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VOL. 4, 2019

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FOR MORE INFO CIRCLE 1



OUTDOOR LIVING IS HOTTER THAN EVER

Q&A WITH AWARD-WINNING ARCHITECT WAYNE VISBEEN



Wayne Visbeen, AIA, IIDA, is the principal and founder of Visbeen Architects, Inc., winner of more than 100 Residential Design Awards and dozens of Best in American Living Awards.

Dedicated outdoor living spaces are becoming increasingly popular with homeowners. Years ago, well-designed outdoor spaces were generally reserved for upscale homes. Today, we see these spaces becoming more mainstream as homeowners are looking for places to escape the grind, relax and retreat to a vacation state of mind. Busy lifestyles leave these homeowners searching for this vacay-vista in a very local getaway—their own backyards. What is surprising is that many architects, designers and home builders are choosing to either disregard these outdoor living areas or compromise them by leaving out key amenities

such as fireplaces. A research study conducted by leading fireplace manufacturer Napoleon disclosed that while only 13 percent of homeowners have an outdoor fireplace or fire table, 88 percent consider them to be either essential or a definite plus when shown design ideas.

We sat down with renowned architect Wayne Visbeen to discuss the key to creating an outdoor living space homebuyers can't resist and the important role fire plays in their design.

Q: *What amenities and design features are homeowners requesting in outdoor living spaces?*

Visbeen: An outdoor living space is an extension of the home's square footage and it should feel like a room, a room that has been thoughtfully designed and connects with the indoor space. I'm a fan of creating outdoor living spaces off the kitchen and



dining area. This allows the homeowner to entertain while preparing food or drinks indoors. If they would rather keep the mess (and the fun) outdoors, I'll add a premium built-in grill and kitchen to really elevate that party platter.

It is important to create a natural transition between indoors and out. Take style cues from the rest of the home, continue with your existing color pallet and use lighting as you would indoors to create a sense of dimension. To blend the two spaces, I like to use accordion folding doors. They allow you to truly open one space into the next. Using a retractable screen, I'm able to create separation from the outdoors when it is desired, like during a rainy day or a buggy night. The star of the show, the fireplace, serves as both a focal point and a social anchor. The right heating element is both inviting and beautiful while offering homeowners a sense of relaxation, socialization and functionality. Something Napoleon calls a Hot Spot.



Q: How can builders, architects and designers incorporate desirable outdoor living into smaller spaces?

Visbeen: Many homeowners are opting for smaller, multipurpose spaces both indoors and out. When it comes to a quality outdoor living area, size has nothing to do with it. It's all about smart design and choosing the right amenities. In my own home, I've created a space that is small yet cleverly designed to offer

ample room for grilling and entertaining. For the latter, I have a flame table as a sophisticated focal point and an inviting place for guests and potential clients to gather. I love my Napoleon Kensington Square Patioflame® Table because it can run off a small propane tank or be attached to a gas line. This works well for small spaces, rooftops and condos in metropolitan areas. Outdoor gathering spots can also help make a smaller home feel larger with the right design and a little open air.



Q: What role(s) does fire play in an outdoor living space?

Visbeen: Some of life's memorable moments happen around the fire—late-night s'mores as a child, flickering flames on a romantic evening and backyard campouts with the kids. Fire creates a space for life's memorable moments to occur. A fireplace not only adds ambiance, but it also adds to usability and design aesthetic. Adding fire extends the usability of an outdoor living area earlier into the spring and later into the fall. Understand how this space will be used, who will be using it, how often and the style of the home, be it traditional, transitional, contemporary or rustic. Once these questions are answered, the designer can choose the right hearth for the job and ultimately that represents an increased opportunity for additional sales and profits.



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FOR MORE INFO CIRCLE 5

The Great Escape



It's summer, so our thoughts turn to long, languid afternoons—perhaps with a martini in hand (make mine vodka, please). This time of year, magazine editors typically fill their publications with vacation houses, so even if readers can't physically escape city life, they can get away vicariously. The broad theme of this issue is “The View House.” As I hunted for projects that exemplified the concept, I came to realize it's a core tenet of well-designed custom homes—not just vacation or weekend houses.

A house strongly rooted in its place creates its own views, assimilating its surroundings into the fabric of its design. The flow of outdoors and indoors is fluid, natural, inevitable. Great architecture melds solid and void—materials and the space around them are inseparable.

Yes, there are still architects who seek only to create the beautiful object or an intellectual exercise without regard for context, but that solipsism is on the wane, thank goodness. We don't want to just gaze at jewel boxes anymore or contemplate their complexity. We want to engage with the buildings we occupy, and we want them to elevate our experience of being alive. The view house is about gazing outward and appreciating where we are, but it's also about looking inward and reflecting on who we are.

We're more than 20 years into the evolution of regional modernism, and it only grows more inclusive and sensitive to the qualities of site, history, and local traditions. Rooting design in the specificity of place is the roadmap to making houses that belong where they are and are cherished for the long term.

In this issue, you'll find four featured projects that harness key elements of their locations and turn them into very different but seemingly inevitable results. Yes, they're also beautiful creations with intellectual firepower underpinning their design and execution. Although they respond directly to context, they don't replicate the buildings around them. They absorb precedent and then go on to set a fresh precedent for the buildings that come after them.

Our cover story, by Brooks + Scarpa and Studio Dwell, is an urban infill project near Northwestern University in Chicago. It takes an iconic local material—Chicago standard brick—and weaves it into a dynamic, sculptural façade. It's original, beautiful, and highly specific to its location. Its form is extraordinary, of course, but it's in complete service to the functional requirements of the house. The façade acts as a screen, protecting the front courtyard and private interiors from street view without sacrificing the home's neighborliness. It's not a solid fortress wall, but a subtle veil that intrigues while it obscures.

The best houses make us feel like we're on vacation every day. They refresh and restore us, fortifying us to go back out into the big, messy world we all share.

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

S. Claire Conroy
Editor-in-Chief
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Beyond the Box

RESOLUTION: 4 ARCHITECTURE

Next year, Resolution: 4 Architecture will celebrate the 30th anniversary of its founding in New York City. The number feels unreal because partners Joseph Tanney, AIA, and Robert Luntz, AIA, still seem like the fresh-faced new kids on the block, reinventing how to design and build single-family custom houses.

They founded the firm in 1990, toiling away on custom renovations to “long, linear” box-like Manhattan apartments. Those jobs taught them a great deal about spinning tight dimensions into delightful, livable spaces. Then, in 2003, came their big break: They won Dwell magazine’s invitational competition to design a modern prefabricated home. They beat out 15 other firms for the honor, including some venerable architects.

The ambitious effort was backed by a young couple who footed the bill for the fabrication and installation of the house on a rural parcel in North Carolina, with some in-kind help from building product manufacturers. By 2004, the Dwell Home was built and the buzz had spread around the country, inspiring modern house enthusiasts and modern architects alike. It felt like a revolution at the time. Young modern architects were going to solve the problem of bringing high-quality, affordable residential design to the mass market.

And then came the housing bust. Many factories went under, and many architects eventually set aside their grand, transformational ideas about factory-built houses. Not so, RES4. The firm kept at it—refining the learn-



Clockwise from top left: Partners Joe Tanney and Robert Luntz. The Dwell Home ignited a fever for prefab, launching RES4 on its core mission. Buildouts of long, linear New York apartments, like the 2011 Wadia Residence, continue to hone the team’s skills in high-design, high-function space planning.

Photos and renderings this page: Resolution: 4 Architecture



Photos this page: Resolution: 4 Architecture

Above and right: The prefab 2017 North Fork Bluff House employs the Z-Type series of modules (module typologies pictured top right), with side wings positioned to block views of the neighbors from the front porch and rear pool deck. The 5,100-square-foot house overlooks Long Island Sound.

ings that came from that first Dwell Home and the houses that flowed from it.

“It turns out that it’s been an evolution and not a revolution,” Joe concludes. And fortunately for the health of the firm, it did not overreach and over leverage. “We’ve been taking baby steps throughout, and it’s the space we operate best in. Our short-term goal is always to do tomorrow’s house better than yesterday’s.”

The firm continues to iterate its modular offerings and they remain a core part of the practice. But RES4 has never lost sight of the bread-and-butter work that sustained it in its early years and through the recession. There are still

plenty of loft buildouts and remodels in the portfolio, and some commercial work as well. “We’ve always been multidisciplinary as a practice,” says Joe. “We recently completed a treehouse—and it was not modular. We do a wide range of things, so the scale varies quite a bit. When we do commercial projects or office spaces, we’ll often do the signage, too.

“And with the houses,” he adds, “we’ll specify finishes and furniture, or even do the landscape. We’re quite hands-on and all-encompassing. The scope depends on the client, project, and scale—and what we’re trying to accomplish. But we’re also happy to work with other designers.”

Mod and Not Mod

Because the firm is so well known for its achievements in modular design and construction, clients have developed certain expectations about what a RES4-designed house should look like. It’s a funny kind of typecasting that’s oozed into the firm’s site-built work as well. “We recently completed a house in Arlington, Virginia,” Joe explains. “It’s site built because the owner wanted to start a construction business and learn on the job, but he was very concerned that it should still look like a RES4 modular house.”

In a way, the typology has become the aesthetic. And it’s done so just at the point when the RES4 work has reached



Left to right: The 2015 North Fork Bay House is a lifted double-wide/courtyard hybrid, elevated on a steel frame for flood control. A weekend house for two generations, the 1,650-square-foot open plan also tucks in three bedrooms and two and a half baths.



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Photo: Eric Soltau



Photo: Eric Soltau



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Top to bottom: Wedged onto a 25-foot-wide lot, this 2017 new construction townhouse in Park Slope employs RES4's talent for using every square inch of living space. A custom teak wraparound sofa defines the sunken living room and morphs into storage above.



Photo: Emily Andrews

Above: The site-built, 2017 Hudson River House is elevated on a natural overlook for panoramic views.

a level of refinement such that it's difficult to tell whether a house was built in the factory or on-site. At the same time, there's a current vogue among modern architects for the long-box volume that's completely unmoored from what can fit on a tractor-trailer.

Stacked boxes solve a factory and transportation problem, for sure, but they also resolve idiosyncrasies of site. With an array of boxes, you can levitate the building over topography and rotate it to capture views, natural light, and ventilation. You can play with materials, solids, voids, indoor, and outdoor space. Those are great attributes no matter what the means of construction.

Building this way on-site does add cost, however, and that's where the factory delivery model shines. Although it isn't always the case, Joe still maintains prefab can be less expensive than full site construction—but there's a caveat: "You don't ask the factory to do more than they can do well."

"It's important to understand their limits," he explains. "Many architects learn the hard way trying to design a domestic space and then get it built in a factory. It's not an academic design exercise. There is time and money involved, and they're just not aware of the costs. It's important to go in at the beginning

and know what will be done in the factory and what will be done on-site. You need efficiency of implementation to achieve a higher level of predictability.

"We use the factory like a contractor, and we try to leverage the economies," he continues. "Our prefab houses are still specific to each site, client, and budget. We just happen to use the factory to build most things. Doing it that way, prefab can be faster, cheaper, and better than site-built. In our early years, we were limited to the products the factory had. But since then, we've established relationships with certain vendors, and we've been able to expand those connections to membranes, tiles, windows, and other materials. Clients' expectations continue to get higher and higher."

That said, Joe admits, there are not many factories that can deliver the quality he needs for those high-expectation clients. And that's a perennial problem, even for the architects who solve the riddle of designing for factory constraints and capabilities. It's in part what's driven some to try to start or buy factories—a precarious proposition.

The big venture-capital-funded players entering the market in recent years don't address the right problems for RES4 and other high-end custom



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FOR MORE INFO CIRCLE 9

residential firms either, says Joe. It's the revolution/evolution problem again. "What's interesting is, the entities we've met with who've attempted to start a revolution have encountered a rocky road. They're really going to be best suited to larger projects—multifamily, hotels, commercial building. Custom building is still a very local business."

In his heart of hearts, he worries about the long-term viability of the kinds of factories his firm requires. "Where the next level and next phase needs to be is the quantity and quality of partners. I see more people looking outside the States, to larger-scale entities in countries where factory-built housing is more commonplace and more sophisticated.

"It'll be a missed opportunity if we can't sustain factories here. There's a great opportunity in creating urban and suburban spaces," he says. "But it's a misguided approach to try to go big and fabricate in one location and then try to go everywhere with the product. It's not the solution for every project, and it's not a magic bullet. For every project you have to consider the location, use, and budget. One-size-fits-all is not the solution many newcomers to the space think it is."



Above: The 2012 Fishers Island House required ferrying modules from the mainland to the island. So, RES4 turned to a system of smaller 12-foot-wide modules. The typology used here is a combination double-wide/triple-wide hybrid for a total of 8 boxes and 4,469 square feet.

Evolution 9

In the meantime, RES4 continues to iterate its well-developed system of modules. For years, the firm worked on the problem of the 16-foot-by-60-foot module, which is the maximum size that can be transported by tractor-trailer on public highways. The firm has devised a system of modules for "communal use" (kitchens, living, and dining areas) and ones for "private use" (bedrooms, sitting rooms, closets, bathrooms). And there are patterns of arrangement or typologies to achieve desired square footage and other programmatic and design goals.

In the past decade, the firm has investigated the possibilities of smaller

modules—the more nimble 12-foot-wide ones, for instance. "The Fishers Island House started exploring various other dimensions, and mixing, matching, and organizing 12-foot-wide modules in various compositions and types. That's been exciting," says Joe.

Day labor, materials, and modules for the house, built in 2012, had to be transported to the island by standard ferry, so the smaller dimensioning was critical.

The firm continues to enter design competitions—most recently, New York City's "Big Ideas for Small Lots" housing design competition—and it's interested in applying its modular understandings to micro-units and other multifamily building types. There's also a passion for building out whole prefab communities, perhaps in exurban locations.

