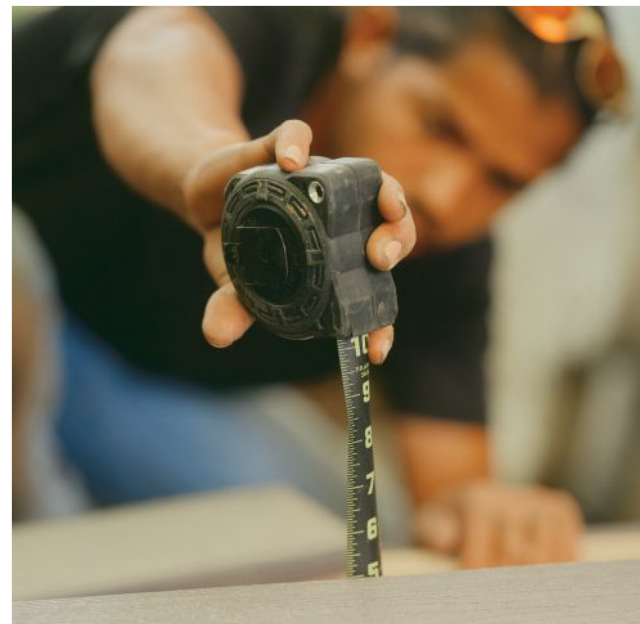
MILLWORK: Poured concrete with local wood shelving (living room)

SHOWERHEAD AND FITTINGS: Kallista (primary bathroom)

SINK: Cast concrete (primary bedroom)

WALL TREATMENT: White stucco

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On Lake Michigan, an expansive home is just as good for hosting guests as it is for being alone.

BY CHERYL WEBER

SHORELINE REFLECTIONS

ARCHITECT: CELESTE ROBBINS, AIA

ROBBINS ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIORS

BUILDER: GOLDBERG GENERAL CONTRACTING, INC.

LOCATION: HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS

Every now and then, an architect's signature design process is a cosmic fit for clients who have the means to greenlight a house that exceeds their expectations—and their initial budget. Chicago's affluent North Shore, of course, has many residents who fit that description and is where Celeste Robbins, AIA, has found her niche. Based in Winnetka, Illinois, she is often asked to design the ultimate dream home for uncompromising clients, those looking for a legacy house they can pass on to their kids. In this case, it was a pair of empty nesters who had raised their family in the Chicago area. They hand-picked a team including a landscape architect, builder, and interior designer to develop their 2½-acre property on Lake Michigan.



Two seating areas and a game table lend a human scale in the great room, which has glass on both sides and is generously sized to accommodate large extended-family gatherings. Walnut cabinetry provides storage above the stone-slab fireplace surround.



Left: Motorized steel-and-glass doors open or close the kitchen to the great room, which is distinguished by a clerestory and higher ceiling. *Below:* The kitchen's planked-walnut cabinetry appears on cabinets and passage doors throughout the house.

Rather than sharing schematic ideas with clients, Celeste likes to present a fully developed model at the first meeting. “Our process is to get to know the client, aesthetics, budget, and how they want the house to function,” she says. “Then we work on the design for a month. I like to present it so they can understand the materiality, how you move, everything that’s in our heads. It’s super-nimble and easy to change the design, but it’s easier if the client can fully visualize the house.”

As she looked at her design detailing for this couple, however, she knew it would cost more than their stated budget. Celeste and longtime contractor-collaborator Jake Goldberg gave the owners a heads-up before the presentation meeting and braced for a serious value-engineering session. But the clients were thrilled. Rather than edit it into obedience, they sold their property and bought a larger parcel to the east.

As Jake recalls, “He said, ‘I love the painting, but we need to find a different canvas. It doesn’t make sense to invest this amount on the current site, but I want to do this house.’ The project was quickly redesigned for the new property; it happened fast and was a wonderful substitution.”



Settled In

Adapted to its new site, the house is spread out to respond to nature and over 350 feet of lake frontage—a rare find that combined several lots. At more than 16,000 square feet, its interlocking wings accommodate their large extended family while creating comfortable zones for the couple when they’re alone. A guest entrance and a family



Left and above: When they're alone, the couple spends much of their time in the sunroom and on the adjacent pool terrace, which also faces their primary suite. *Below:* An office overlooks the lake on the opposite side of the house.

entrance help to create these divisions of space. The wing to the left, or north, contains the family entrance, the couple's two-bedroom primary suite, and a laundry and powder room, while a perpendicular wing jutting east, toward the lake, houses an eat-in kitchen and sunroom. These two wings form an L shape that defines the pool terrace. Next to the kitchen, a spacious great room and adjacent dining room connect the main entry and daily living spaces with three guest suites to the west and a study at the back of the house.

"When you have a larger home, it's important to create different experiences and have something that feels like home base—here it's the kitchen and great room—settling all these spaces that flow around it," Celeste says.

The house also settles into the landscape—no small feat for its size—thanks to the one-story height and irregular

but tidy footprint; you don't see the whole structure at once. Long, linear brick from Denmark lends a quiet scale. So do the thermally broken steel windows that Celeste's team designed with the manufacturer to achieve a thin profile. "Window patterning is an important element of the house," she says. Varying the window sizes and mullion patterns allowed for operable panes and reflects the character of the outdoors. "When you're looking at a group of trees, there's an organic pattern to them," she says, whereas uniform windows have a manmade feel. Some of the openings contain ribbed glass or are layered with dark metal screens to create rhythm and privacy.

Deep roof overhangs ease the transition between outside and inside. In that, Celeste is influenced by early modernists like Rudolph Schindler and Frank Lloyd Wright. "Overhangs are practical because rainwater falls away from the windows," she says. "Architecturally I do it because it's like breaking up the volume in three dimensions. The roof is meeting the sky in a soft way, without sharp edges. It creates shade and a sense of place as you move out."

The front courtyard and rear terracing also knit landscape to house. To accommodate a 10-foot rise from north to south, the southern elevation is partially embedded in the earth, and a series of low site walls and terraces on the northeast extend the pool and outdoor rooms toward the bluff's edge. "We changed the elevation where the pool drops down, bringing the landscape into those spaces, so there's not a massive terrace" against the house, Celeste says. "And when you come in at the front door, the house wraps around you, creating an outdoor courtyard" that anchors the house to the land.



Push and Pull

Choreography plays a necessary role in the approach. A row of closely planted trees marks the main driveway. It pulls up to a parking court bounded by a discreet garage that opens to a secondary family driveway and entrance on the opposite side. “At some point in the middle of the project, those driveways were connected; it was a little congested and detracted from the nature feel,” Celeste says. “At the end we came back to the original idea of two separate driveways.” The family entrance pauses at its own gracious foyer before continuing into the kitchen and primary suite.

Straight ahead inside the main entrance, a glass bump-out was designed for the grand piano, a family heirloom. The adjacent great room has glass sliders on both sides, in effect joining the lake to the front courtyard, where another bump-out accommodates the dining room. “There’s a tension between the piano that pushes out to the lake, and the dining room that pushes out toward the front courtyard,” Celeste says. “They host 30-person dinners, and she wanted to be able to seat a lot of people at a table.”

Wood and stone find their way into most interior spaces, reinforcing the connection to nature. A planked-walnut Boffi kitchen sets the tone for the rest of the house: to create a continuum, walnut veneer for cabinets and passage doors throughout the house came from the same Boffi source in Italy. “Full-height doors on either side of the Boffi system are made by our cabinet-maker, and you can’t tell the difference,” Celeste says. Beyond the kitchen, a sunroom fitted out with a bar and fireplace extends out toward the lake. Its 8-foot-long slider opens to the backyard, and a 6-foot slider on the side leads to the pool.

Indeed, the kitchen is positioned to seamlessly connect to every part of daily life. Continuous with the great room, it is nevertheless offset with motorized steel-and-glass doors so that the spaces can feel separate or connected. The great room’s higher ceiling and clerestory further enlarge the space, but furniture groupings invite intimacy. At the kitchen end of the room is a small game table and cozy seating around an organically shaped coffee table where guests can relax with their drinks and chat with the cook in the kitchen. On the opposite side of the great room, a fireplace and its minimalist stone surround are ensconced in walnut panels.

