



The living area of a Truckee, California, family home, which was designed by architect Cynthia Wang of Studio Ren and interior designer Jamie Bush. The curved club chair by Marmol Radziner is upholstered in a cowhide by Townsend Leather, and the cocktail table, dining table, and sofa and armchairs, which are covered in a Zinc Textile velvet, are custom designs; the light fixture is by Tom Dixon, and a custom-made silk rug tops the polished black concrete floor. For details, see Resources.

# REMOTE POSSIBILITIES

*For a Silicon Valley family that wanted a retreat in the woods but had no intention of going rustic, architect Cynthia Wang and designer Jamie Bush conjure a completely new take on the country cabin that brings urban cool to the Sierra Nevada mountains*

TEXT by JOSEPH GIOVANNINI  
PHOTOGRAPHY by BJÖRN WALLANDER  
PRODUCED  
by ROBERT RUFINO





The mirrored side table in the living area is by Notre Monde, and the fireplace surround is stacked flagstone. **FACING PAGE, FROM TOP:** The house is constructed of western red cedar and flagstone. In the media room, the sofa and chairs are by Ligne Roset, the cocktail tables are by Moroso, and the Serge Mouille light fixture is from Design Within Reach; one wall is clad in gray oak veneer, and the Moroccan rug is custom made. For details, see Resources.

**LONG STORY SHORT:** “They said ‘Tom Ford,’” remembers Los Angeles designer Jamie Bush about what the inspiration might be for his clients’ new Tahoe vacation house. “Tom Ford in the mountains: smoky, dark, sexy, a little moody.”

Short story longer: “We like the integrity of Tom Ford’s clothes, the quality of the fabrics, the cut, the thoroughness,” says Chamath Palihapitiya, an Internet entrepreneur and Facebook alum. “Not just the aesthetic, but the ethic, the creative discipline inside and out.”

Palihapitiya adds that he and his wife, Brigitte Lau, who work in Silicon Valley and live there with their three children, didn’t want a tired, oversize log-cabin cliché but something that reflected the reality of a modern family that uses iPhones and believes in Teslas. “We wanted a reflection of our taste, a modern aesthetic that would embrace our inner voice.”

So the design of the interiors, by Bush, and the architecture of the house, by Los Angeles architect Cynthia Wang of Studio Ren, was to be an act of translation: both Tom Ford and Silicon Valley translated into a design more ambitious than usual in these parts. “We wanted a showcase for the creativity of the people we were working with,” says Palihapitiya, who invests in young talents and entrepreneurs and in things he likes—things as varied as ice cream-store start-ups and the Golden State Warriors, an NBA team he partially owns. An internationally ranked poker player, he also wanted a poker den.





A marble-topped dining table and teak benches by California Living on the covered terrace; the side chair by Lawson-Fenning is upholstered in a Perennials fabric, the ceiling is clad in western red cedar, and the floor tiles are sandstone. FACING PAGE, FROM TOP: The poker room is furnished with Saarinen chairs by Knoll upholstered in an Opuzen mohair, a chandelier by Lindsey Adelman, and sconces by Fuse Lighting; the painting is by Jamie Bush, and the wallcovering is by Elitis. The kitchen cabinetry is by Bulthaup, the oven is by Miele, the stove and hood are by Gaggenau, the sink by Blanco has Dornbracht fittings, and the countertop is quartzite; the custom-made stools are covered in an Edelman leather, and vintage chairs by Pierre Paulin are upholstered in a mohair by Kneedler Fauchère. For details, see Resources.