Single-family custom work remains the mainstay, however, whether prefab or site built. And the site-built projects provide their own evolutionary opportunities to stretch professionally. "We love exploring new avenues of construction. In addition to wood, we're doing a steel fabricated building in Brooklyn and a precast building in Florida," says Joe.

After nearly 30 years on the job, the new kids on the block are still keeping it new.—*S. Claire Conroy*



Above: Last year's Pelham Shore House uses the T-Series typology to capture bay views for key rooms.

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Making Shade

HALFLANTS + PICHETTE STUDIO
SARASOTA AND TAMPA, FLORIDA

Two years ago, an especially bad storm swept through Sarasota, Florida, which is no stranger to severe weather. Architect Michael Halflants, who does not live in a house of his own design, called up a former client and asked if he could bring his family over to ride it out. The house and its occupants made it through unscathed.

Michael is a partner in the design/build firm Halflants + Pichette Studio and also an associate professor of architecture at the University of South Florida, Tampa, where he leads the housing studio and teaches seminars in tropical architecture. He knows a thing or two about designing for the demanding climate in coastal Florida.

Originally from Belgium, Michael received his master's degree in architecture from the University of Florida. He teamed up with architect John Pichette during the go-go days of the housing boom. "We each had independent, budding practices," Michael recalls. "And he had more work than I did, so he asked me whether I'd be interested in joining him. That was back in 2006 at the top of the market—great times; everyone was busy. Six months into the practice, everything went down. We turned to design/build to survive the recession."

John's previous experience as a project manager for a firm that designed large commercial buildings helped him breeze through his contractor's license. "John is on the tail end, and I'm on the front end," says Michael, who leads the design work.

But what began as a survival strategy more than a decade ago has become the firm's core approach to practice. "The

argument we make to clients is, no one will care as much about executing the design as we do," Michael explains. "And it's true. We've become better architects because the drawings have to be done directly for subcontractors. It's a far less cumbersome process, as well. Instead of a sub talking to the contractor and then the contractor calling the architect, we have the architect directly on-site, answering questions as they come up—and giving the right answer. And it's absolutely true that it lowers our liability risk overall."

The Right Mix

Currently, the firm's portfolio is a mix of single-family custom residential and multifamily design. On the custom projects, the firm is almost always the builder, too. "We work with other builders, but our preferred way is to do both the design and build," says Michael.

Business is good again in South Florida, but the biggest boom is in multifamily projects. In fact, for Halflants + Pichette, the ratio of residential building types has flipped from 80 percent single family to 80 percent multifamily. So



Photo: Halflants + Pichette Studio



Photo: Halflants + Pichette Studio



Photo: Halflants + Pichette Studio

This page: Principals Michael Halflants and John Pichette. The Whitaker Lofts project marks the first foray into development for the architect-led design/build firm. The architects plan to sell the residential units and retain the retail long-term.

Photo: William S. Speer Photography



Photo: William S. Speer Photography

Above and above, left: The design/build Philippi Creek Residence shades itself from the Florida sun while remaining open to breezes and curated views. A second-story platform frames spectacular sunsets.

they'd like to take on more scope for the multifamily projects—as builder and, ultimately, as developer, too.

As of yet, they haven't managed to break through on the contractor side of the multifamily business. It's difficult to make the leap into larger projects when bank funding is needed. And that's galling to Michael, who knows they can handle the work better than many contractors who win the job. "It's difficult to convince banks and the owners that we can do it," he says. "We almost built a project that would have been six townhouses, but we gave a realistic construction time of

nine months to the owner and he said no. Of course, now the chosen builder is at nine months and only a quarter through the job."

The solution? Develop their own projects. The firm recently picked up a desirable parcel of land and plans to do just that. Michael and John are talking with investors, but they have every intention of leading the design decisions and directing construction. "The property is on the main street in Sarasota, next to a new roundabout that I knew would change the nature of the street," Michael explains. "There's a bayfront park across the street from

the parcel. I would drive by it on the way to work and realized it would be a good purchase. What we have in mind is fairly ambitious: 20 units over retail. The plan is to keep the retail long-term and sell the residential. The big opening of the building will face the park."

Having designed quite a few multifamily projects for other owner/developers, the firm feels ready to take the next step. Michael and John are also interested in developing micro-units at some point. "But, as much as we'd like to do more speculative projects, we don't want to put all our eggs in one basket," Michael notes.

Photo: William S. Speer Photography



Photo: William S. Speer Photography



Far left and left: Custom steel trusses suspend a balcony in the design/build Seminole Residence. Generous overhangs and a courtyard plan create a protected microclimate for outdoor living.

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Far left and left: Located in a floodplain and across from a public beach, the Anna Maria Residence is raised a full story off the ground. A series of tiered, protected outdoor areas brings it gently back down to earth.

Tropical Modern

Designing for and against the climate in hot, humid, hurricane-prone Florida is an ongoing challenge for the firm, in both the single-family and multifamily projects. There are key similarities, though. First and foremost is to emphasize indoor/outdoor living. For the custom homes, that means houses that shade and protect exterior living

space. And for the apartments, it means always designing into the plans at least a small sliver of balcony, terrace, or roof deck—not just for access to the outdoors, but to make the space feel and live larger overall.

“Modern architecture is not a style, it’s an attitude,” Michael observes. “It’s not about a flat roof, but about how you engage the site and make the

most of its qualities and of the climate. We’re interested in making houses that invite you outdoors, that encourage you to walk inside through the outside. So, we always create a separate path outside into the house. We start with the exterior space and then wrap the house around it, shading it, protecting it. That makes for delightful living and a more efficient house.”

Stucco is the material of choice for its weather hardiness, but the firm likes to specify warmer woods in sheltered areas, such as soffits. And, although solar panels would seem a natural fit for Florida, Michael says the payback really isn’t there, given how cheap electricity is in his moderate region: “Our challenge is the moisture and humidity; it’s not difficult to achieve the temperature differential we need to go from 92 to 72 degrees.

“In the end, sustainability is about creating places people really enjoy,” he concludes. “Because they will want to maintain it for the long term. Places like the Umbrella House by Paul Rudolph, with that great roof that extends well beyond the house. That’s where everyone wants to congregate.”

—S. Claire Conroy



Above: On a tight site one house away from the Gulf of Mexico, the design/build Guberman-Kennedy Residence splits the program into wings and elevates main living to tap corridor views of the water.

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General contractor: Roberts Design & Build Photographer: Tom Harris Profile: Redi-Roof Color: Weathered Zinc

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-Scott Rappe, AIA, LEED AP, Principal, Kuklinski+Rappe Architects



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FOR MORE INFO CIRCLE 14



Summer Camp for Residential Architects

BY MARY CERRONE, AIA CRAN CHAIR

The end of summer means different things to different people. For many, it is a farewell to extra daylight, porch time, and family trips. For some, it is relief from 24/7 kids. But for AIA CRAN, it means our annual symposium. I like to think of the symposium as summer camp for residential architects—four days shared with familiar and new friends, packed with educational sessions, home tours, product and service showcase booths, cocktail receptions, dinners, and everything in between.

As this year's CRAN Chair (head camp counselor), I am thrilled to invite you to join us Sept. 11-15 at the Hotel Valley Ho in Scottsdale, Arizona. The Valley Ho is a 1956 mid-century modern hotel, located in "Old Scottsdale." Both historic and modern, this hotel and spa is a classic example of the desert oasis midcentury vibe.

Pre-symposium activities commence Wednesday evening with a welcome reception centered on a screen presentation of CRAN component news, activities, and images of members' work. This is a great opportunity for component leaders to learn what other groups are up to, exchange best practices, and compare notes on "what I learned in school last year."

Pre-symposium activities resume first thing Thursday morning with a tour of nearby Arcosanti. Here we will explore the concept of "arcology," architecture + ecology, as envisioned by its creator, Paolo Soleri. In addition to touring the community, we will visit the planning office, see current construction, and learn about future design development with models and drawings. Established in 1970, Arcosanti remains relevant as it grapples with the real-world issues of pedestrian-scaled urban design, resource management, and consumption. Campers should remember to bring their sunscreen and to hydrate!

The official symposium kickoff takes place Thursday afternoon. After we settle down into our seats, we will open with Scottsdale architect Tamarit Suchart, AIA, of Chen+Suchart Studio, whose residential work has won several AIA Arizona awards. He will be followed by Arizona State University's senior sustainability scientist, architect, and urban designer Duke Reiter, FAIA. He will discuss how his studio is using the challenging environment of the Southwest as a laboratory for resilience strategies. Thursday's sessions conclude with a presentation by Brian Gaudio, Assoc. AIA, a documentary

Photo: Courtesy Westroc Hospitality



This year's Custom Residential Architects Network Symposium takes place at the swanky, restored 1956 Hotel Valley Ho.

filmmaker, architect, scholar, and CEO of Module, a startup that designs and builds adaptable, modular housing solutions. Then, we are free to play.

Friday's sessions include an equally diverse array of presentations. We will begin with landscape architect and founding director of the University of New Mexico Historic Preservation and Regionalism Program, Chris Wilson, who will discuss "Landscape/Grounding Residential Design in the Southwest: Vernacular, Revival, and Modern." Cade Hayes, AIA, and Jesus Robles, Assoc. AIA, of the multidisciplinary firm DUST will present their work, followed by Lake/Flato's sustainability director Heather Holdridge, Assoc. AIA, who will discuss "Toward 2030: Integrating High Performance With Design." Mark LaLiberte will then lead a panel discussion among three pairs of architects and builders who have

worked together, about the intersection of building performance, design, and client values. Friday's sessions close with a presentation by plein air painter and instructor Joe Paquet. The evening wraps up with a beautiful sunset tour and cocktail reception at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West. Begun as a hand-built laboratory for design in the desert, Taliesin continues as the home of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and the School of Architecture at Taliesin. After this hard day, we will all need a good night's sleep in preparation for more activities!

Saturday will be devoted to our always-inspiring home tour. Again, remember the sunscreen! This year's tour will feature Frank Lloyd Wright's rugged, concrete block Price House. While it is Wright's largest Arizona home, it still exemplifies his principles of shelter with view (prospect), interior-exterior spatial connectivity, and, perhaps most notably, honest use of materials. Our tour will also feature the personal homes of notable architects Eddie Jones, AIA, Matt Salenger, and Wendell Burnette, FAIA, as well as an iconic,



Wendell Burnette, FAIA, is a keynoter.

midcentury modern Al Beadle home, among others. Lunch will be served at the Biltmore Hotel, famous for its "Textile Block" construction, and includes a brief tour of the Wright-inspired structure.

Sunday morning begins with a presentation by lighting designer Ann Schiffers about "Homeownership Redesigned for the 21st Century." This will be followed by our keynote speaker, award-winning architect Wendell Burnette, whose practice is concerned with space and light, context and place, and with the environment and landscapes in which we live.

Before we send our campers home, we will conduct an AIA dues raffle. The winner must be present to win, so we hope you plan your travels accordingly. Oh, and remember to check the lost and found for missing towels and swimsuits!

We look forward to seeing you in Scottsdale.

For a full and detailed description of the symposium schedule, see the Custom Residential Architects Network community website on aia.org.

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A New Twist

Once underappreciated and hidden from view, Chicago's common brick moves front and center on an elegant, sinewy suburban house.

BY CHERYL WEBER

LOCATION: EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

ARCHITECT: BROOKS + SCARPA WITH STUDIO DWELL

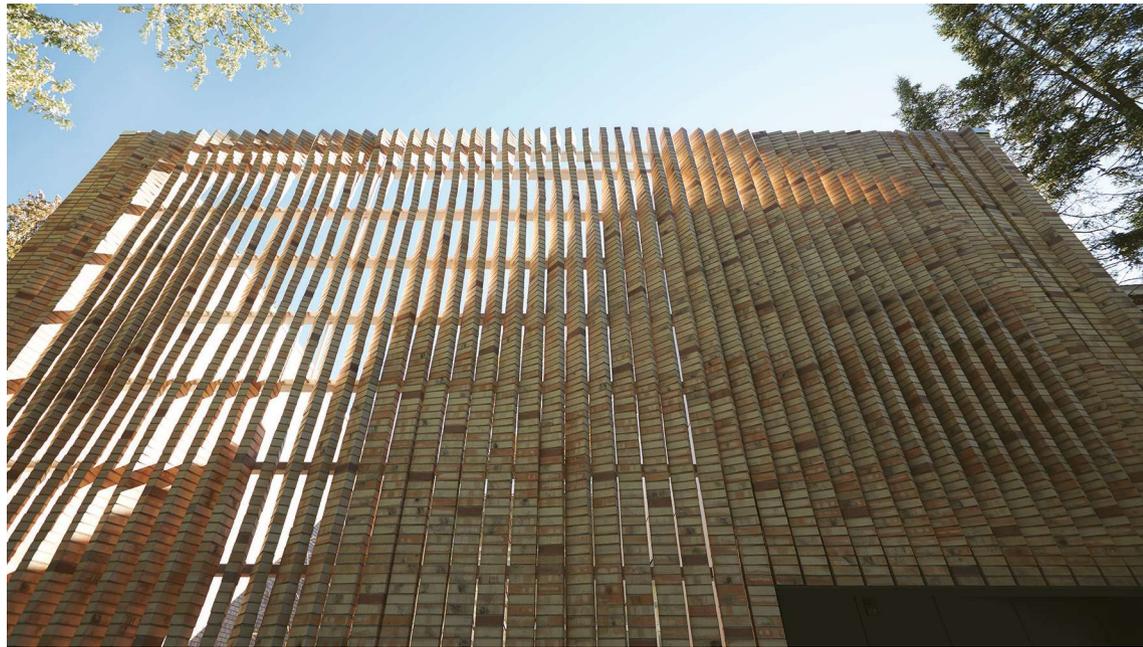
BUILDER: STUDIO DWELL

A traditional, tree-lined neighborhood in a venerable Chicago suburb is hardly the place for a glassy courtyard house. Nor is the prominent use of Chicago common brick, a cheap and abundant material historically deployed in areas obscured from the street. But Brooks + Scarpa's client requested something unusual on this 50-foot-by-150-foot infill lot near Northwestern University. "Our client wanted something very different and striking," says Larry Scarpa, FAIA. "He said jokingly, 'I want them to hate me.'" He got his wish, except for the community response. "So far the comments have been very positive," Larry says. "It has not been controversial, and no variances were required."