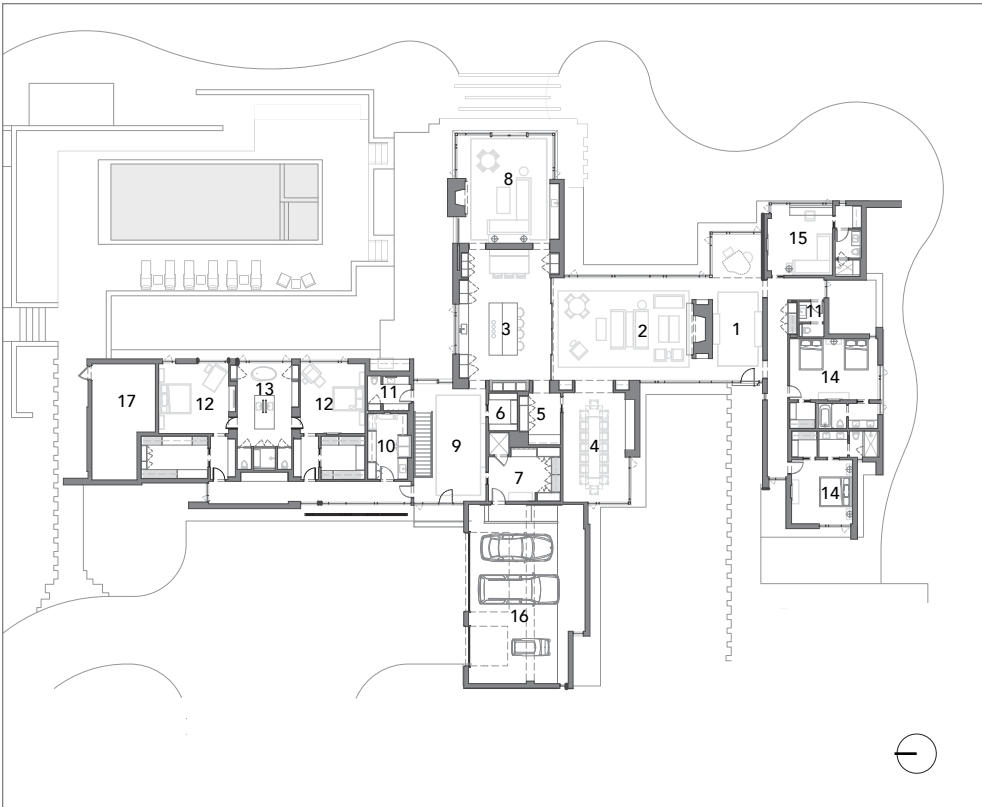
“I like to use natural wood and stone if I have a choice,” Celeste says. “There’s a depth to it you can feel.” Soft green Jadore quartzite slabs line niches in the sunroom, powder room, and dining room, while a different stone was used in the baths. “We found these beautiful things and then designed around them,” she says.

The primary suite, where two bedrooms share a central bath, is a realm unto itself. It, too, is oriented outward with floor-to-ceiling glass gazing toward the lake. Although the pool terrace sits close by, its lower elevation and intermediate plantings keep it from being a focal point. On this northeast side, a series of retaining walls help to create close-up garden views.

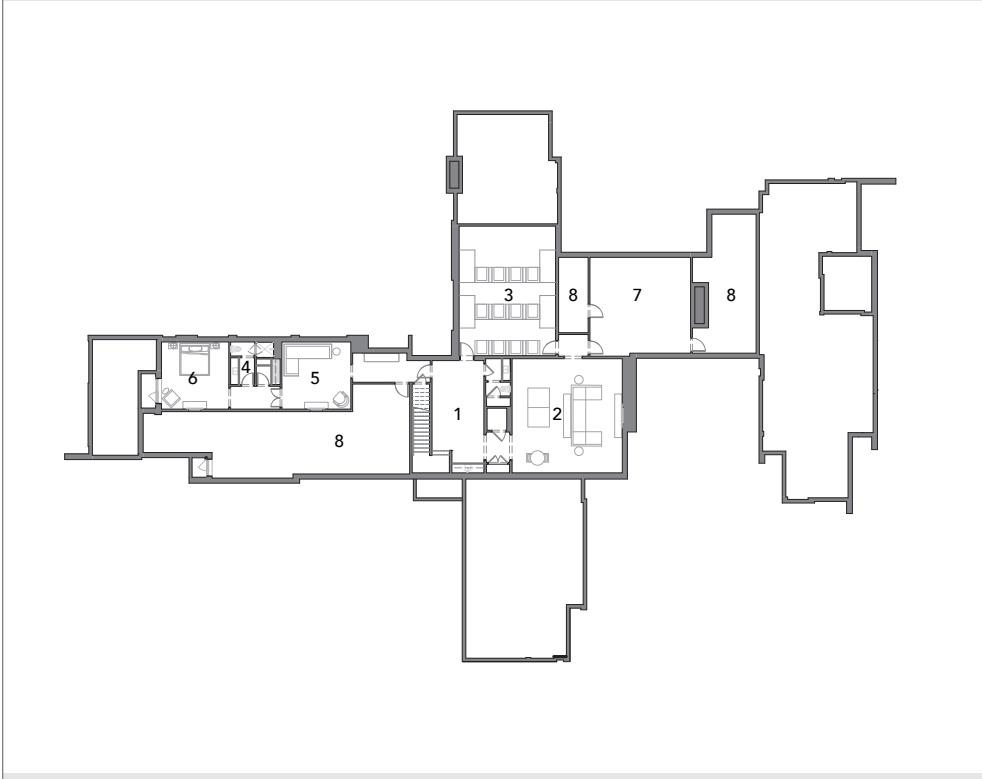
Similar land vignettes occur at the other end of the house in the two-bedroom guest wing. This part of the house includes an office facing the lake, as though at the prow of a ship. “We created a landscape moment where you’re walking down the hall from the great room toward a full-length window,” Celeste says. “We created a window well there because the grade is high. When you move through the house, you’re still seeing out.”



The serene, two-bedroom primary suite and bath look directly over the pool terrace, which sits at a lower elevation to preserve views of the lake. Lush plantings against the house also help to obscure the pool hardscape.



FIRST-FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry Hall | 2. Great Room | 3. Kitchen | 4. Dining Room | 5. Butler's Pantry
6. Pantry | 7. Mudroom | 8. Sunroom | 9. Family Entry | 10. Laundry | 11. Powder Room
12. Primary Bedroom | 13. Primary Bath | 14. Guest Bedroom | 15. Study | 16. Garage | 17. Mechanical Room



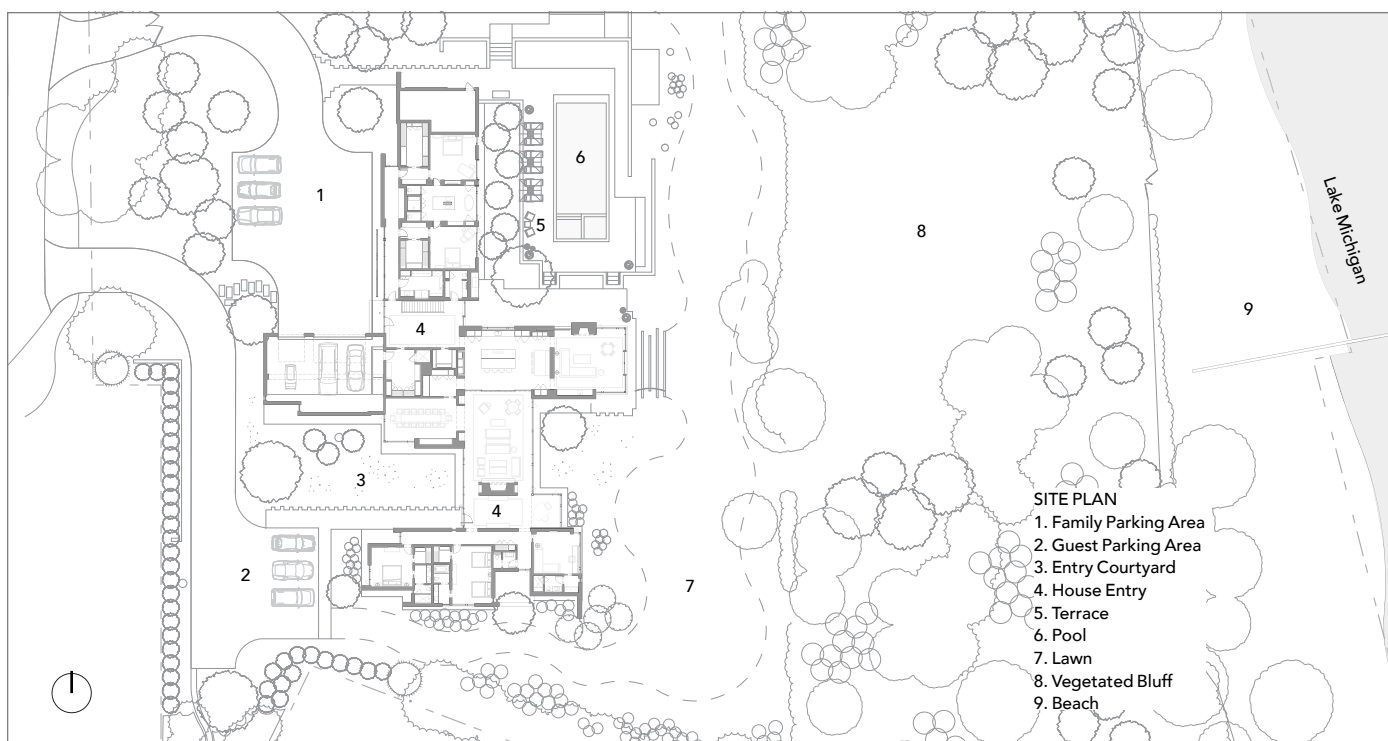
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN | 1. Stair Hall | 2. Rec Room | 3. Theater Room | 4. Powder Room
5. Guest Lounge | 6. Guest Bedroom | 7. Storage | 8. Mechanical

Team Effort

Technical complexities inevitably mount on a project of this scope. For Jake, it meant coordinating the work of many different trades-people. “We had an acoustical plastered ceiling in the great room and Boffi doing the kitchen and the bar, and we brought in three different millworkers, along with multiple custom metal fabricators,” he says. Wind-driven rain is a given on bluff locations and required a thoroughly waterproofed and sealed building envelope, including the basement caretaker’s room, rec room, and theater.