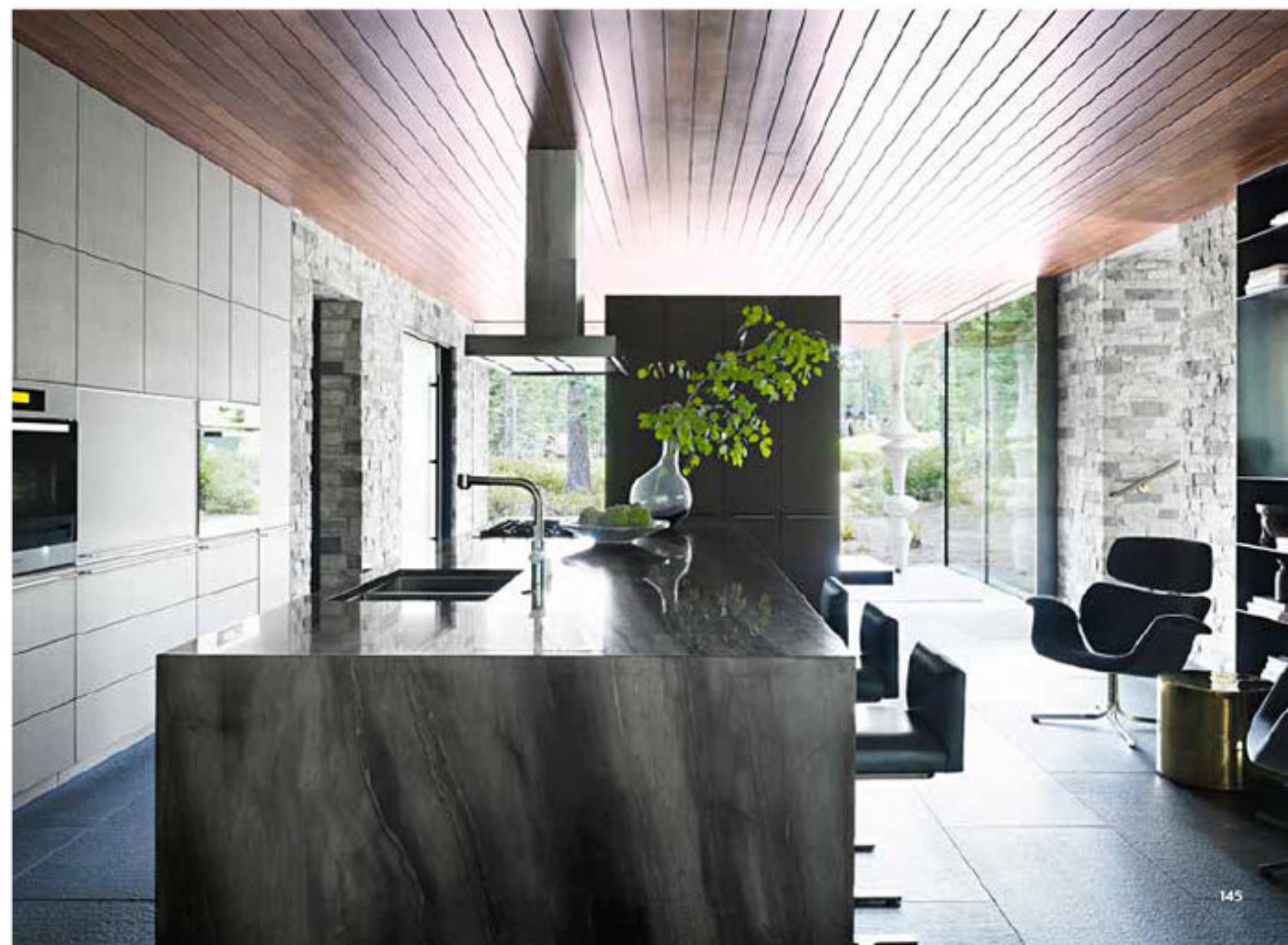


The woody site, in a secluded community with spacious lots and generous setbacks, offered mountain views with a forest behind the backyard. The setting seemed to want a glassy, open Southern California house that brings the outside indoors.

"We pushed the limit in all the living areas downstairs with as much glass as possible," says Wang. "all of it double-glazed and thick, to keep the house comfortable while giving the sense of living outside." She grouped the bedrooms and children's playroom as a retreat on the second floor, in a long cedar-sided box engineered to cantilever daringly beyond the glass walls and out over a covered terrace. The crisply tailored, magically levitated mass, anchored at its ends by stone piers, is structured by a hidden steel truss.

On the ground floor, the kitchen is the knuckle of the house, pivoting from the expansive family area to a see-through cube of glass that houses the living and dining areas, which extend out toward the trees. The transparent room, its roofline as slim as a MacBook Air, is next to not there, as though the furniture were just sitting in a clearing. "They wanted warm materials, so the architectural concept was a modern space but with the warmth of a chalet," says Wang. Collaborating with Bush, the architect took the material cues from the surrounding landscape so the house would belong to the site.

The transition from outside to inside is seamless. In another act of translation, Bush converted the exterior's earthy architectural palette into the interior finishes, using a variety of woods and







In the master bedroom, an armchair and stool by Minotti, upholstered in a Holly Hunt leather, are paired with a side table by Jonathan Adler, the bench and dresser are by Lawson-Fenning, and the drawing is by Ching Ho Cheng; the wall is painted in Bank Vault by Dunn-Edwards, and the carpet is by Decorative Carpets. RIGHT: Custom-made bunk beds in the children's room are dressed with bedding by John Robshaw and pillows by Jonathan Adler; the shag rug is by NuLoom, and the flooring is walnut. For details, see Resources.



split-face sandstone: The effect is tailored, dark, and handsome, on the Tom Ford model. Continuous walls of stone and cedar, and a carpet of bluestone floors, glide right through the floor-to-ceiling glass. "We worked from the outside in," says Bush. "The textured surfaces give it character and depth."

Bush heightened the environmental warmth, adding a shadowy mood by designing built-in wooden desks and closets, small exercises in architecture that confirm the strong, clean lines of a house carved with deep pockets of space. He accents the woods with a mixture of metals, always the strong, silent type—blackened steel bookcases and antique brass kitchen stools. All the hardware is bronze.

Bush didn't so much choose the furniture and lighting fixtures as curate a collection, selecting everything down to the limited-edition Dyson vacuum. Avoiding pieces that have been overused, he chose mostly midcentury furniture by noted designers who are not household names, such as the French designer Pierre Paulin. His eye gravitated to sofas in cubic blocks and chairs with wooden or metal frames that let space flow through. Italian and French pieces with spidery legs and arms add levity to the understated mix. He pulled the furniture away from the walls to shape intimate islands within the larger spaces, all set on smoky rugs that add more of that subtly luxurious, smoldering Ford mood. Japanese ceramics, serene and organic, crystallize the house's elegant simplicity.

"It's a beautiful but informal house where we can decompress," says Palihapitiya. "Whenever we feel disconnected and need to reset from all the complexities of our lives, we come here and feel whole." He then underlines the connection to Ford and Silicon Valley: "The way it was built, the material choices, the engineering, the lines—all of it was woven together with a creative discipline that makes the house exceptionally timeless and refined."

In other words, nothing was lost in translation. ■



ELLE DECOR

# Style



The dining area of a Tahoe vacation home designed by Jamie Bush, page 140.