Designed for a single man with grown children, the layout is straightforward, with a rectangular open living room, dining area, and kitchen, and an offset office near the front of the courtyard on the first floor. Above are an open-plan master suite and a guest bedroom over the office. But the building is not about the plan, it's about the spatial experience. The porous street façade consists of an outdoor courtyard behind a row of stacked, twisting brick columns-cum-art installa-







This page: Once a pedestrian material relegated to back alleys, Chicago common brick is celebrated on the façade of this infill courtyard house. Installed in 28-foot columns and rotated at $\frac{1}{8}$ -, $\frac{1}{4}$ -, and $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch turns, the twisted bricks generate a moiré effect as people pass by.

tion. The 28-foot-tall columns create an undulating pattern of opening and closing as light moves across them. This appears as a moiré-like pattern to people passing the house—transparent at some points and opaque at others. The brick scrim also allows glare-free natural light to penetrate the building's glass walls, while illumination from the house seeps through to the street at night.

Fascinated by the idea of buildings that “move,” Larry was counting on this effect.

“When I give a talk and organize it, I start to see some threads in what I do,” he says. “What’s been emerging recently is the idea of movement as something that’s more dynamic; architects have had a lot of failures of moving buildings. This building doesn’t physically move, but when you walk or drive by, it appears to move. The way it’s organized changes from solid to void.”

He looks to artists, rather than other buildings, for design inspiration. One of his muses is the British painter Patrick Hughes, who did a series called *Reverspective*. “He paints pictures of other famous artworks, but in the way he puts it on canvas, it shapes the canvas so that when you move past it, the painting appears to move and change. Literally when you pass by it, things that appeared open from one view close up in another view; it’s ephemeral.”





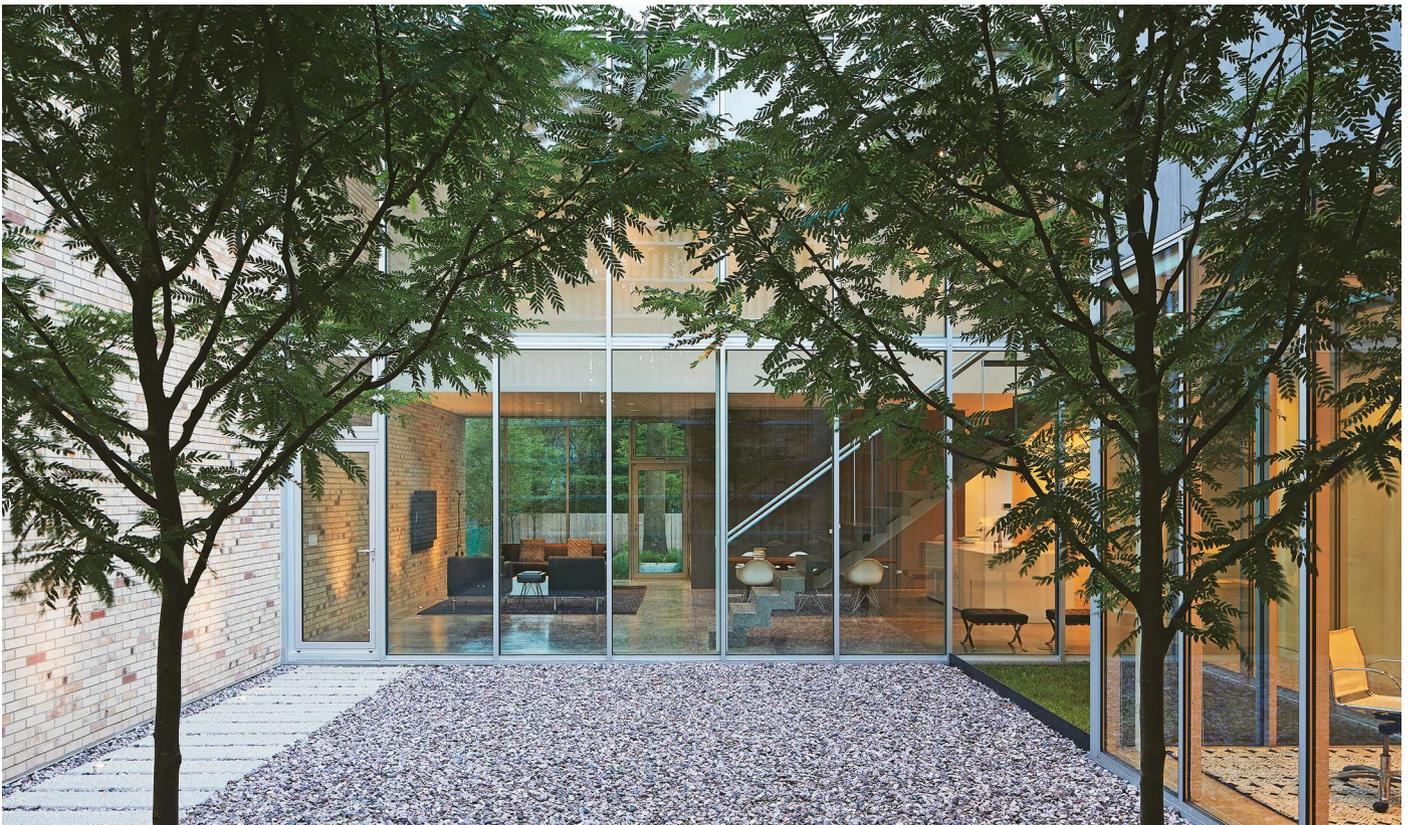
This page: A 4-inch circle of mortar was sufficient to affix the bricks to each other, but wind loads were a concern. Horizontal tubing spaced in 32-inch increments braces the structure. The wall shelters the interior courtyard and private living spaces from view.

In this way, the house almost serves as a palate-cleanser in the suburban landscape. “We thought of the building as a bit of a pause in the setting in that it’s more neutral, almost blank on the site,” he says.

Science of Perception

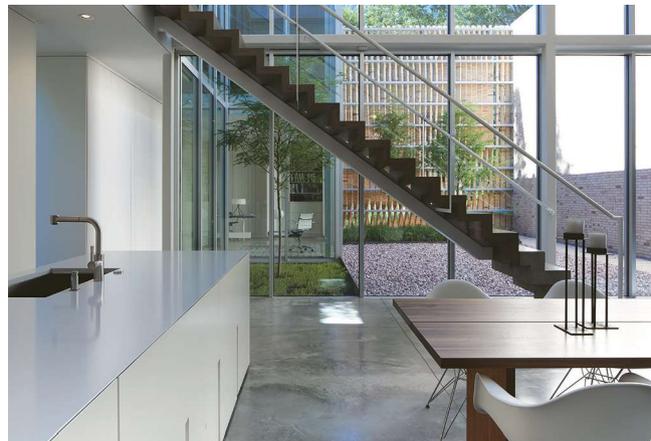
Early on, the client was set on having a steel-and-glass house like a Brooks + Scarpa project he’d seen in Venice, California. “He didn’t want brick at the time, but it’s Chicago, you have to do brick,” Larry says. But what kind of brick? His local partner on the project was the architecture firm Studio Dwell. Its principal Mark Peters, AIA, weighed design decisions against the reality of costs, served as the client’s local contact, and managed construction. Several years ago Mark rebuilt the front wall of his office with Chicago common brick grafted from another part of the old warehouse. “When the client came to my office, he said, ‘I want that look,’” Mark says. “We did 20 mockups in the field before he approved.”

Made from Lake Michigan clay, Chicago common brick looks different from typical red bricks as a result of the clay’s geological composition. When fired, the colors come out inconsistent—spotty, red, yellow, or dark. Larry’s idea was to turn a humble material into something extraordinary. “I like





This page: The permeable wall permits natural light to penetrate the interiors during the day, and allows for the interiors to project illumination through the street façade at night. The brick becomes a solid wall on the east side of the courtyard, flanking the entry path and moving past the glass-front façade, through the great room, and out to the rear yard.





This page: Interior finishes are simple and sleek, allowing the eyes to move freely along sightlines inside and outside the house. Capturing curated exterior views is a trick Larry Scarpa learned from his days working for architect Gene Leedy in Florida. “The outside space becomes part of the inside space because it’s squeezed into the building.”

the idea of taking what was always seen as the bad stuff and hidden from view, and displaying it prominently as a major feature of the design,” he says.

Ironically, unbeknownst to Larry at the time, the brick has become desirable today as supplies dwindle. But it is solid, irregular, and difficult to install. The team ended up working with a manufacturer to produce new bricks that look like Chicago common brick, a tricky process of choosing the right percentage of yellows, reds, and pinks.

Getting the front wall’s twirling columns just right was equally complicated. Over many iterations, the team mapped out the rotation of each brick on a computer. “We made a lot of animated 3D video clips, making the user move to see the effects of what we did,” Larry says. “Some bricks go from flat to 90 degrees. The idea was to create a surface that

undulates and you can see through; using the rationalization or computer helped us turn that into easy components that are understandable and constructible.”

Like a painter on canvas, this is the architect’s interpretation of something that flows and moves. “A piece I really like was done by one of my colleagues at USC who is also a well-known choreographer,” Larry says. “He did improvisational pieces with light and his body, creating shape through the interaction of light and movement. I think of it as experiments or a moment as opposed to some finite and fixed design.”

The wall’s relative ease of construction belied its complexity, though the team tested various ways to install it. One of the earlier ideas was to slide the bricks down vertical rods like beads on a chain. However, working with an engineer, they figured out that, because the

“I think of it as experiments or a moment as opposed to some finite and fixed design.”

—Larry Scarpa



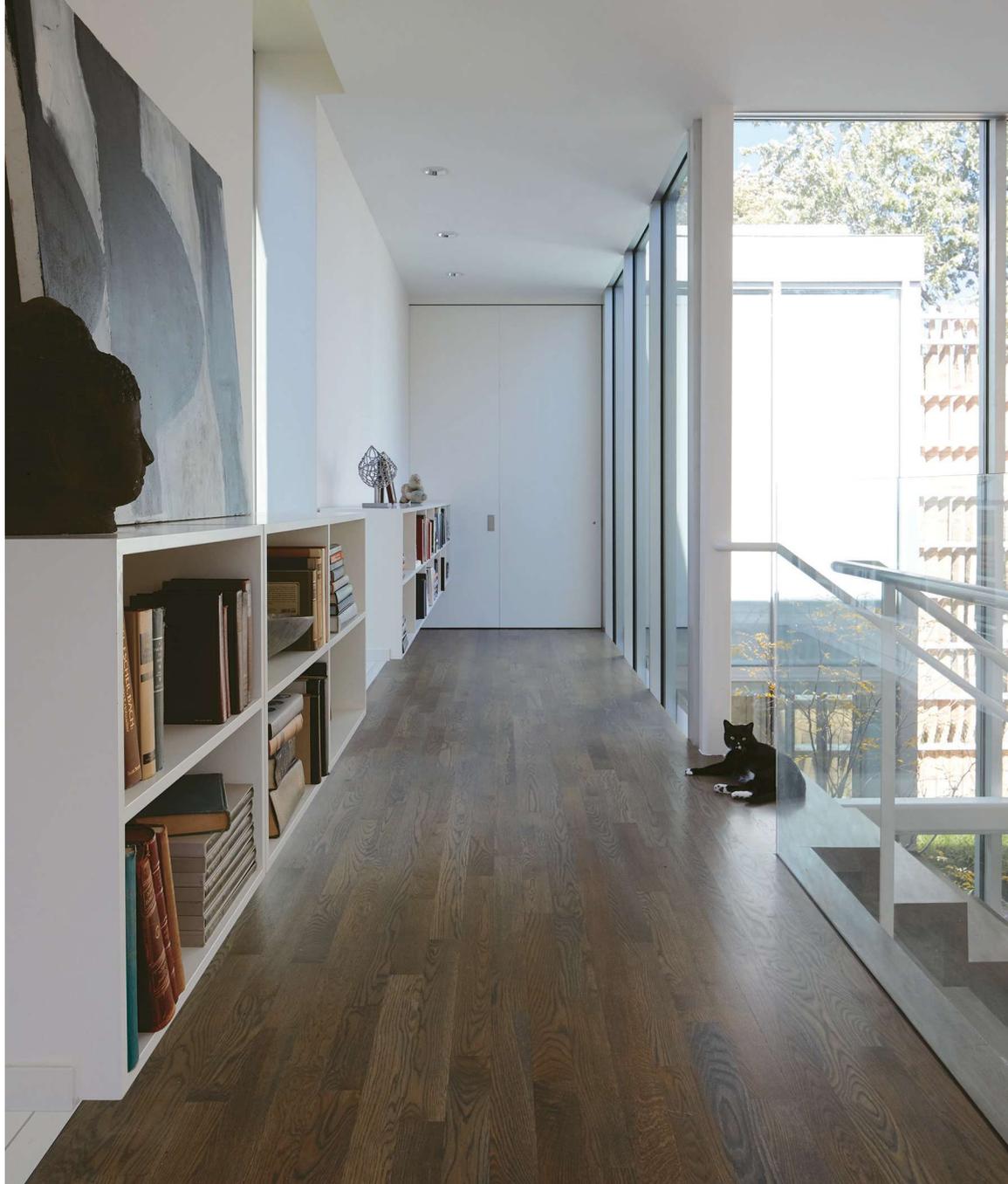
This page: Articulated panels conceal kitchen functions when not in use, and bar stools—clad in the same white Caesarstone as the island—slide neatly out of sight. The first-level home office gazes across the courtyard and back into the kitchen and dining area.

columns pivot, a 4-inch-round circle of mortar between each brick would be enough to support them. “It was the lateral wind load that was the issue,” Mark says. “We had 2-inch-by-3-inch-by-6-inch tubes running every 32 inches horizontally, and we tied the bricks back to those.” The wall was divided into 12 quadrants and laid on a sheet, mapping out the 1/8-, 1/4-, or 1/2-inch turns. “I was really surprised at how willing the mason was to work on it,” Mark says. “Once he started, he said it was the easiest thing ever, and it went up quickly.”