The almost 4-acre parcel presented its own redevelopment challenges. “The regrading of the site was intense,” Jake says. Along with the removal of a recessed sport court, the owners asked them to take down an old house on another part of the property piece by piece and salvage everything from appliances to studs. Working with Sara Furlan of Mariani Landscape, Jake’s crew oversaw the required bluff restoration, stormwater management systems, landscaping and hardscaping, and construction of a funicular that provides access to the beach. Many trees were protected, others were brought in, and existing boulders were repurposed.

In the end, the house lets the owners live large or small on one level, while remaining visually light on the land. “We’re always looking to create modern houses that don’t have an ego,” Celeste says, “because modernism connects us to nature. Modern architecture is meant to be flexible, lived in, and open to nature’s beauty, which is something that everyone can experience.” 



Shoreline Reflections

Highland Park, Illinois

ARCHITECT: Celeste Robbins, AIA, Robbins Architecture and Interiors, Winnetka, Illinois

BUILDER: Jacob Goldberg, Goldberg General Contracting, Inc., Chicago

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Andrea Goldman, Glencoe, Illinois

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Sara Furlan, Mariani Landscape, Lake Bluff, Illinois

CIVIL ENGINEER: IG Consulting, Wheeling, Illinois

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Bob Magruder, Goodfriend Magruder Structure PLLC, Chicago

LIGHTING DESIGNER: AKLD Lighting Design, Wilmette, Illinois

A/V CONSULTANT: AV Integration Group, Highland Park, Illinois

KITCHEN DESIGNER: Boffi

PROJECT SIZE: 16,511 square feet

SITE SIZE: 3.6 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: \$980 per square foot

PHOTOGRAPHY: Roger Davies

KEY PRODUCTS

ALUMINUM SCREENS: Modern Metals

CABINETRY: Boffi, Wood Logic

CLADDING: Brick from Petersen Tegl / Kolumba K91

COOKING VENT HOOD: Boffi

COOKTOP: Boffi 4-burner Pitt system

COUNTERTOPS: J'Adore, Cambria, Cosentino (outdoor kitchen)

DISHWASHER: Miele

ENTRY DOORS: Hopes Windows

FASCIA: Painted Extria

FAUCETS: California Faucets, Graff, Newport Brass, California Faucets

FIREPLACE: Courtaud Gris

FLOORING: Apex Wood Floors, Surfaces, Artistic Tile

GARAGE DOORS: Raynor

HARDWARE: Wilmette Hardware, Boffi

HOME CONTROL SYSTEMS: Josh AI

HUMIDITY CONTROL: Clean Comfort

HVAC: Mitsubishi air-source heat pumps

ICEMAKER: Sub-Zero

INSULATION/HOUSEWRAP: WRB: Vapro-Shield SA

HOT TUB/SPA: Downes Pools

LIGHTING: Tech Lighting Element

LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEMS: Lutron Palladiom

OUTDOOR APPLIANCES: Sub-Zero (refrigerator and ice maker), Lynx (grill)

OVENS: Miele

PASSAGE DOOR HARDWARE:

PAVING: Indiana Limestone Company

PAINTS/STAINS: Benjamin Moore

RADIANT HEATING: Hydronic boiler by NTI

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Sub-Zero

ROOFING: Modified Bitumen Assembly

SECURITY SYSTEMS: Keyth Security

SINKS: Kohler

SKYLIGHTS: Velux

SOFFITS: Senergy painted stucco

SPECIALTY APPLIANCES: Wolf microwave and warming drawer

TOILETS: TOTO

THERMAL AND MOISTURE BARRIERS: Closed cell SPF

VANITIES AND PEDESTAL LAVS: Wood Logic

VENTILATION: Panasonic

WASHER/DRYER: LG

WINDOW SHADING SYSTEM: Lutron Sivoia

WINDOWS AND WINDOW WALL SYSTEMS: Hopes Windows

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero



Outer Limits

Three rural houses offer their occupants a sensory reset.

BY CHERYL WEBER

Kirigami House

POWDER MOUNTAIN, UTAH
SPARANO + MOONEY ARCHITECTURE

Sitting at an elevation of almost 9,000 feet in the Wasatch Mountains, this house for an intergenerational family reflects not just its stark surroundings but the owners' Asian heritage. They use the house in all four seasons and wanted a quiet place that would contract for just two people or expand for a full-fledged family reunion. The location is both remote and on the radar. Although in the photos it looks like it's all by itself, in fact it's at the end of a neighborhood street, which ends at a ski run. "The lot is almost urban sized, 60 by 100 feet, and slopes from north to south," says project architect Seth Striefel.

Local design codes specify that new buildings must conform to the natural topography. This one stacks into the hillside, with the garage and entry at the bottom of the slope along with a spa and sauna, mudroom, and three bedrooms. Upstairs is the main living area, another bedroom, and a media room, while the primary suite sits 5 feet higher, at the top of the slope. Within that parti and





A wedge-shaped courtyard cuts into the massing on the main living area, which has uninterrupted views. A scullery is hidden behind sliding doors opposite the island (above).

programming, the building artfully considers how materials are made—and who it’s for.

“The clients were open-minded aesthetically,” says principal Anne Mooney, FAIA. “We’ve found people with second homes to be more adventurous than with primary residences and really engaged in the process. They were interested in blending Asian aspects of the house—programming like the onsen and spa areas—and Western things like a media room and bunkroom for their guests.”

Thin Skin

The Eastern concept of cutting into the architectural massing to create indoor-outdoor experiences influenced the firm’s conceptual work on this project. For example, a wedge shape forms a deep notch in the floor plan between the main living area and primary suite, opening out to a side courtyard. On a larger scale, the aesthetic philosophy of *kirigami*, or the Japanese art of paper cutting and folding, helped to generate the building’s form. Custom steel







Following the slope of the land, the primary suite sits 5 feet above the main level. Top: A window and desk outside the primary suite is on axis with the stairs.

panels clad the house and wrap into its subtle folds. Some of the metal panels are solid for privacy and solar protection; others are perforated to frame views and admit dappled light. “The panels are detailed to create special views to different aspects of the landscape—mountain or sunset views, close in and long range,” Seth says. “You can see all the way to the Uinta Mountains and the Great Salt Lake through one small spot on the site, it’s so high up.”

Installed above the board-formed-concrete foundation, the durable metal panels were applied as a rainscreen over continuous rigid insulation. “We were

trying to use a vernacular material, just a simple standing seam,” Anne says.

“We started out with a zinc material—it’s pretty flat—then moved to this highly corrosion-resistant steel and zinc composite that has color variations.” Set in the landscape, the panels have a more natural finish than zinc and respond to the environment—they look different in morning light than in the afternoon and at sunset, she says.

Because of its high zinc content, the surface will look consistent through the years. “That’s another thing we thought about from the beginning—having a low-maintenance home that doesn’t

require finishes to be applied every few years,” she says. “It’s important for a vacation home because you want to spend your time enjoying it.”

Into the Light

Whether the occupants are coming in after a ski outing or to start their vacation, the lower level practically insists that they decompress. Inside the front pivot door, a sunny, double-height stair hall is a threshold where people can sit down and take off their shoes. The shoe cubby wraps up along the stair landing and becomes additional storage. And its materials set the stage for the rest of the house, with

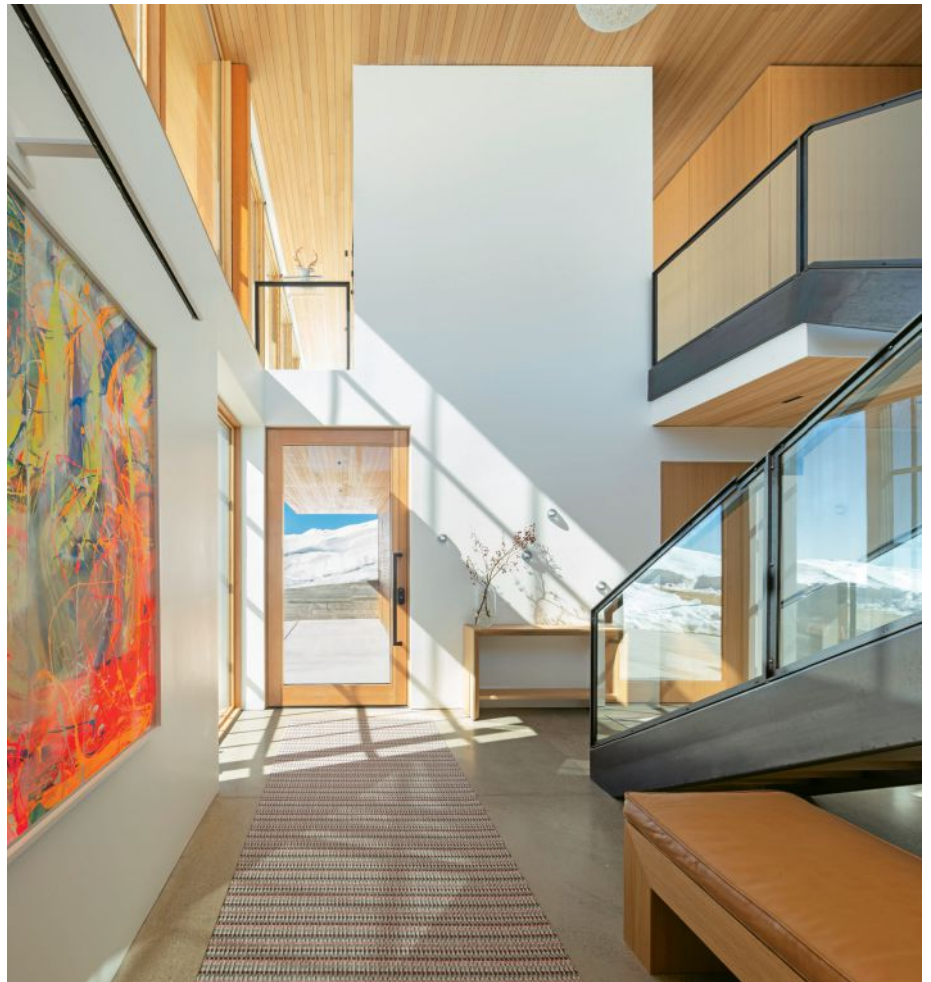


white oak cabinetry and hem-fir ceilings that run out to exterior soffits, where the wood is thermally modified to increase its durability.

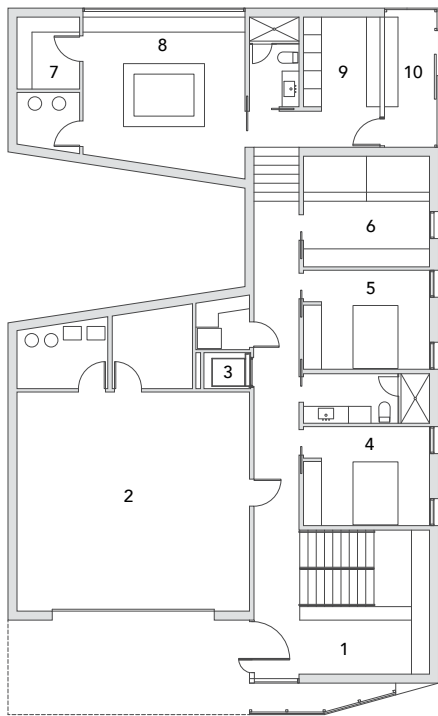
Two bedrooms and a bunkroom lie along a corridor on the ground level. Just off the ski launchpad at the rear is a cedar-lined sauna and spa with a hot tub sunk into the floor. There's also a mudroom with grate flooring and blackened steel lockers for ski storage and hiking and biking equipment. The stainless-steel floor grating sits several inches above a concrete slab with floor drains. "When you're coming in off the mountain covered in snow or mud, that floor layer takes care of it before you move into the house," Anne says.

Upstairs, the living, dining, and kitchen area is one big space, opening out to the angled courtyard. "It faces the sunset but is also a cool place to sit and watch people skiing by the house," Seth says. "The glass-railed terrace is about 5 feet above grade, and in a good year the snow is the same level as the terrace."

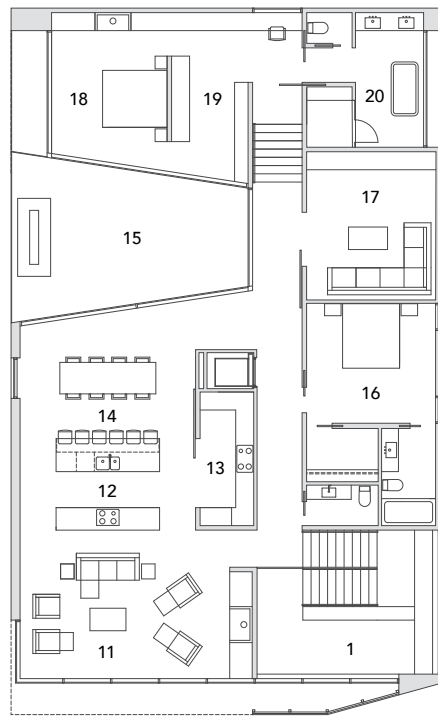
Just off the great room, a bar niche serves the deck, dining area, and a windowless media room across the hall, which is equipped with a projector and acoustically separated from the rest of the house. Back in the kitchen, a double island has expansive



Top, left and right: The ground-level entry offers conveniently placed storage cabinetry on the landing. Above: The cedar-lined sauna and spa features a sunken hot tub.



MAIN-LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



UPPER-LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



1. Entry | 2. Garage | 3. Elevator | 4. Bedroom 1 | 5. Bedroom 2 | 6. Bunkroom | 7. Sauna | 8. Spa | 9. Mudroom | 10. Ski Landing | 11. Living | 12. Kitchen | 13. Scullery | 14. Dining | 15. Courtyard | 16. Guest Bedroom | 17. Media | 18. Primary Bedroom | 19. Primary Closet | 20. Primary Bath

Kirigami House

Powder Mountain, Utah

ARCHITECT: Anne Mooney, FAIA, and John Sparano, FAIA, principals in charge; Seth Striefel, project architect, Sparano + Mooney Architecture, Salt Lake City, Utah

BUILDER: Garth Hare, Benchmark Modern, Salt Lake City

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Meagan Westhoven, Westhoven Design, Santa Monica, California

PROJECT SIZE: 5,740 square feet

SITE SIZE: 0.14 acre

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Matt Winquist

KEY PRODUCTS

CABINETRY: Rift white oak (kitchen and baths), blackened steel (mudroom)

CABINETRY HARDWARE: Berenson

CLADDING: TEKKō Metals standing seam and perforated panels, hem-fir wood siding and soffits

COOKTOP, VENT HOOD, DISHWASHER, OVENS: Bosch

COUNTERTOPS: Absolute Black Granite (kitchen), Caesarstone (baths)

DECKING: Thermory

ENGINEERED LUMBER: TJs

ENTRY DOORS: Marvin pivot door

FAUCETS: Dornbracht, California

FIREPLACE: Montigo (living room), Spark (outdoor)

FLOORING: Polished concrete

INSULATION: Rockwool (walls), Polyiso (roofs)

LIGHTING: Sisternalux (exterior), Sonneman, Bocci, Mooi, Iguzzini, DMF (interior)

MICROWAVE DRAWER: Sharp

PAINTS/STAINS/COATINGS: Tnemec Company (steel columns, railing), Sherwin-Williams (interior paint)

PASSAGE DOORS/HARDWARE: INOX (pocket doors), Emtek (swing doors)

REFRIGERATOR: GE

ROOFING: Carlisle TPO

SINKS: Rohl, Badeloft, Lacava, Elkay (utility)

SURFACING: Rift white oak paneling, hem-fir ceilings

THERMAL AND MOISTURE BARRIERS: Fluid-applied AWB

TOILETS: TOTO

VENTILATION: CERV whole-house exhaust

WASHER/DRYER: Samsung

WINDOW SHADING SYSTEMS: Lutron motorized shades

WINDOWS AND WINDOW WALL SYSTEMS: Marvin

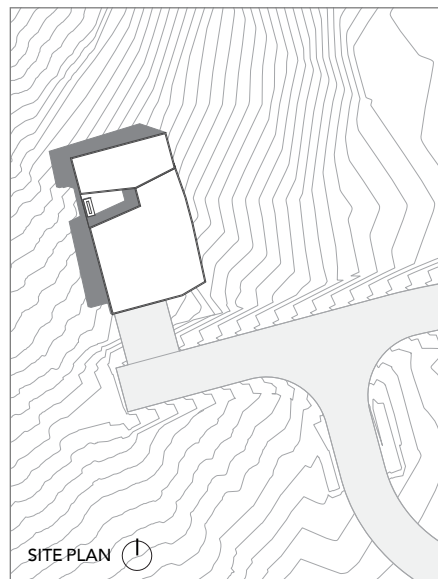
WINE REFRIGERATOR: Samsung



views out to the courtyard on the north and across the living room to the south through full-height windows that turn the corner, part of the cantilever over the lower-level entry. In this main living space, seamless surfaces keep the focus on the outdoors: sliding white oak doors hide a scullery kitchen and the refrigerator, and there are no upper cabinets.

“All the prep work gets done in the scullery; the other areas are clean and more refined,” Anne says. Black granite countertops complement the more tactile Vermont stone around the fireplace, and the great room’s recessed LED lights are another polished component. Aligned with the ceiling’s wood patterns, they emit a tremendous amount of light but are subtle about it, Anne says.

Throughout, the interiors balance the sense of prospect and refuge. A



smaller window in the dining area admits landscape views while limiting exposure to the western sun’s glare.

Upstairs, another window and built-in desk outside the primary suite frame a mountain view. “You’re looking right over the cat track that goes behind the house, one of the main groomed paths that gets skiers across the mountain,” Seth says. And the primary bath, with its steam shower and floating vanity, has a stunning view from the tub.

This house is built for the long haul. An elevator will make multilevel living easy as the occupants age. And strategies such as vertical-grain fir window systems that open at key locations to optimize prevailing breezes, a super-insulated shell, two battery storage walls, and native landscape reseeding will continue to minimize its ecological footprint. The result is a house that treads lightly in its mountain setting while providing a timeless retreat. 

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Integrity is another.