See Through

Behind the wall, the house has a conventional envelope—wood frame with doubled-faced brick sides, a glass front façade, and cement panels and glass on the back. The path to the front door follows the playbook too. It’s laid on the diagonal so that, from the front, the building looks like it’s sitting in a field of native prairie grasses, and visitors can experience the changing façade as they approach the recessed entry. A door





A highly edited palette of colors and materials put the focus on precise, crisp detailing. Architect Mark Peters bird-dogged the process as leader of the local design/build team in Chicago.

on the left opens into the courtyard, where a concrete walkway and stepping stones hug the perpendicular brick façades on an indirect route to the front door.

Planted with airy honey locust trees (think New York City's Paley Park), the 24-foot-wide-by-39-foot-deep courtyard contains gravel made from brick that broke or was cut, and crushed rock left over from the foundation. The house retreats behind the courtyard wall, its sides mostly solid. "From the garden in back you can see right through the house and courtyard and kind of through the courtyard wall, almost like a house of mirrors," Larry says.

Floor plans can be deceiving. Their simplicity gave Larry the freedom to manipulate the building section. The glass-enclosed

office, for example, can be seen across the courtyard from the living room. "If you put a plan of, say, the Salk Institute or many things by Lou Kahn in a student project and just showed the plan, 90 percent of professors would fail them," Larry says. "I worked for a guy in Florida named Gene Leedy, and one thing I loved about his work is this idea of seeing from the inside of your building to the outside and then back in. The outside space becomes part of the inside space because it's squeezed into the building."

Another example of this indoor-outdoor choreography occurs in the living room, where the side brick wall makes a knife-edge connection to the glass back wall. As Mark explains it, "We ended the brick wall a window-frame width from the

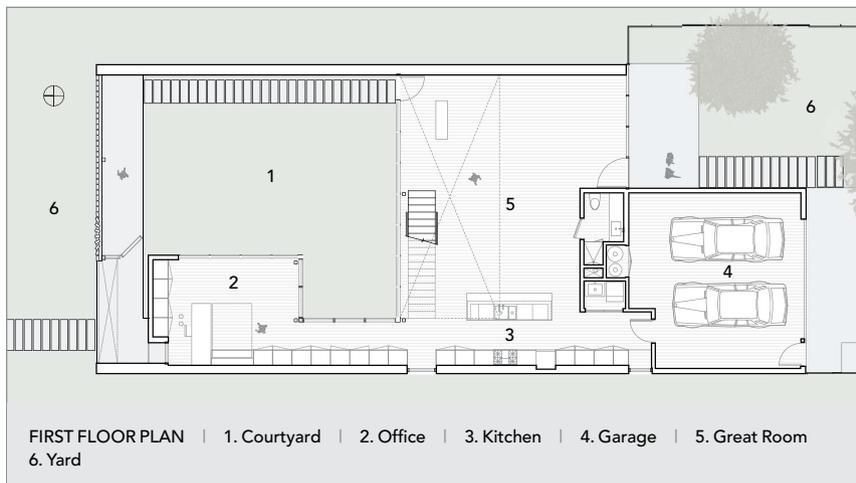
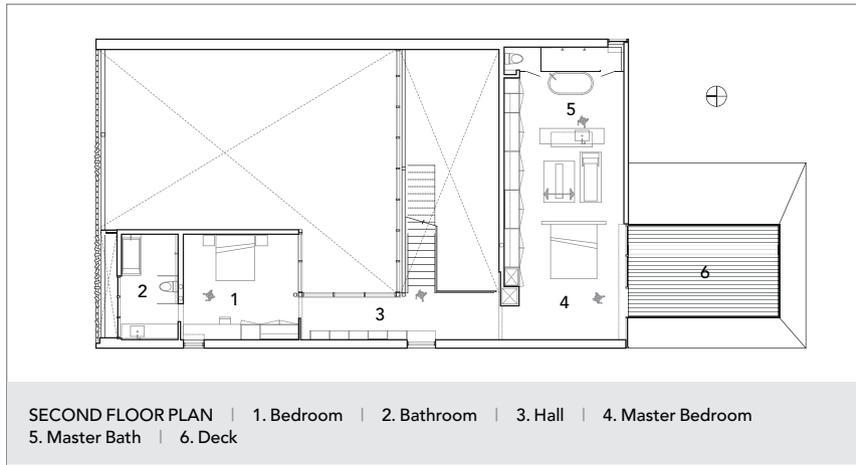


This page: At the back of the house, the garage hides behind cement panels, integrating with rear façade. The interior brick wall terminates a window-frame width from the outside face. The design team devised a custom cap to protect the corner.

outside face and ran the frame past the thickness of the wall, 16 inches. So the frame is now on the outside. All we had to do was come up with a custom cap on the outside so it wouldn't have any exposure on that corner. We worked with the window manufacturer. Once you ask a question and try to figure it out, it's pretty amazing how you can come up with a solution."

What's more, the back corner has solid brick above and glass below, and as you turn the corner, the materials switch to a glass window above and brick below. "The horizontal line above the glass in the living room and the garage form that pops out is absolutely perfect around the building," Larry says. "That's our interpretation of a Miesian corner."

That rigor extends to the garage detailing. Its door is integrated with the cement panels, which were installed as a rainscreen on the back of the house. While flush or pivot garage doors can cost \$12,000 or so, Mark's workaround was to install a standard door on custom double tracks. "The top wheel goes into a track that pushes it all the way out flush," Larry says. "It's very clever; now I use it all the time. You weigh a lot of decisions against the cost. Mark went above and beyond the call of duty to make it all work out properly."



Thayer Brick House

Evanston, Ill.

ARCHITECT: Lawrence Scarpa, FAIA, principal in charge; Angela Brooks, FAIA; Jeff Huber, AIA; Arty Vartanyan, Chinh Nhan Nguyen, Cesar Delgado, Eleftheria Stavridi, Fui Srivikorn, Matt Barnett, AIA, Brooks + Scarpa, Hawthorne, Calif; Mark Peters, AIA, principal in charge; Jonathan Heckert, project manager, Studio Dwell, Chicago

BUILDER: Studio Dwell

LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Brooks + Scarpa

CIVIL ENGINEER: Studio Dwell

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Louis Shell Structures

PROJECT SIZE: 2,800 square feet

SITE SIZE: .17 acres

COST: \$1.2 million

PHOTOGRAPHY: Marty Peters and Brooks + Scarpa

KEY PRODUCTS

APPLIANCES: GE, ISE, Bosch, Fagor, Bertazzoni

DOORS: T.M. Cobb, Timely Industries, Steelcraft, McKEON, Nationwide Industries, Anemostat Door Products, Total Door Systems

FLOORING: Walker Zanger

GLAZING: PPG

HARDWARE: Schlage, Trimco, LCN, Ives, Rixson, Monarch, Pemko, Johnson Hardware, Elmes

INSULATION: Johns Manville

LIGHTING: Shaper Lighting, Bega, Prudential Lighting, Stonco, Belfer Lighting, Delray Lighting

LIGHTING CONTROLS: Lutron

PAINTS: AFM Safecoat

PLUMBING FIXTURES: American Standard, Kohler, Bobrick, GROHE, Chicago Faucets, TOTO, Delta

ROOFING: CertainTeed

TILE: Walker Zanger

WINDOWS: Milgard, Fleetwood, U.S. Aluminum



A diagonal path to the front entry activates the experience of motion in the undulating façade. Stands of thickly planted native grasses soften the transition from the built to the natural environment and, as the breeze blows, sway in concert with the twisting columns of brick.

Cultural Connection

Likewise, the interior could not be more subtle or succinct. The owner never cooks or eats at home, so the kitchen is fully concealed, all appliances tucked behind white-painted wood panels 10 feet high. “The doors are the tallest solid-core doors we could find; they pivot in different directions, and the middle section encloses the range,” Mark says. Bar stools, clad in the same white Caesarstone as the bar, slide in flush and disappear when not in use.

Nearby, floating stairs come out of the floor in concrete and meet the folded steel stair coming down, “so you’ve got something heavy going up and something light hanging down,” Larry says. It rises to a bookshelf-lined hallway

connecting the master suite and guest room at opposite ends of the house. The master suite spans along the back of the house, divided only by a floor-to-ceiling bed headboard with vanities behind it. Cabinetry runs top to bottom along the inner wall, but light floods in through glass in the outer parapet wall. This room also steps out to a private deck on the garage roof.

By deploying a prosaic, history-laden local material in a spontaneous way, the design dramatizes the architectural experience of life at home. And it does so without upstaging the street. Larry’s version bows enthusiastically to this legacy—not primarily as an object, he says, “but an experience that lasts well beyond the physical presence of the building.” 

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that interact with
the landscape.

— Jamie Daugaard, AIA NCARB LEED AP
Centre Sky Architecture

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High in the Rockies in Big Sky, Montana, this home embraces a rugged landscape and captures surrounding vistas of three majestic peaks. Integrated with the terrain, this mountain modern dwelling features large expanses of glass that lend lightness and openness to the home. See Jamie's full vision at kolbewindows.com/MTview

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FOR MORE INFO CIRCLE 17

The View House

Humans and nature align beautifully in three very different settings.

BY S. CLAIRE CONROY AND CHERYL WEBER







Camp Frio

LEAKEY, TEXAS

TIM CUPPETT ARCHITECTS



Opposite and this page: The design team worked diligently to devise spaces that segue seamlessly from outdoors to indoors. Thresholds are fully weatherstripped, allowing interiors to open to breezes and birdsong when nature permits, or to hunker down for inclement days.

If there's one thing Texas is known for, it's wide open spaces, as the Dixie Chicks' song goes. But for residents of Austin, which has seen exponential growth over the past few decades, those unsullied spaces are farther afield these days. The sleepy town of Leakey, where this family compound is situated, takes about three hours to reach from Austin and a tad over two from San Antonio. Once you arrive, however, you're worlds away from the hustle of urban life, nestled into the undulations of Texas Hill Country. The star attraction here is the cool, spring-fed Frio River, banked in cypress and cedar trees. There's a wide part of the river that's especially conducive to swimming, fishing, kayaking, and other water sports.

Just before the housing crash of 2008, Austin-based custom builder David Dagleish bought a large parcel of land for his own family compound and, with an investor, acquired another adjacent 200-acre parcel with the intention of developing a second-home community. Although the downturn slowed the buildout, Frio Cañon is moving along at a good clip now, with many parcels along the riverfront (where this lot is), and ones adjoining the meadow and Bybee Creek now sold and under construction.

Frio Cañon was conceived as a "legacy community," says David. He envisioned a destination for multiple generations of family, where children range free, and neighbors interact as





much or as little as they like. A hundred acres are set aside as wildlife preserve; there are trails for hiking, and several community buildings for events and holidays. David says his vision is catching on, and buyers are investing in high-quality houses they hope will pass on to their children and beyond.

Even with design guidelines (David is the ultimate arbiter), second-home communities can end up as a mixed bag of

aesthetics. Some buyers export their city sensibilities and expectations of comfort and luxury, resulting in mini-me McMansions plopped down discordantly in rural settings. Luckily, David has worked with the best architects in Austin and has tightly controlled the list of approved designers. Tim Cuppett Architects is among his top choices, and that's underscored by this latest house along the Frio riverfront.



Opposite and this page: Time-honored, simple materials, such as painted shiplap and cedar porch decking, emphasize the rustic setting of the home's location. The dining room occupies a two-story breezeway, bookended by screened porches. Window walls close the room off from the elements in bad weather. Interior living spaces are intentionally intimate in size, with bold colors providing reassuring refuge from the white heat of summer and the gray cold of winter.





This page: Dramatic punches of color appear in the kitchen and pantry, with appliances playing star roles. Specially sourced wallpaper and textiles connect the new home to the region's farmhouse heritage.



Getting Out

One of the easy traps to fall into with second-home design is thinking first and foremost about the interior spaces. This can cause rooms to bloat and the entire program to emphasize the wrong design goal. The aim of the second house is not to carve out the usual laundry list of living spaces—the higher purpose is to connect to a special site and facilitate a kind of lifestyle that is uniquely of that place. Here, architect Tim Cuppett's agenda was to expel people from the house and compel them to go enjoy nature, fresh air, and active pursuits.

To that end, he and firm partner David Kilpatrick, AIA, divided the

program into a series of component buildings. There's a main house with a partial second level for a bunkroom, two guest cottages with sleeping lofts, and a garage with an art space and meditation room above. They're linked by a series of bridges, so kids can run barefoot and avoid the creepy crawly things below.

The road to the property parallels the river. All the buildings on-site are carefully rotated to take in long views to the river and avoid views of adjacent neighbors. "We are always looking beyond the other building sites," says Tim. "We're always looking across the floodplain." That makes the property live even larger than its 2.8 acres.