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White Oak Farm

HUDSON VALLEY, NEW YORK
AMANDA MARTOCCHIO ARCHITECTURE

When Amanda Martocchio's clients purchased 200 acres of undeveloped land in the Hudson Valley, they didn't need to spend time getting to know it. The property holds formative memories for the husband, who grew up playing in the surrounding woods with his brothers, and when the elderly former owner put it on the market, he and his wife jumped on the sale. Amidst its meadows, rolling hills, and dense oak forest, they envisioned not only building their forever home but also preserving the woods and developing the pastures for horses. Their top priority, of course, was to connect architectural-ly to the bucolic landscape.

Honoring the clients' desire to limit the house's size as viewed from the road, and for a high perch from which to enjoy the views, the design team set the house near the top of a hill but deep within the site. From the approach it reads as a horizontal structure that hugs the land, while additional square footage is hidden in a walk-out lower level.

Early on, Amanda's team worked with Stimson, the well-known New England-based landscape architecture firm, to preserve stands of mature oaks that are now expertly framed from within the house. The collaboration also produced a lawn panel and incrementally less-formal native planting swaths that



extend from the footprint, knitting it to two small outbuildings—a pool house and a garden house—on the property’s south side.

The entry sequence is deliberately understated. A jutting garage defines the entry arcade, which meets a bar-shaped living room with glass on both sides. Once you step inside, the view descends. “On the entry side of the living room is that long grass panel, the only manicured lawn,” says Amanda, AIA. “The other side opens to the terrace at the back, which overlooks the hill that slopes away and the pasture beyond.”

With their three children soon heading off to lives of their own, the couple asked for a house where they





Exterior fieldstone salvaged from an upstate New York barn comes inside on the keeping room walls and fireplace. Behind the column (above), a slatted partition (shown on page 46) separates the room from the stairway to the lower level.

could age in place. Everything they need is on the entry level: the living room joins the primary suite on the north with the kitchen, pocket office, and “keeping room,” or den, on the south. “It’s a combination of open and intimate spaces,” Amanda says. Likewise, the interior choreography draws a bead on this special place, with different window types framing a mix of close and expansive views.

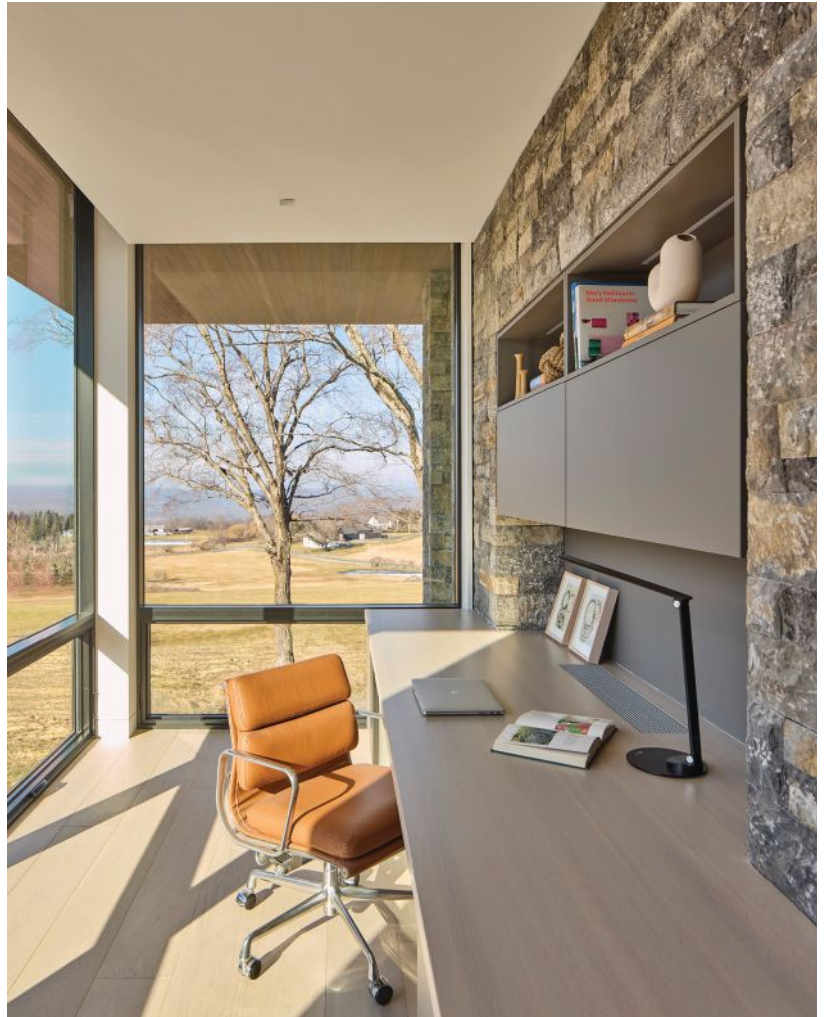
“The primary suite feels quite protected. It cantilevers over the hill and has a relationship to the meadow and trees, and it opens to the living room terrace,” she says. The office on the other side of the house also sits high up, with meadows beyond. Near the kitchen, a sunny staircase descends to the secondary living spaces, including a media room and den, bedroom suite, gym, sauna, changing room for the pool, and the boys’ bath and bedroom, where four bunks welcome friends overnight.

Precision Drill

Exterior forms and materials give clues to their function. The arcade with repetitive steel columns enters at the side of the taller living/dining volume; stone clads the lower-height primary suite, setting it apart and imbuing it with a sense of privacy. Preweathered Philippine mahogany on the garage and main living volumes is inset with aluminum-composite black window surrounds. “This material allows us to create continuous, smooth, crisp surfaces that maintain their color,” Amanda says. “It’s adhered to the rainscreen furring strips with a special kind of glue so there are no exposed fasteners. We love it for long fascias, corner conditions, and window surrounds.”

Achieving those crisp lines required the use of special furring strips behind the metal panels, says project manager Michael Grey of Structure Works Construction. “We used well-squared-off, planed, high-quality lumber so our measurement points would be super accurate.”

On the rear façade, a stone-clad wall runs the full length of the lower level, serving as a solid base for the cantilevered glass-and-steel primary suite and office volumes. Large vertical stone piers with internal steel framing continue from the lower patio up through the kitchen, forming the office wall on one side and the rear wall of



Top: A cantilevered corner office looks northwest over horse pastures. Stone piers continue inside there and in the kitchen, where a column forms the back of the keeping room fireplace (above).



Above, left to right: Wood slats in the northwest-facing stairwell bring the meadow into focus. The primary bedroom exudes calm. The family's two boys and guests sleep in cabinet-like pods.



the keeping room fireplace on the other. Reclaimed from a farm in upstate New York, the natural stone was sized in situ. "It had to be made thin enough to work with, and we were only allowed quarter-inch joints, at a maximum, between the stones, so there was a lot of labor-intensive dressing of the stone on site to make it work," Michael says. Nor was the initial site excavation easy. "It was solid rock," he says, "with sod no deeper than 2 or 3 inches."

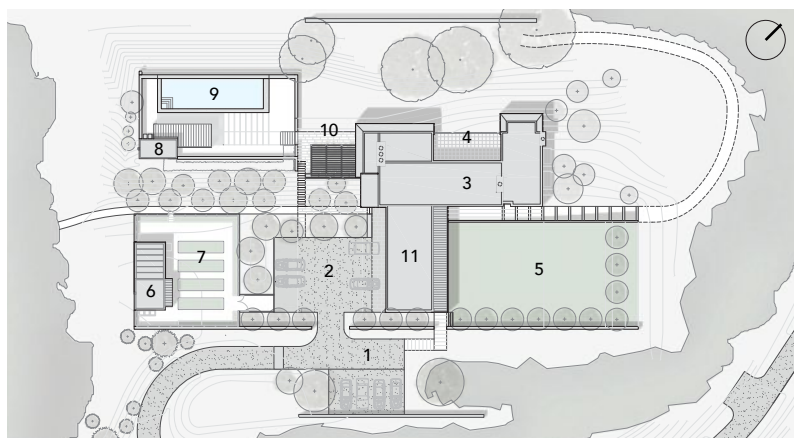
LVL joists were interspersed with steel to support the 6-foot cantilevered floors, 12-foot

cantilevered corner roof, expansive stonework, living room span, and heavy glazing. "The framing was complex," Michael adds. "Amanda used a thorough system of control lines to make sure the structural drawing set worked well with the architectural drawings."

Quality of Light

Interiors are orderly and calming—the result of that precision—with textures that play to the light streaming roughly east to west across the living room. A sliding door system, 13 feet tall by 35½ feet wide, opens to a large rear terrace, so that the room merges with the outdoors for gatherings. "It's wonderful to be able to turn to one side and see a different landscape experience from the other side—one plainer and formally composed [the lawn panel], the other steep and wooded with long views," Amanda says, adding that energy performance was top of mind for this house, on a windy part of the hill. Triple-pane windows were used in key locations, and motorized sunshades are detailed to disappear into the ceiling.

Material colors and textures reference the exterior's mahogany and natural stone siding, which show up on vertical surfaces inside. In the living room, pale, white-oak floors and shelving call out the creaminess of the fireplace stone. A cantilevered,



SITE PLAN | 1. Guest Parking | 2. Family Parking | 3. Main House | 4. Raised Terrace
5. Lawn Panel | 6. Garden House | 7. Garden | 8. Pool House | 9. Pool
10. Lower Terrace | 11. Garage

manufactured-stone fireplace bench provides a dark accent that matches the mahogany siding, which slides in from an outside wall. A similar theme exists in the kitchen—a combination of dark cabinets, light countertops, and monolithic stone walls.

Vertical slats veil the keeping room from the stairway to the lower level, animated by a double-height window and hanging spheres of light. “The screening makes it a nice zone really focusing you on that view,” Amanda says. “The stairwell faces northwest, so they get nice afternoon light and elegant shadows through the slats.” Downstairs in the boys’ room, a cabinetmaker built four bunks joined by a small stair; each wood alcove has a wall-mounted reading light, a thin light strip along the top, and a niche for books and phone charging.

Here, one can appreciate the architecture while understanding that it’s not so much about the house as it is the land. In ways both straightforward and



subtle, the building’s forms, colors, and textures reflect the site’s natural features. It’s a fitting response for a client who understood early on the allure of open spaces—and this place in particular. 

White Oak Farm

Hudson Valley, New York

ARCHITECT: Amanda Martocchio, AIA, principal in charge; Lucy Kelly, Brian Foster, Leander Grayson, Smit Patel, project team, Amanda Martocchio Architecture, New Canaan, Connecticut

BUILDER: Structure Works Construction, Millbrook, New York

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Amanda Martocchio Architecture and Ash Staging

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Stimson Studio, Cambridge, Massachusetts

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Edward Stanley Engineers, LLC, Guilford, Connecticut

CIVIL ENGINEER: D.C. Engineering, PC, Meridian, Idaho

MECHANICAL ENGINEER: N&S Supply, Fishkill, New York

SELECTED MILLWORK DESIGNER: Gregory Hitchcock Design, New York

SURVEYOR: Terry Bergendorff Collins, Brewster, New York

PROJECT SIZE: 8,820 square feet

SITE SIZE: 200 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Michael Biondo Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

APPLIANCES: Wolf (cooktop), Gaggenau (vent hood, wall oven, refrigerator and freezer, wine cooler, steam oven), Bosch (dishwasher), Dacor (warming drawer), Samsung (washer/dryer), Sub-Zero (undercounter beverage center refrigerator), Alfresco Grill (outdoor)

BUNKROOM FABRICATOR: Ventures Arc’l Millwork

CABINETRY: Custom by Gregory Hitchcock Design, Amanda Martocchio Architecture, Arrital Ak_Project

CLADDING: T&G horizontal Philippine mahogany, Alucobond Plus ACM cladding panels

COUNTERTOPS: Sapienstone

ENERGY RECOVERY VENTILATOR: RenewAire

ENTRY DOOR CUSTOM PULL: Rocky Mountain Hardware

ENTRY PIVOT DOORS AND HARDWARE: Fontrick, Fritzjurgan (hardware)

FAUCETS: Dornbracht, Riobel, Fantini

FIREPLACE MANTEL: RSDG (custom)

FIREPLACES: Earthcore Isokem, Spark Modern Fires Direct Vent

FLOORING: Bespoke Engineered Wood Flooring

HUMIDITY CONTROL: Aprilaire

HVAC SYSTEMS: Mitsubishi

INSULATION: Polyiso

LIGHTING: Kreon (throughout), Shakuff, Kadur Drizzle Globe Pendant, Ralph Pucci, Linear Cumulus Chandelier by Ted Abramczyk, Kuzco Lighting

LIGHTING AND SHADE CONTROL SYSTEMS: Lutron

MEDICINE CABINETS: Robern

PASSAGE DOORS AND HARDWARE: Canaan Distributors, Emtek

RADIANT FLOOR HEATING: Uponor Quik Trak

ROOFING AND TRUS SYSTEM: GAF, TPO

SINKS: Julien, Arrital Ak_Project, Kraus

SOUND INSULATION: Johns Manville Sound + Fire Block

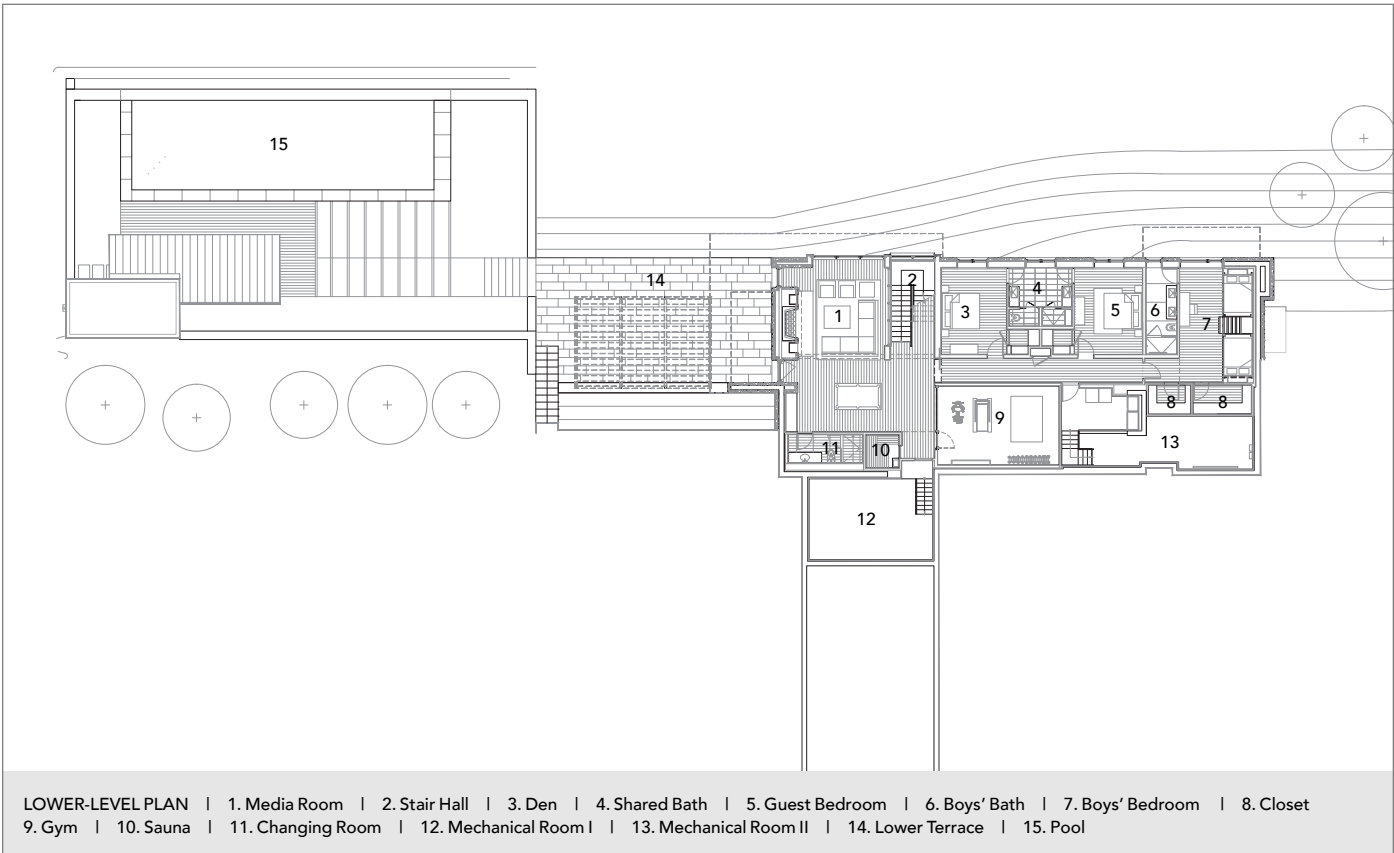
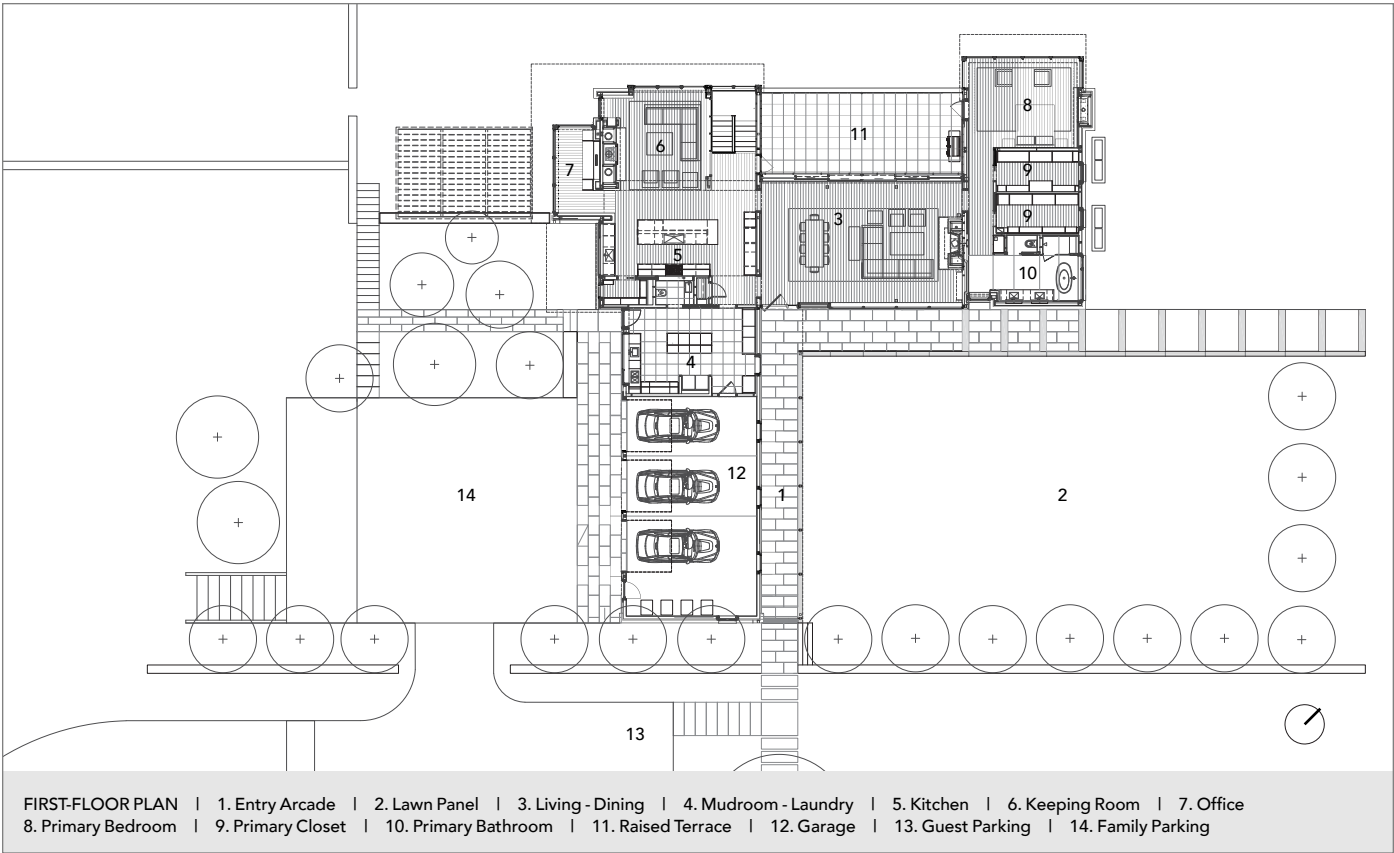
STRUCTURAL STEEL: Winnick Steel