Seeking to reinforce a human scale in the main house, the architects kept the requisite living room, kitchen, and first-floor master relatively small with average-height ceilings. Then they pulled them apart and inserted a

The owners selected Tim and Dave's team precisely for their ability to balance the dual, opposing human needs for prospect and refuge.

soaring central breezeway that serves as the main dining room. It's part interior room and part screened porch. Thresholds to all the rooms that connect to it are fully weatherstripped. Depending on the whims of Mother Nature, the dining room can be left open to the elements or closed off at each end with glass wall systems and conditioned for comfort.



This page: Shiplap walls slice through the master bedroom, morphing into closet cabinetry and covering bathroom ceilings to make way for expanses of tile. The architects rotated the house on the lot to capture long views and maintain privacy from neighbors.





This page and opposite: A partial second story above the dining room contains a bunkroom for the kids and their friends, and a second bedroom for mature visitors. Orchestrating complementary roof pitches for the four-building compound, while maintaining useful ceiling heights, were among the many maestro moves for the design team. Especially challenging was the head height for the meditation space above the garage (opposite page).

“The breezeway is oriented as close to north/south as we could get it,” says Tim. “And it does a fantastic job of ventilating the space. Our intention was that it be left open most of the time. One of our goals in the project was to make sure the family didn’t lock themselves into air-conditioned spaces.”

A skylight above brings in extra illumination, and the white shiplap throughout makes the space cheery and bright. “The breezeway is captured by screened porch on both sides,” says Dave, “so it’s not buggy. And the shiplap for us reinforced the concept that these are finely crafted rudimentary structures. It was important that local trades could do it without lots of supervision. The house was never going to be about drywall with no trim.”







This page: Two guest cottages mirror each other in layout, with full bedroom, sitting area, bathroom, and kitchenette on the ground level and sleeping loft above. They're the only buildings to employ drywall, albeit sparingly.



Camp Frio

Leakey, Texas

ARCHITECT: Tim Cuppett, AIA, and David Kilpatrick, AIA, Tim Cuppett Architects, Austin, Texas

BUILDER: David Dalglish, Dalglish Construction, Austin

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Homeowner with Adriana Chetty, Tim Cuppett Architects, Austin

LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Rebecca Leonard, Lionheart Places, Austin

PROJECT SIZE: 3,600 square feet (conditioned space)

SITE SIZE: 2.8 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Whit Preston, Paul Finkel (master bath)

KEY PRODUCTS

COUNTERTOPS: Silestone

DISHWASHER: KitchenAid

FAUCETS: ROHL

FIREPLACE: Isokern

ICEMAKER: Scotsman

HVAC: Mitsubishi Mini-splits

KITCHEN SINK: ROHL

LIGHTING, EXTERIOR: Tech Lighting, Bowman 4

LIGHTING, INTERIOR: Circa Lighting, Rejuvenation, Wyatt Warehouse Pendant

PAINTS, EXTERIOR: Eco-Stain

PAINTS, INTERIOR: Sherwin-Williams

RANGE: BlueStar

REFRIGERATOR: KitchenAid, Smeg

ROOFING: Corrugated Galvalume

TILE: Travis Tile

TOILETS: American Standard

TUBS: Duravit, Victoria + Albert (master)

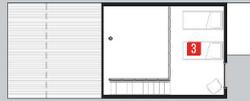
VENT HOOD: Vent-A-Hood

WALLPAPER: Voutsas (pantry), Ellie Cashman (dressing room)

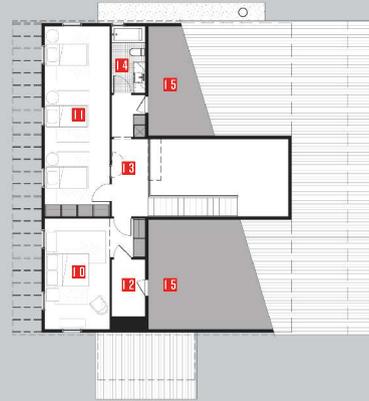
WINDOWS: Marvin

WINDOW SYSTEMS: Western Window Systems

WINE REFRIGERATOR: U-Line



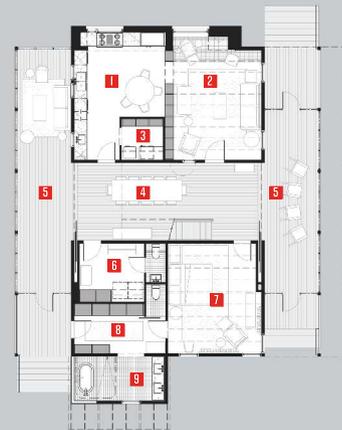
1. BATH
2. KITCHENETTE
3. LOFT



TYPICAL COTTAGE



1. GARAGE
2. ART STUDIO
3. BATH
4. MEDITATION ROOM

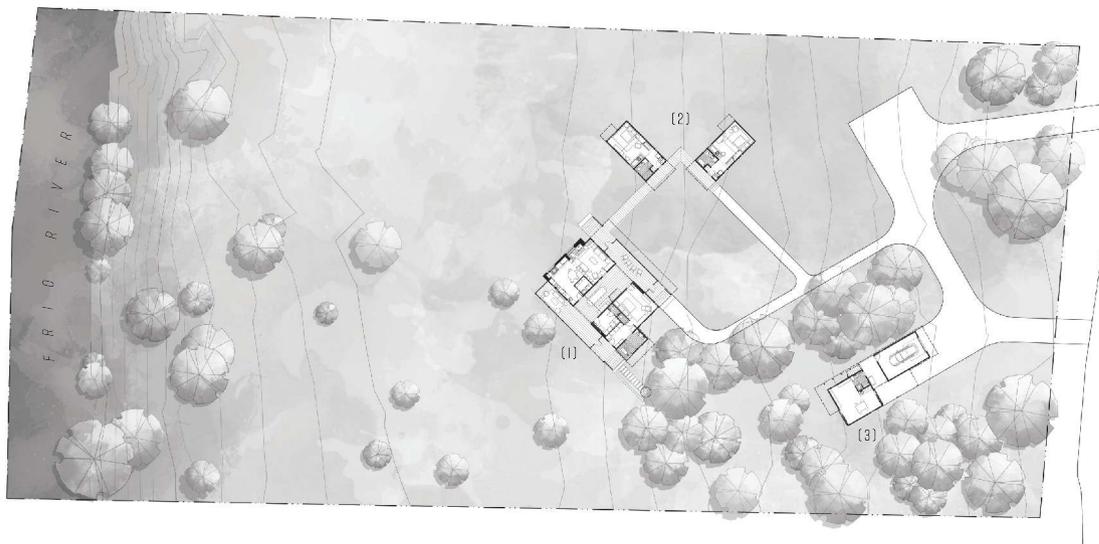


1. KITCHEN
2. LIVING
3. PANTRY
4. DINING
5. SCREENED PORCH
6. MUD ROOM
7. MASTER BEDROOM
8. DRESSING
9. MASTER BATH
10. BEDROOM
11. BUNK ROOM
12. STORAGE
13. BALCONY
14. BATH
15. ATTIC/MECH

ART STUDIO / MEDITATION ROOM / GARAGE

MAIN HOUSE

0 2 4 8 16



SITE PLAN

- (1) MAIN HOUSE
- (2) COTTAGES
- (3) ART STUDIO / MEDITATION ROOM / GARAGE



“The breezeway floor is cedar with Eco-Stain—the same as the screened porch, so you feel you are in the dog run,” he continues. “The floor acts like a deck, sitting on sleepers. Underneath, there’s a sloped concrete subfloor to area drains. You could spray the whole room out, if you wanted. It can absorb the wear and tear of young kids and dogs.”

Hunkering Down

As bright and expansive as the breezeway space is, the living room is intimate, cool, and dark. Swathed in bold, rich colors (guided by the art-trained homeowner), it’s the antidote to glaring Texas sun and heat.

The owners selected Tim and Dave’s team precisely for their ability to balance the dual, opposing human needs for prospect and refuge and to manifest the Danish idea of *hygge*, or charm and comfort. Says Tim, “The rooms are just big enough to occupy and feel cozy. That dark interior is very cooling in the summer, but what’s interesting is, in the winter it’s warm. I happen to live in a historic house, and when I renovated it, I captured that quality. That’s the project that got them to hire us.”

Although the compound is decidedly contemporary, it strikes that soothing vintage tone through the use of simple but precise forms, time-honored rustic materials—rough-

sawn cedar siding, Galvalume metal roofing, foundations clad in limestone, and wire-brushed Douglas fir floors in all but the breezeway room. The dark colors and what David Dagleish affectionately calls the “granny wallpaper” also reinforce the feeling of an amorphous, timeless past.

“This is really Tim’s genius,” David says. “It’s a modern interpretation of a Texas dog-run house. The colors are bold, but they really harmonize. It was refreshingly simple to build, but the details are knife-edge. And it has that wow factor. I’ve been doing this since 1981 and I’ve seen a lot of creative geniuses, but nothing like this.”
—S. Claire Conroy

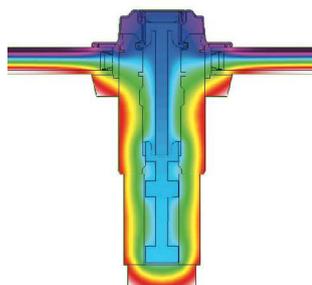


Photographer: Ryan Kurtz Photography

We owe this project to one thing – truck bed liner.

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FROM CONCEPT THROUGH COMPLETION



Thermal model represented is specific to this project.

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Calistoga Estate

CALISTOGA, CALIFORNIA
AMY A. ALPER, ARCHITECT

A principle of Japanese garden design is that property lines do not define a site—the proverbial borrowed landscape. Neither, it is understood, do four walls define a house. Views out were the organizing principle of this Napa Valley house that absorbs the remnants of an older landscape. An existing vineyard, garage, meandering stone walls, pool, and outdoor fireplace were knit with the new, acknowledging the land’s history.

Architect Amy Alper’s clients, Oregon transplants, had lived at the house part-time for three years. During that time, the retired couple had planted vineyards. Their original idea was to remodel the house, content to let the property evolve. When they moved in permanently, however, they recognized that this approach would not serve them long-term and certainly would not do justice to the spectacular views of Mount Saint Helena in the distance. And so they decided to start from scratch.



Opposite and this page: A new house in California wine country makes strategic use of existing site features—maturing vineyards; landscape elements, such as stone walls, terraces, swimming pool, and fire pit; and a guest house. An existing garage burned down during the 2017 Tubbs Fire and was rebuilt; the main house, which was under construction at the time with materials specified for Wildland Urban Interface Zones, survived unscathed.





The new house, while larger than the original, sits on the same general spot and has some orientations in common. This, says Amy, was a way to preserve the memory and relationships. “There was a circular road around the back of the property leading to the garage, and beautiful stone walls, and there was no reason to negate that,” she says. Also, “there were certain classical relationships of garage to kitchen that remain, and the kitchen has a direct relationship

“One of the goals was to knit together the site elements so that when finished, it felt like it was meant to be from the beginning.”

—Amy Alper

to the outdoor kitchen. The kitchen generally wanted to be where it had been, and the living space wanted to have this very strong relationship across to the pool, outdoor dining, and fireplace.” What’s more, there was clearly an opportunity to focus the living room on postcard-perfect Mount Saint Helena to the northeast.

With these components in mind, Amy organized the floor plan along a strong axis and cross-axis. The long main axis



runs east-west from the living room, through the guest quarters, to the master suite, while two cross-axes spill out to the long, covered south terrace facing the existing landscape elements: pool, outdoor kitchen, and fireplace. This layout preserved the vineyard on the front slope and a generous rear yard facing south.

The big secondary move was to create a new entry sequence. Previously, the long drive emptied out at the back of the property, but a new spur drops visi-

tors at a guest parking court anchored by a Corten water feature. From there, stone steps pave the way through a garden to the stone entry pavilion—“a smaller, more intimate proportion relative to the rest of the buildings,” Amy says. “As you walk along the path, you engage with the view across the vineyard and hills.” Once visitors step inside and turn left into the living room, they can see directly across the house to the sunny south terrace.



Opposite and this page: A previous house on the 12-acre site got some things right, but did not take full advantage of spectacular views of Mount Saint Helena. Arranged along well-defined axes, all key interiors now relate to long-range mountain vistas or adjacent outdoor amenities.



This page: A clear logic applied to the detailing and material selection pulls together the public rooms and private realms. Woodwork in cedar and soda-blasted oak establishes a strong linear organization of elements, while the species' subtle, swirling grains complement the more organic patterning in the stone walls.



Passing Through

Taking cues from Sonoma County's agricultural buildings, the architecture marries rustic materials with a modern composition of points, lines, and planes. The stone-and-cedar-clad living room is the most prominent form. Its gabled, two-story roofline is made up of two parts—a seating area that engages the fireplace and the view of Mount Saint Helena, and another seating area focused on media.