THERMAL AND MOISTURE BARRIERS: Tuff-n-Dri Waterproofing System

TILE: Caliza Tile, Porcelanosa (terrace)

TOILETS: Duravit, TOTO

WINDOWS AND DOORS: Marvin Windows (throughout), Twin Forks Windows, Fleetwood Windows & Doors (living room sliders)





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WINDOWS AND DOORS





Spring Creek Residence

ALTA, WYOMING
BALDWIN ARCHITECTS

An enviable aspect of many well-designed destination homes is their genius for economically accommodating overnight guests. Typically set in pristine natural surroundings, these houses are expected to have both an understated visual presence and the ability to expand and contract effortlessly as visitors come and go. This house, near the Wyoming-Idaho state line, achieves those goals with smart massing and some creative sectional moves that have an appealing playfulness.

Baldwin Architects' client had been out jogging when she spotted a house she liked, knocked on the door to ask who designed it, and then called the firm. Her 70-acre property was on meadowland nestled into a mountain valley, and she wanted a modest but densely programmed "cabin." Her dream was for a full-time residence that felt natural for one person but would seamlessly welcome her adult son and his friends for short periods. "They like to have nerf battles, places for them to run around and hide," says Brian Bedrosian, AIA. "So, the loft, living room, multilevel gym/garage area, and how they twist together, was informed by this playfulness and interaction between different spaces in the house."

The 112-foot-long structure was positioned on an angle along the land's gentle contours. In addition to the long, linear footprint, its 6:12 gable shape was the key to fitting in program areas that transform from





A 6:12 pitched roof was the key to fitting in three levels that read as one story. Generous glazing, cathedralized ceilings, white oak millwork, and polished concrete floors keep the house light and airy.

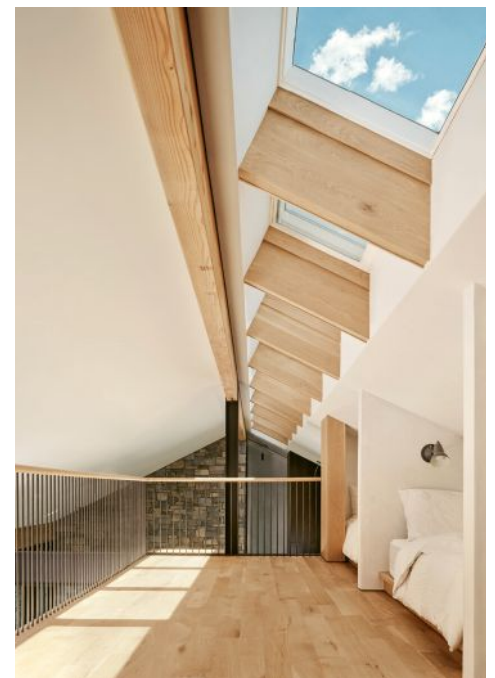
one scale to another under a continuous roof. “Aside from being good at shedding snow, the gable was interesting to us, one of our first, for sure,” says Burton Baldrige, FAIA. “Early on, we realized we needed an efficient form we could execute at a budget number and work sectionally to fit in as much as possible without screaming, ‘I’m a really efficient house’—rather than a throwaway gable like usual over a great room.”

The wood-framed structure includes a bit of steel framing, visible in the living room, to support the long-span glulam ridge beam, and a central stair allows the house to expand and contract with the number of occupants. When the owner is alone, she inhabits the kitchen, dining/living room, and primary suite on the southwest end of the house. When her son visits, a trip up the stair leads to his suite, including a gym and a tiny guest room nook, that pops out of a large rectilinear bay. “That’s the primo view in the whole house—she really loves her son,” Burton says.

Further up into the gable is a sleeping loft with three built-in beds under the



The middle level containing the son's room and office, guest nook, and gym (*above and top right*) rises to a three-bed loft, lit by a long monitor (*right*). A board-formed concrete wall anchors all three levels and echoes the exterior foundation treatment.



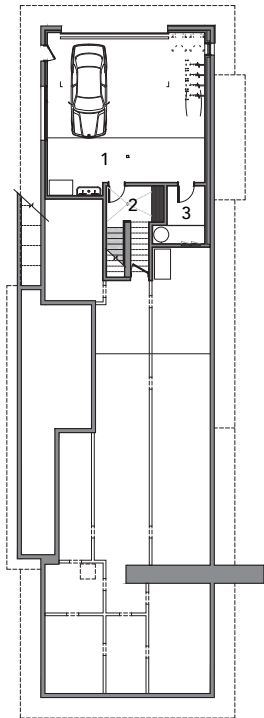
eaves, where a glass monitor—about 12 by 20 feet—keeps it from feeling claustrophobic and funnels light down through the house. “At one point, the house was sited in a more extreme way across the grade to enhance the sectional properties,” Brian says, “but a 6:12 roof pitch allowed us to make use of the common gable and for the upper rooms to be occupiable.”

The Wildland Urban Interface code (WUI) also drove the form and aesthetic. On former grazing land, the property abuts a national forest, and the environmental restrictions were substantial. The low massing and dark cladding keep the structure from being something that people down the valley must contend with, Brian says. While charred wood was considered, stained,

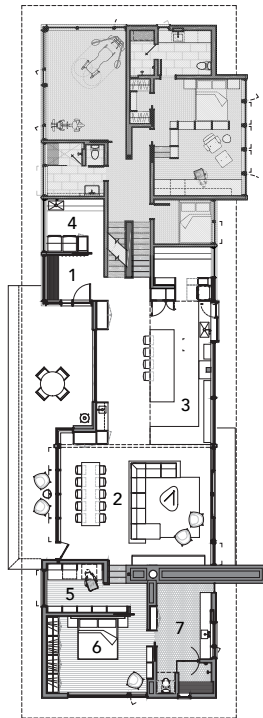
fire-treated fir was chosen for budget and durability reasons, along with a board-formed concrete base.

Hands On

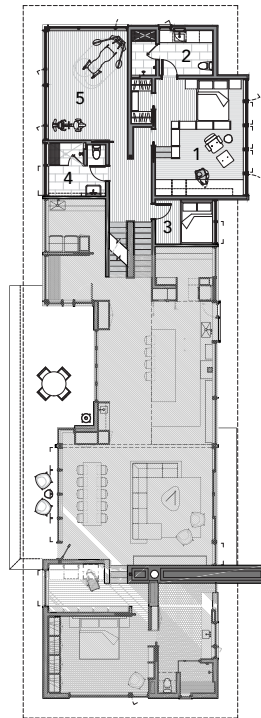
Board-formed concrete reappears inside to support both the stairwell and the pale material palette. The concrete and the stone fireplace surround are a textural counterpoint to the white oak



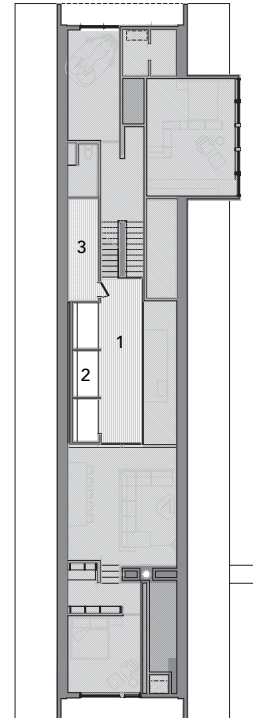
LOWER LEVEL
1. Garage
2. Mudroom
3. Storage



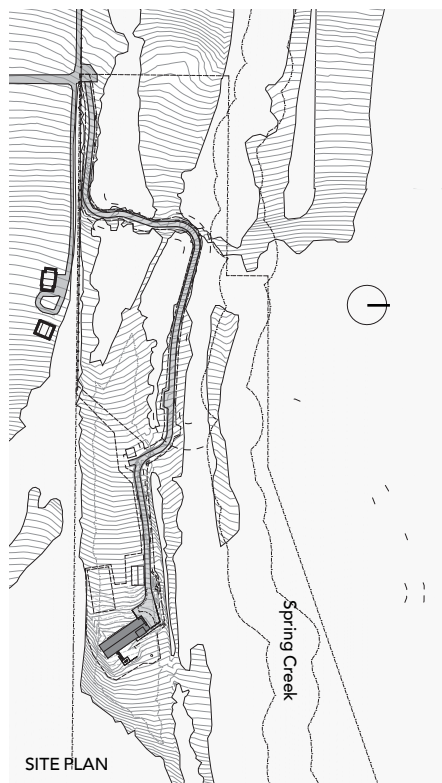
**MAIN LEVEL +
PRIMARY SUITE**
1. Entry
2. Living + Dining Room
3. Kitchen
4. Laundry Room
5. Office
6. Primary Bedroom
7. Primary Bathroom



FAMILY SUITE
1. Secondary Bedroom +
Office
2. Secondary Bathroom
3. Bedroom Nook
4. Guest Bathroom
5. Gym



GUEST LOFT
1. Guest Loft
2. Sleeping Bunks
3. Storage



SITE PLAN

millwork and white plaster surfaces that run through the house, reflecting the abundant natural light. The minimalist stair rail was made from steel dowels anchored into the wood stringer and handrail. Upstairs, the bay window's cedar siding wraps inside along the guest-bed nook. "Wyoming is the end of the supply chain," Burton says. "The balance between rustic and modern was something we had to talk about all the way through. She wasn't thrilled about the wood being knotty, but I think the dialogue between that and the more pristine rift-sawn oak was a better one."

Every room has a take on the outdoors. The living and dining room have opposing glass walls, and her office and built-in bookshelf are positioned in front of a window along the hallway to the bedroom, which has a vaulted ceiling.

The kitchen island was executed like a large table, inspired by images the owner supplied. The cabinets, too, are solid white oak that skews handmade and cabin-like and will wear organically over time. So will the soapstone kitchen counters and the limestone slab with fossil impressions in the primary bath.

"A lot of what we had done previously was hyper modern European cabinetry," Burton says. "She wanted the scale of the hand attached to it. We had fantastic Wyoming carpenters who built the kitchen drawer fronts with integral grip rails."

Outer World

Environmental performance was a priority too. Extra-thick walls and ceilings are filled with insulation that performs above code: R-38 for the radiant-heated floors, R-41 for the walls, and R-77 on



the roof. Operable windows and skylights eliminate the need for mechanical cooling, and an energy recovery ventilator circulates fresh air.

Careful siting of the house eliminated the need to remove trees, and the property gained more with the planting of fire-friendly aspens. Shrubs didn't fare quite as well, but any disturbed chokecherries or other vegetation favored by the local bear, elk, and moose population was replaced in triplicate, and the meadow restored with native grasses and plants.

For builder Joe Montesano, the precise siting was a boon to construction.

"We deal with mountain sites constantly around here, but from day one they had it oriented so perfectly that it slipped right into the landscape," he says. "From digging the foundation, it felt like it was exactly where it needed to be." Framing and interior finishes also fell into place, albeit with more sustained effort. "It looks like one big, long structure, but there were a lot of elements that made it challenging," Joe says. "Even though it's a seemingly singular structure, there's a lot going on. Inside, it doesn't feel like it looks on the outside."

With the Teton mountain range running along behind it, the house feels inherently camp-like, evoking a place for vacation. In that, it offers something for both occupants: for her, it's a full-time sanctuary in nature; for her son, it's a part-time party house. The team enjoyed the experience too—while it lasted. With construction underway during the depths of Covid, after meetings Brian and Burton sometimes hiked in the national park. "The animals became more brazen; a fox carrying its kit in its mouth stopped to pose for a photo," Burton says, adding: "It was such a lovely project, drama-free and joyful and fun." 

Spring Creek Residence

Alta, Wyoming

ARCHITECT: Burton Baldridge, FAIA, project architect; Brian Bedrosian, project manager and principal designer; Andrew Fulcher, senior designer; Clifford Vickrey, designer, Baldridge Architects, Austin, Texas

BUILDER: Wilkinson Montesano, Driggs, Idaho

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Baldridge Architects

CIVIL ENGINEER: Y2 Consultants, Jackson, Wyoming

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: G&S Structural Engineers, Idaho Falls, Idaho

ELECTRICAL ENGINEER: Bradley Engineering, Idaho Falls, Idaho

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT: Intermountain Aquatics, Driggs, Idaho

GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER: Jorgensen Geotechnical, LLC, Jackson, Wyoming

PROJECT SIZE: 4,838 square feet

SITE SIZE: 70 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Casey Dunn

KEY PRODUCTS

APPLIANCES: Wolf, Sub-Zero, Streitman (espresso maker)

BATHROOM HARDWARE: CR Lawrence

DOOR HARDWARE: Rowen and Wren, Accurate

ELECTRICAL DEVICES: Lutron

FIREPLACE: Isokern

LIGHTING: Lambert et Fils, Schoolhouse Electric, Andrew Neyer

PAINT: Benjamin Moore

PLASTER: U.S. Gypsum

PLUMBING: Kohler, TOTO, Thermasol (steam), Alape, Hans Grohe

SIDING: Montana Timber

SKYLIGHTS: Velux

TILE: Clé Tile, Daltile

WINDOWS: Jeld-Wen

Surface Appeal



1



2



3



4

1. SIDE OUT

Vertalla expands the creative possibilities of vinyl siding with striking accent panels and clean vertical lines. Its curated color palette comprises 10 colors from bold hues to neutrals—ideal for adding dimension to exterior elevations. westlakeroyalbuildingproducts.com

2. OUTLET SHOPPING

Electrical switches are often an afterthought, except among the architecture set. London-based Plank Hardware offers its first U.S.-compatible switches and outlets collection with interchangeable, mixed-metal switches, dimmers, and outlets that read as refined architectural details. us.plankhardware.com.

3. HANDLE WITH FLAIR

The art of Ellsworth Kelly and 1980s American sportswear inspired the Vestige collection of cabinetry and appliance hardware from Water Street Brass. Spanning 16 styles, each solid brass piece is offered three ways: all metal, with a contrasting insert, or with an insert matched to the cabinetry. waterstreetbrass.com

4. VOLCANIC CHARACTER

Milan-based architect Matteo Thun is partnering with Florim to offer SensiEtna—colorful wall tiles inspired by the volcanic eruptions of Mount Etna in Sicily. Crafted from lava stone and recycled glass, the textured surfaces are processed to enhance the materials' depth and irregularities. Florim.com



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WILDCAT HOLLOW HOUSE
AUSTIN, TEXAS
SPECHT NOVAK

Poised between a busy road and a panoramic rear view of downtown Austin, Wildcat Hollow House artfully finesses privacy, transparency, and two-level living. A 35% slope squeezed the buildable area, as did a 32-foot height limit measured from the land's natural grade. "We had to massage the form of the house to comply with the requirements," says Jakeb Novak, AIA. Although the front reads as a singular story and volume, the building comprises two levels and two volumes—a guest suite and garage on the north and the main house on the south, which connect via a bridge. "They wanted to have a physical separation between these two components but liked the continuous gesture on the front so it's not apparent there are two structures," he says. Between them, a two-story courtyard scoops light into the walkout lower level.

Privacy measures make an art statement: Bookending the glassy façade, a pair of semi-transparent walls are made of staggered travertine blocks, with a ribbon of garden behind



them. The textured travertine pattern provides privacy by day and emits a glow from the house's interior lights at night. Further strengthening the street presence, a circular concrete stair tower pops up through the low, rectilinear composition.

Once inside, the experience shifts from discreet to dramatic. "The front façade is private, but once you enter, the house dissolves into floor-to-ceiling glass walls and focuses your attention on this incredible view of the Austin city skyline," says Jakeb. "It's hanging off the cliff." The travertine stone will be repeated inside, along with warm-toned walnut and patinaed brass, and rounded furniture will play off the central stair tower.—*Cheryl Weber*

Project: Wildcat Hollow House; architect: Jakeb Novak, AIA, Specht Novak, Austin, Texas; builder: Home as Art, Austin; project size: 4,400 square feet; site size: 1.14 acres; renderings: Specht Novak



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Outer wall: Franklin Lakes 1643, Regal® Select, Matte
Wainscoting: Yorktowne Green HC-133, Advance®, Satin
Crown Molding: Swiss Coffee OC-45, Advance®, Semi-Gloss