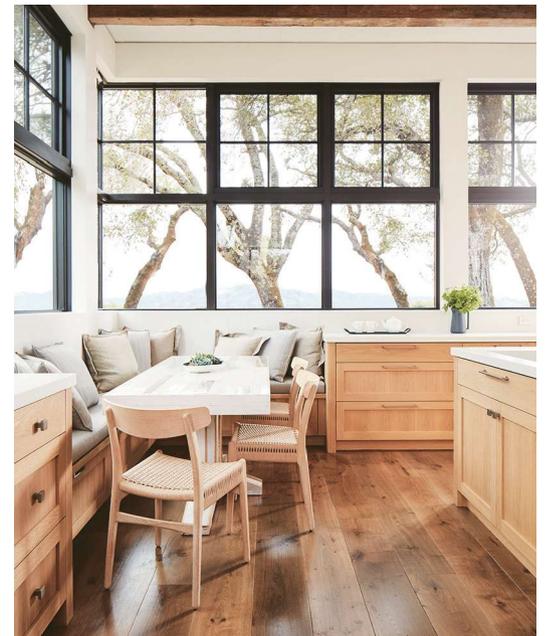
The stone-clad kitchen and stone-clad master pavilion, which includes the office, anchor opposite ends of the house. Connecting those two main zones is a cedar-wrapped guest wing

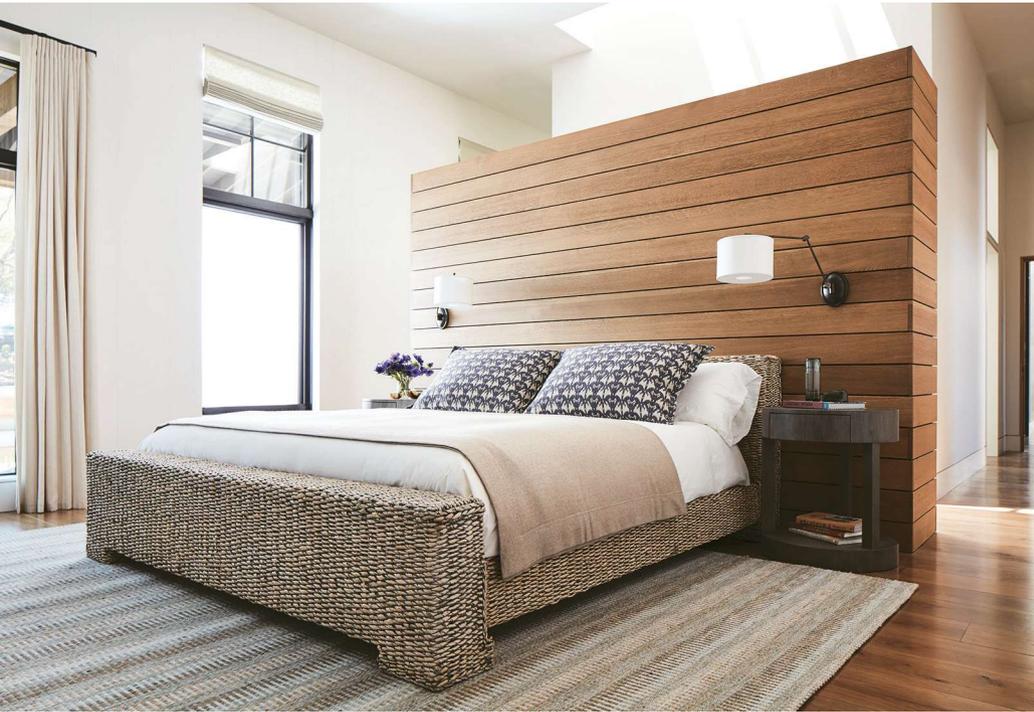
containing two bedrooms with en-suite baths. Inside, they flank a vaulted, skylit hallway whose battened walls echo the exterior. Along the hall, recessed thresholds lined in soda-blasted oak signal the guest room openings.

Repeating materials elevate the interior logic. "Movement through the house is as important as any particular room," Amy says. Interior axial views showcase the stone or cedar that wraps from outside to inside. For example, looking down the hall from the living room, you can see the master suite's stone passing through. This volume creates a bookend, and its doorway echoes the guest rooms' oak-paneled threshold, whose warm,



This page: The design team worked closely with Kolbe windows and builder John Rechin to achieve the four-over pattern in both the windows and custom cabinetry. Maintaining the top window mullions honors the area's traditional agrarian architecture without compromising views.





This page and opposite: The master suite and two guest suites share a wing of the house in cross-axis to the public rooms. Located at the terminus of the wing, the master captures multiple exposures of light and views. A window seat and the master tub take in western vistas over the pool area.



cognac tone complements the stone. Inside the master suite, “the owners wanted to wake up to an elegant existing tree, so the master is the crescendo of this primary axis you walk down,” Amy says. Flooring materials move in and out too: the bluestone entry path flows into the foyer, and the bluestone mudroom floor moves out to the terrace.

The building’s trio of large corner windows adds dynamism to an otherwise axial plan. “Just as the house started laying out, the major views lent themselves to be highlighted through the experience of looking through corner windows,” Amy says. In the living room, this pivoting view angle allowed the furniture arrangement to focus on the fireplace, she says. The office’s corner window frames the same Mount Saint Helena scene, while a matching window in the master bedroom outlines a more intimate object—the specimen tree.





Rooted in Place

Moving around the outside of the house is never dull or predictable either, even though it feels familiar. The volumes' different materials and heights come together at the south porch paralleling the pool and outdoor kitchen. "The roofline at the kitchen has a classic break, the way agricultural buildings in the area have a break to their shape; it turns the corner, becomes the porch, pulls back, turns the corner again, and finishes in a cedar pocket," Amy says. "In Napa and Sonoma, the gable roofline relates to barn forms that draw people to the area. Here it's the element that unites the composition."

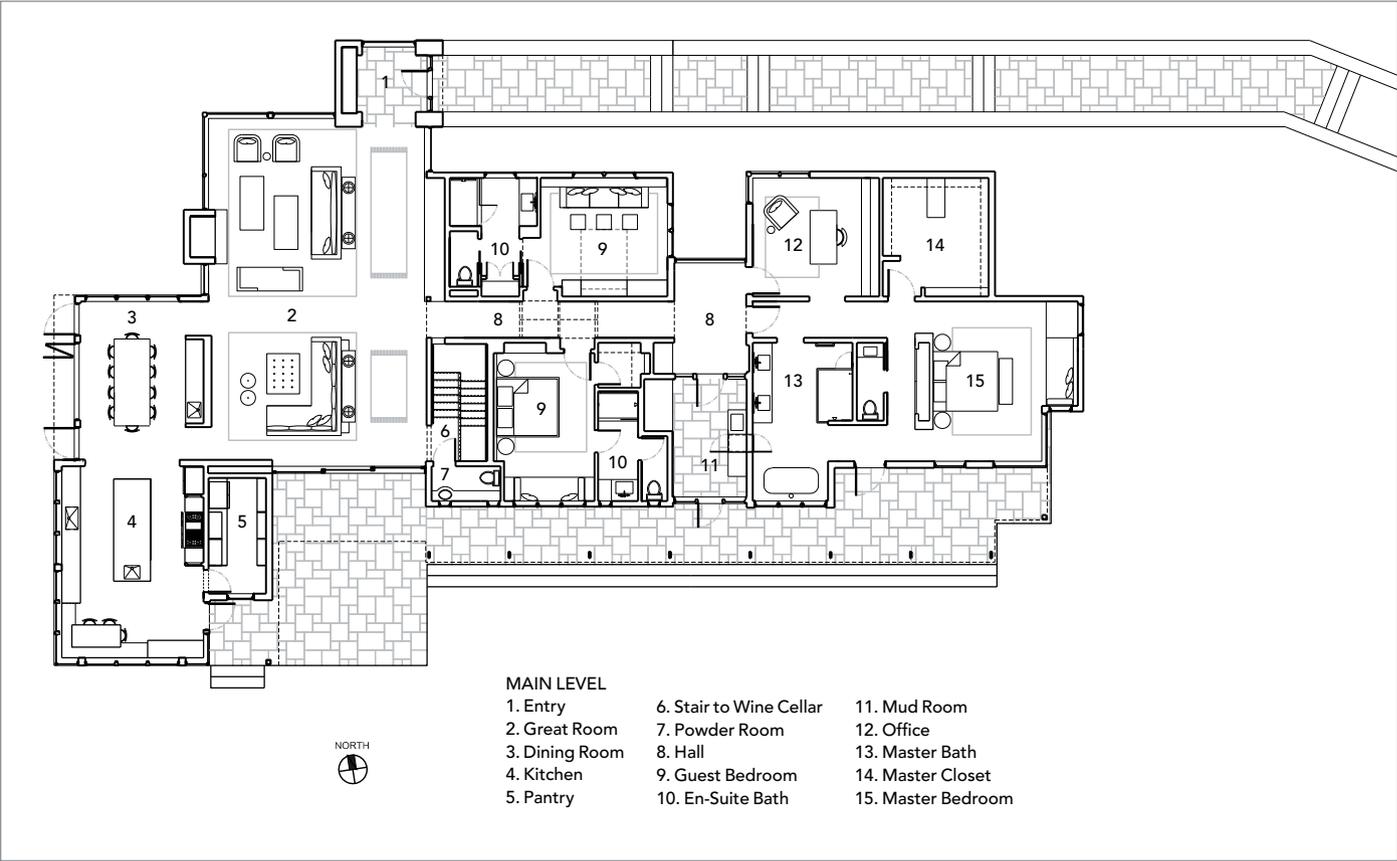
A hybrid of modern and traditional, the house's mixed messages serve a purpose. For example, mullions on the upper part of the windows help break down the scale and acknowledge wine

country's rural architecture, while the lower part is continuous so as not to obstruct views. This is echoed in the kitchen's upper cabinets, whose square motif relates to the windows across the room. And in the living room, a series of kickers ties the exposed trusses to the gable ends, eliminating the need for steel. "It adds an agricultural twist as a more straightforward way to approach architecture," Amy says. Builder John Rechin "weighed in on how to do things in a simple manner."

"We used steel minimally in a few cases," John says. "The large pieces of glass took quite a bit of structural coordination with the window company to accomplish the views we wanted. Steel posts are embedded into the foundation system, which is unusual. They come up between the windows, supporting them inside the wall structure."

This page: Both guest suites have window seats, too—a feature the architect likes to work into every house with good views. And what guest doesn't appreciate a space to relax in private without getting into bed? The west-facing guest room looks out to the existing fire pit.







Located in the Wildland Urban Interface Zone, the project also meets wildfire regulations. In fact, the use of noncombustible materials and assemblies—stone and chunky cedar siding, metal roof, and closed-cell foam envelope—helped it survive the Tubbs Fire that swept through in October 2017 while the house was under construction. Fortunately, only the existing garage burned, and it was redesigned and rebuilt.

Something old, something new: the property reads as the perfect vintage for a couple whose dream was to live in wine country and make wine. “One of the goals was to knit together the site elements so that when finished, it felt like it was meant to be from the beginning,” Amy says. At once orderly and unexpected, the pieces snap into place, redefined for comfort amidst the shifting activities of daily life.

—Cheryl Weber

Calistoga Estate

Calistoga, Calif.

ARCHITECT: Amy Alper, AIA, Amy A. Alper, Architect, Sonoma, Calif.; project architect: Dirk Smolak

BUILDER: John Rechin, Total Concepts, Santa Rosa, Calif.

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Jennifer Robin Interiors, San Anselmo, Calif.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Cary Bush, Merge Studio, Sebastopol, Calif.

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR: JKT Associates, Sonoma

LIGHTING DESIGNER: McCoy Lighting Design, Rancho Mirage, Calif.

PROJECT SIZE: 4,250 square feet

SITE SIZE: 12 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: John Merkl Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

BATHROOM VENTILATION: Panasonic

CABINETS: Waterworks, Rocky Mountain Hardware

COOKTOP/RANGE: Miele

COUNTERTOP: NuCrete Studios

CLADDING: Napa Syar Stone

DISHWASHER: Miele

ENTRY DOORS: Kolbe

EXTERIOR LIGHTING: Vision3 Lighting

FAUCETS: Kallista, Waterworks, Kohler

FIREPLACE: Isokern

FLOORING: Montaigne Beaumont, Honed Fountainbleu

GARAGE DOORS: Carriage House Doors

ICE-MAKER: Sub-Zero

INSULATION: Benjamin Obdyke

INTERIOR LIGHTING: Tech Lighting

LIGHTING CONTROLS: Lutron

MICROWAVE: Sharp

PAINTS, STAINS, COATINGS: Benjamin Moore

REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

ROOFING: Taylor Metal

SHOWER TILE: Fez Collection

SINKS: Kohler, Rohl

SKYLIGHTS: Solarium & Skylight Systems

TOILETS: TOTO

TOWEL HEATERS: Amba Products

TUB: Native Trails

WINDOWS: Kolbe

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

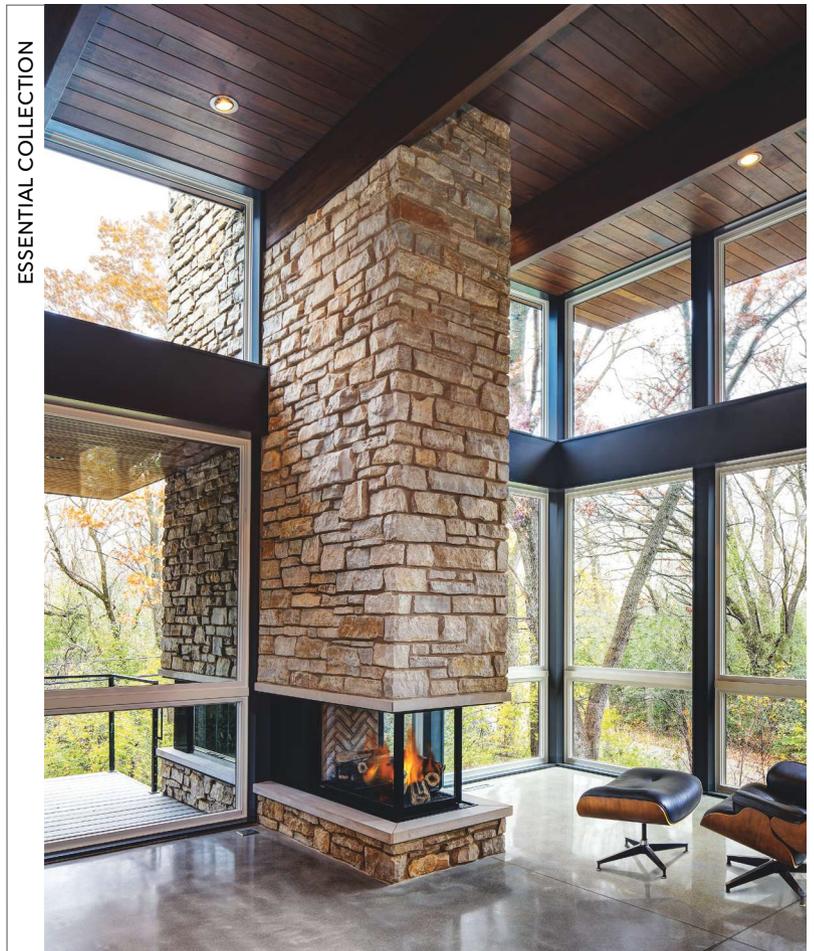
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FOR MORE INFO CIRCLE 19



Chain Bridge House

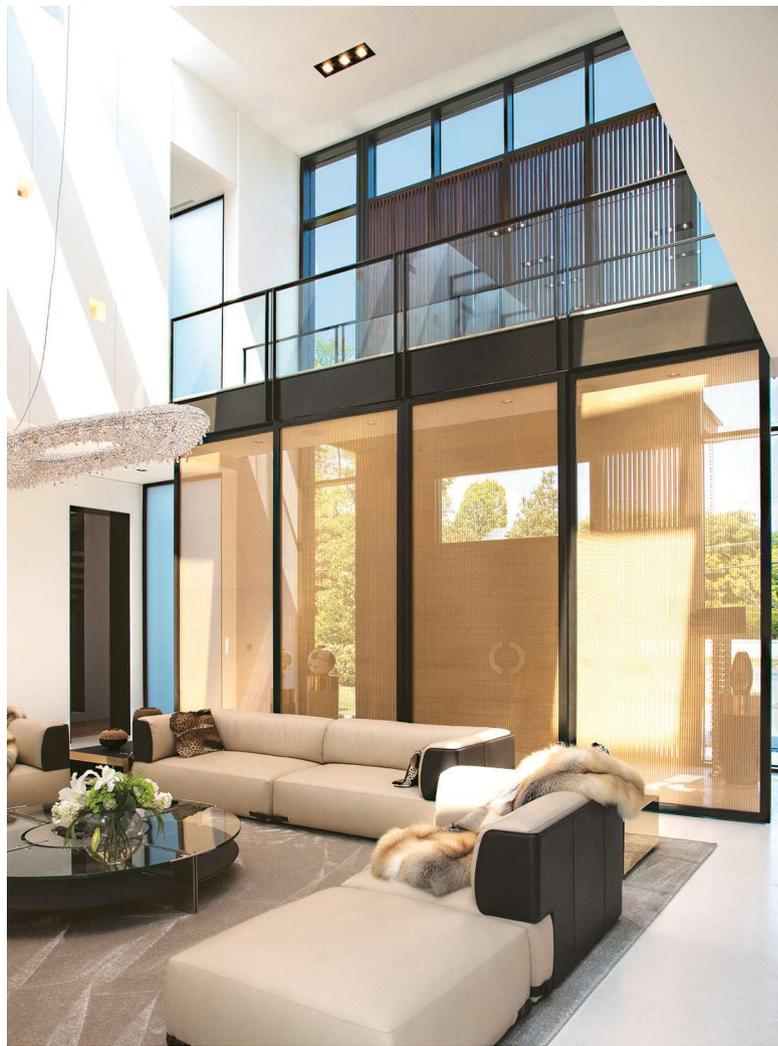
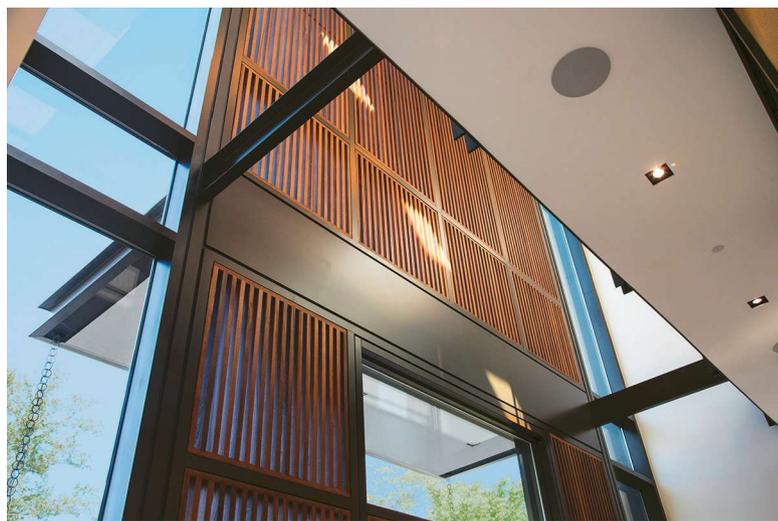
MCLEAN, VIRGINIA
MCINTURFF ARCHITECTS

The leafy neighborhoods along the Potomac River in Washington, D.C.'s privileged inner-ring suburbs offer an ideal combination of urbanity and livability. Yet their downside is the tight lots, closely spaced houses, and busy roads. Mark McInturff, FAIA, sought to preserve privacy when he designed a house for a married couple along the waterway that divides Virginia from D.C. Just minutes from the Capital's commercial corridors, the half-acre property is small but parklike, plunging to a wooded creek ravine, while houses on the other side of the street overlook the Potomac River.

The wife, who is from Morocco, wanted a house built around an airy, courtyard-like living room with high ceilings and natural light. She and her husband, a retired businessman, also requested materials that felt solid and permanent. Mark and his team are used to such challenges. "One thing I like about practicing in Washington is that we have an amazingly diverse international, educated clientele," he says. "So when people come to us with an idea that has cultural significance to them, we run with it."

Mark drew a three-part building that touches every setback on the allowable footprint. The structure consists of a double-height glass and steel core—the living room "courtyard"—bookended by two robust concrete wings with thick walls, smaller windows, and white stucco surfaces. Those wings contain the private spaces—kitchen, dining, and family room on the first floor, three bedrooms and a study above. With 6-foot-wide hallways as connecting hyphens, the three volumes are identical in width, but each one steps a little farther into the backyard to soak up the southwestern exposure.

The team's design kept the general idea of a Moorish courtyard house but emphasizes strong geometries and the



This page and opposite: On a tight urban lot, the large house titrates privacy and openness. Mesh screens divide the foyer from the living room but slide open in a number of configurations to steer party flow.



This page: At the client's request, the living room evokes the grand proportions of a Moroccan courtyard house. Although just 20-by-20 feet, the room is double height and topped in skylights. Opening the foyer screens adds another 10 feet or so of circulation space. Limestone flooring in 2-by-4-foot slabs continues from the foyer through the living room and out to the pool terrace.



play of light and shadow. That second request, for a house with implacable solidity, led the architects on an extended search for the right materials or construction method. “The wife lived in Belgium during her youth, where people built out of thick, permanent materials,” Mark says. “They said, ‘we don’t want a house where it sounds hollow when you knock on the wall or step on the floor. She would walk in and knock on a double-layer stud wall and say no.’”

“When people come to us with an idea that has cultural significance to them, we run with it.”

—Mark McInturff

Principal Peter Noonan, AIA, came up with the idea of using insulated concrete form walls for the two wings. From basement floor to roof, the walls are composed of a 10-inch poured-concrete core sandwiched between several inches of rigid foam. “One advantage of ICF for three stories is that you get an incredibly well-insulated mass,” Peter says. “We installed a geothermal system for both heating and cooling, and once you get the interior heated up or cooled down, these thick concrete walls hold that thermal environment. A lot of the Passive Houses use similar technologies.”

The floor structure is impenetrable, too. Thin Epicore steel spanning elements were embedded with radiant tubing and filled with concrete. “Our general contractor had a super foreman named John Maysak, whom we totally bonded with and frustrated on more than one occasion,” Mark says. “It’s a commercial concrete floor system with concrete framing like you’d see in Switzerland; you could drive a truck on it. Everybody prioritizes where they put



The house is built like a tank, with walls of poured concrete sandwiched in foam and a commercial concrete flooring system embedded with radiant tubing. It’s heated and cooled with a geothermal system. As a result, says architect Peter Noonan, the house holds its thermal environment extremely well.



This page: The clients found the centerpiece island in a showroom and had the architects design a neutral backdrop kitchen around it. The teak-and-stainless island resembles “an old-time America’s Cup boat,” says Mark McInturff.

their cost, and this was one place they did. In exchange we scrapped the idea of a putting green on the roof.”

Scrim Scramble

With privacy a major concern, the team created layers, suggestions of enclosure between the house and road. Arriving visitors drive through a screen of plantings, park in the forecourt, and cross a small mahogany “bridge” to the front door. (The subterranean garage is around back under the media room and courtyard, navigated with a precise, three-point turn). Inside, sliding mesh screens define the foyer and lightly veil the double-height central living room. Beyond, the living room’s sliding glass back wall opens to a porch, pool, and terraces. Motorized screens can drop down from the porch ceiling, turning the living room into a giant outdoor space.

Principal Colleen Healey, AIA, describes the house as “a small collection of large rooms—not cavernous, but comfortably proportioned. Many

of the first floor rooms are generous, nonspecific spaces,” she says. “For the middle volume to feel like a courtyard, we had to go as big as we could; otherwise it would feel like a space to move through. The main room is 20 by 20 feet. The entry is 10 or 11 feet deep and can be connected to the living room when the sliding screens are open.”

Adds Mark: “The mesh screens can stack—open in the middle for a party so people can come blasting into the room, or they can open on the side. They’re a big toy, in a way.” Colleen worked with fabricators to produce the delicate GKD scrim. “They’re made of gold and silver material woven together, turned in alternating directions so you get a different look depending on the side you’re on,” she says.



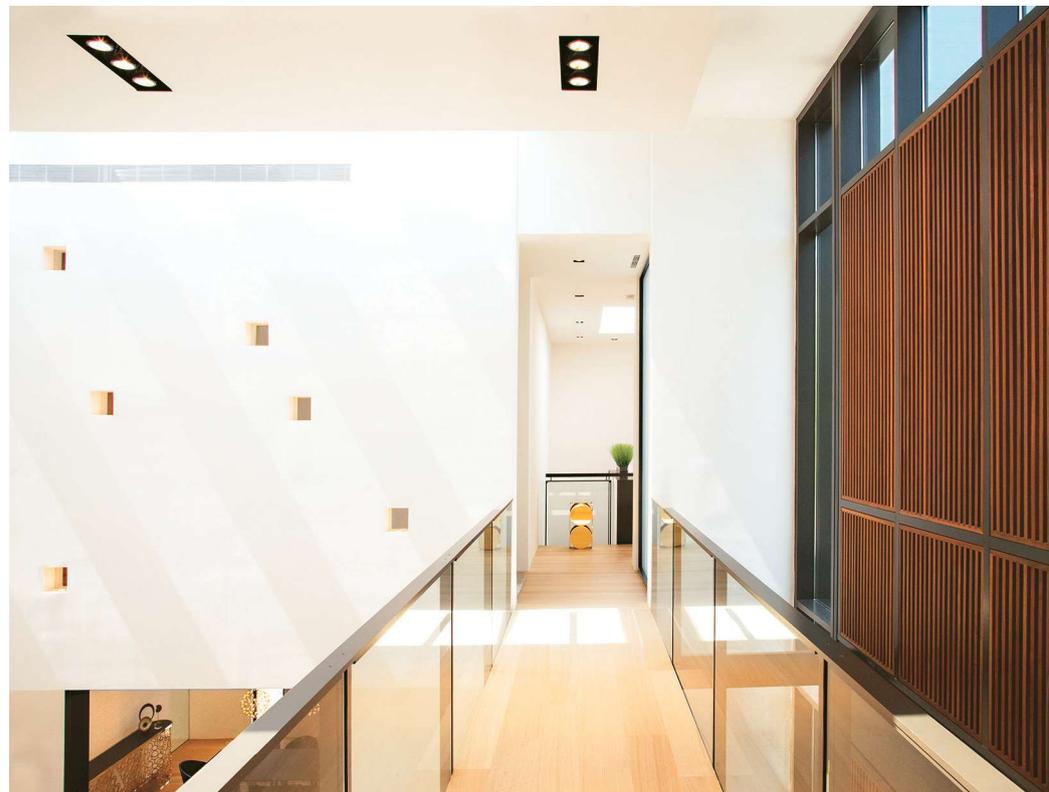
Lightbox

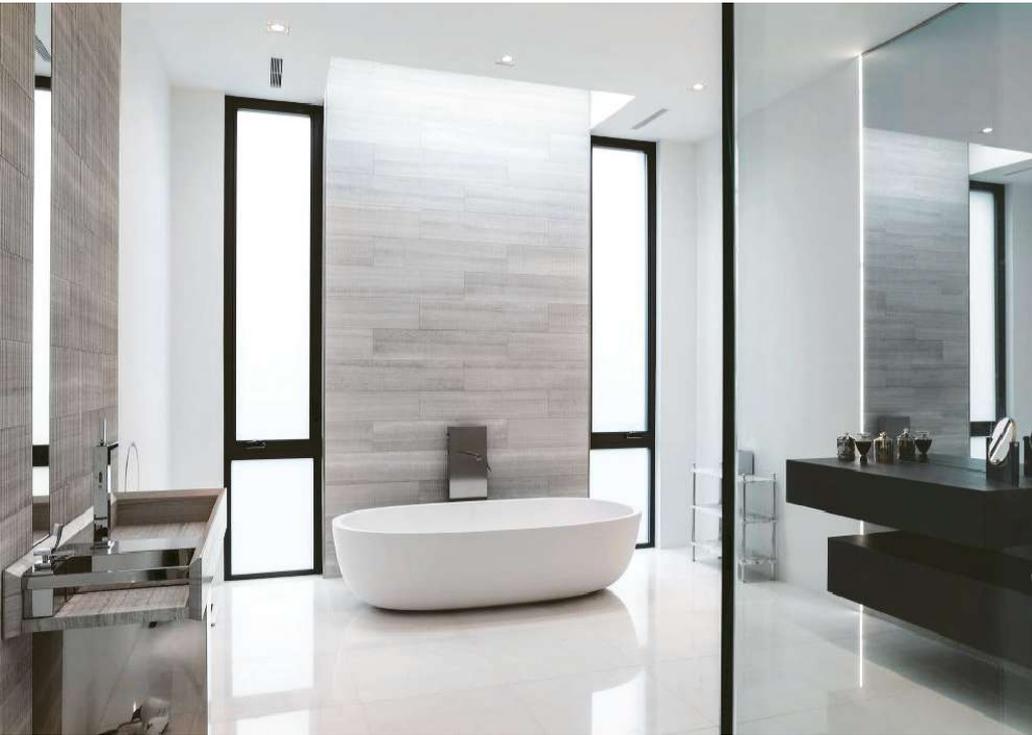
Solidity and transparency conspire to trip a little light fantastic. In the central, tent-like space, five standard Velux skylights were engineered to create 4-foot-by-20-foot openings where the two interior walls meet the ceiling. “We slid them all the way to the edges so that those masses on either side could feel like they were going up into the skylights,” Colleen says. A large round skylight in the middle heightens the sense that the ceiling is floating.

Upstairs, a bridge crosses the courtyard from one side of the house to the other along the front façade. In another nod to Moroccan houses, this two-story wall is fitted with mahogany louvers, matching the material on the volume’s exterior side elevations.



This page: On the second level, a bridge leads to the master bedroom at one end and guest bedrooms at the other. A mahogany screen shields views of the street. Across the living room, the office hangs over the rear porch, pulling in light and views from multiple directions.





This page: His-and-hers master baths and closets coordinate in fixtures and finishes but support different bathing and dressing rituals.

Chain Bridge House

McLean, Va.

ARCHITECT: Mark McInturff, FAIA, and Colleen Healey, AIA, principals in charge; Peter Noonan, AIA, and Julia Jeffs, McInturff Architects, Bethesda, Md.

CONTRACTOR: John Maysak, project lead, Added Dimensions, Takoma Park, Md.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Lila Fendrick Landscape Architects, Chevy Chase, Md.

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: MC 1200 Architectural Engineers, Alexandria, Va.

POOL: Alpine Pool & Design Corporation, Annandale, Va.

PROJECT SIZE: 8,500 square feet

SITE SIZE: .5 acres

PHOTOGRAPHY: Angie Seckinger, Julia Heine

KEY PRODUCTS

BATHROOM VENTILATION: Panasonic

COOKTOP/VENT HOOD: Gaggenau

DISHWASHER: Miele

ENTRY DOOR: Forms+Surfaces

HVAC: Carrier

KITCHEN CABINETS: Boffi

KITCHEN FAUCETS: Blanco

KITCHEN ISLAND: ALNO Kitchens

LIGHTING: Lutron, Eurofase, Mooi (interior); Progress (exterior)

LIMESTONE FLOORING: Marble Systems

MASTER BATH VANITY: Boffi

OFFICE CABINETRY: Abernethy Sticks, steel by Steve Prudhomme

OVENS: Miele

REFRIGERATOR: Miele

ROLLUP INSECT SCREENS: Phantom Screens

SHOWER FAUCETS: Fantini Rubinetti

SINKS: Boffi

SKYLIGHTS: VELUX

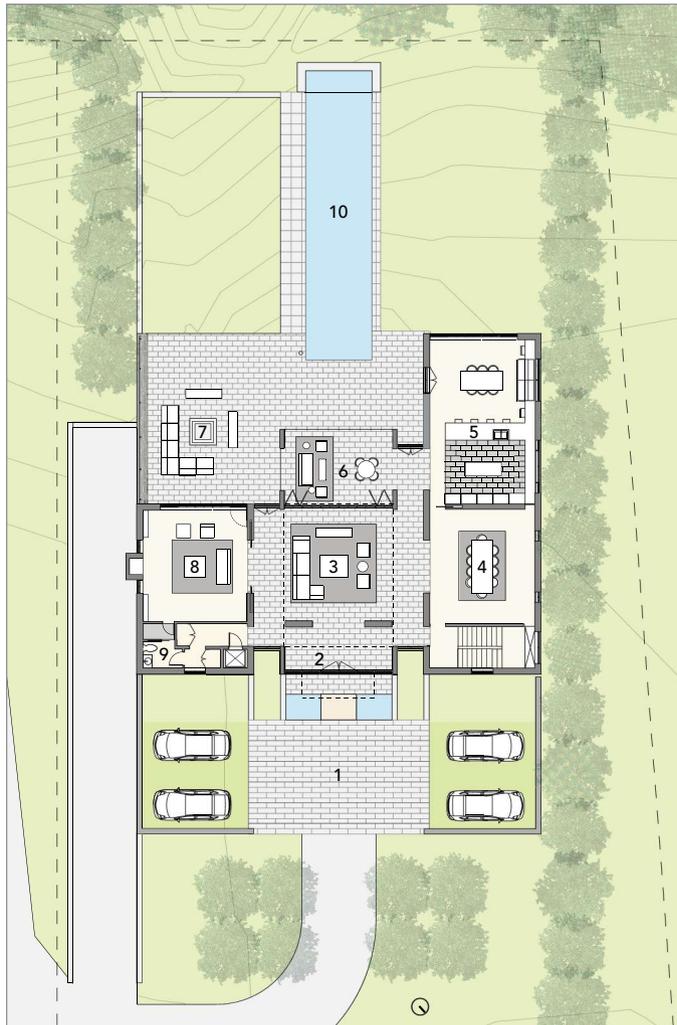
STRUCTURAL GLASS AND STEEL: AK Metals

TOILETS: TOTO

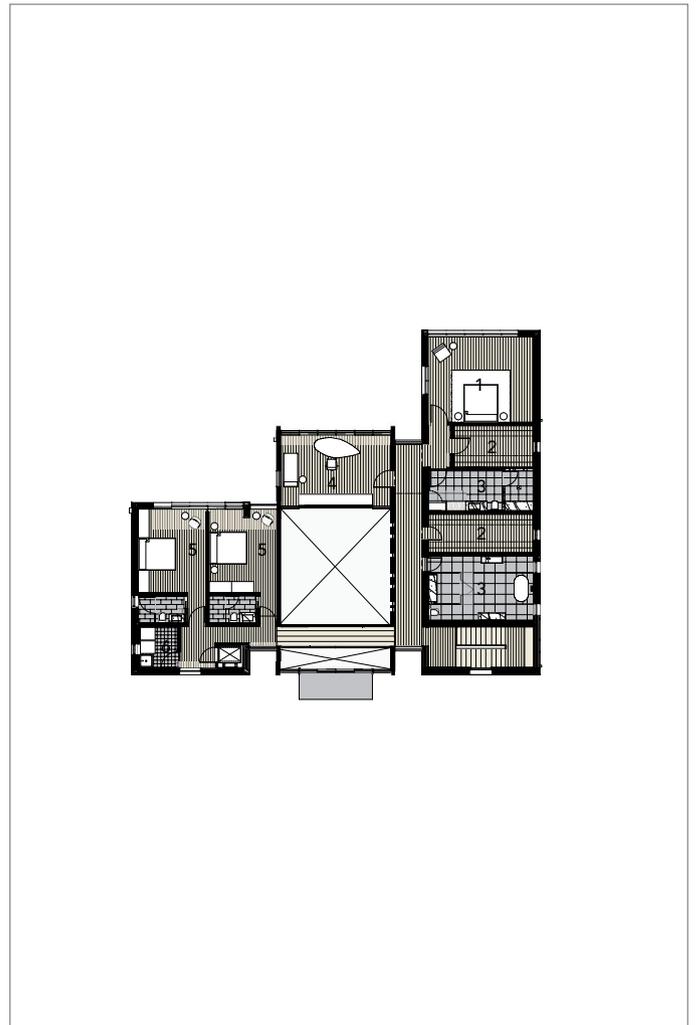
TUB: Boffi

WASHER/DRYER: Miele

WINDOW SHADING: Lutron



FIRST FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry Court | 2. Entry | 3. Living Room
 "Courtyard" | 4. Dining Room | 5. Kitchen | 6. Screened Porch
 7. Terrace | 8. Media Room | 9. Bath | 10. Pool



SECOND FLOOR PLAN | 1. Master Bedroom | 2. Closet | 3. Bath
 4. Office | 5. Bedroom | 6. Laundry





The steel "courtyard" core is flanked by two stucco boxes. A window wall system with roll-up Phantom Screens opens the living room to the backyard oasis for large parties.

Throughout the interior, sturdy, smooth walls are made from a double layer of drywall covered with Duroc and then plastered. But the light easily slips in. The husband's office at the back of the second floor sits on top of the porch, gazing out to the woods and into the center of the house. In the master bathroom, the walls shoot up into a pair of skylights over the tub. And an abstract pattern of small squares punctures the upper wall between the private master suite hallway and the living room's air space.

"At the Alhambra in Spain, baths have vaulted roofs and little squares about that size, punches of light," Mark

says, though "there's nothing overtly Moorish about it. The boxes have pieces of glass, little lights in the bottom; we thought of it almost like candles." Their placement was a puzzle, though. "If there are 10 squares randomly placed, what's the logic?" he says. "There were way too many sketches of it, working around ductwork weaving through the wall."

The house wasn't easy to build on its sloped lot. Extensive excavation required general contractor Richard Hazboun to shore up the neighbor's house and protect the ravine during construction. But the result is a solid yet graceful dwelling with a high-quality

fit. Details were executed with Swiss-watch precision. "The massive floors are perfectly level from one end of the house to the other," Richard says. "All the windows have the same reveals, floor to ceiling, so they needed to hit the bottom and top the same." Parapet walls on the flat TPO roof hide the mechanical equipment and courtyard skylights, giving it a simple, cubic form from the street.

"There was a level of trust and friendship among everyone with a certain goal in mind," John says of the team. "You really have to see this as human interaction, and out of it comes a house." —Cheryl Weber

Question Conventional Boundaries



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3. LA VITA LOCA

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customfireplacedesign.com
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4. CONCRETE ADVANTAGE

Designer Doorware combines rough-and-ready concrete with smooth metals in a new line of door hardware. The Bullet+Stone collection comes standard in Luna Grey, with custom colors available on request.
designerdoorware.com
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RD PRODUCTS

5. THE PERFECT WARM

Appliance maker Miele introduces a new 30-inch warming drawer that pairs with its sleek speed and convection wall ovens. The push-to-open units have two adjustable levels to accommodate dishes and food simultaneously.

mieleusa.com

Circle 105 on inquiry card.

5



6. CHAMBER MADE

NanaWall's new WA67 folding glass wall system solves the problem of combining extruded aluminum-clad exteriors with wood-clad interiors in demanding climates. A proprietary "evaporation chamber" allows the two materials to expand and contract at different rates. Available in triple-paned glass for severe cold locations.

nanawall.com

Circle 106 on inquiry card.

6



7. LOVELY VIU

Duravit, in collaboration with Sieger Design, has launched a new collection of ceramic fixtures called Viu and furniture-style pieces called XViU—characterized by precise, minimalist detailing.

duravit.us

Circle 107 on inquiry card.

7



8. LG SIGNATURE

LG's 36-inch, dual fuel range marries a continuous-grate gas cooktop with an extra-large capacity steam/convection oven. The two front burners convert to handle round-bottomed woks.

lg.com

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8





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9. SPOIL NO MORE

Arriving in the third quarter of this year, Sub-Zero's PRO 36-inch refrigerator has two separate cooling systems, three temperature zones, and glass or solid-front doors. An air purification system helps remove ethylene gas implicated in food spoilage, says the maker. subzero-wolf.com
Circle 109 on inquiry card.



9

10. WATER FEATURE

QuickDrain's handsome shower systems combine ease of installation, single-slope drainage, and adjustable heights and lengths for custom applications. quickdrainusa.com
Circle 110 on inquiry card.



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11. NICE TOUCH

Dacor's new Modernist Gas Pro range employs smart technology via a large touch screen to precisely control cooking functions and times—all in a handsomely curated design. dacor.com
Circle 111 on inquiry card.



11

12. WINNING WAYS

Teaming with Roger Thomas, creative lead for the Wynn hospitality chain, Rocky Mountain Hardware introduces three new profiles: Barre, Zeppelin, and Chiseled (not shown). The designs aim for a timeless mix of classic and contemporary, fabricated with the company's artisanal rigor. rockymountainhardware.com
Circle 112 on inquiry card.



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We are delighted to announce the launch of our first annual RD Architecture Awards program recognizing outstanding residential architecture. Winners will be published in Volume 3, 2020 of Residential Design magazine and recognized with a special event held at next year's AIA Conference on Architecture in Los Angeles.

Eligibility

All entries must be submitted by or on behalf of an architect or designer. The competition is open to projects within or outside the United States of America. Projects completed on or after Jan. 2, 2015, are eligible for entry. Projects may be entered in multiple categories, if they conform to the category criteria. Entries will be judged by an independent jury of architects.

This is a residential design excellence program that welcomes all styles of architecture. We do recognize that traditional projects and contemporary projects are sometimes difficult to judge against each other. We have therefore created categories specifically for contextual or vernacular work to encourage submission of traditional projects to the program and to the magazine.

However, we invite firms to enter projects where they feel they can best compete, and we will give jurors broad discretion to move them where their strengths can shine. Both modern and traditional work will be considered for Project of the Year, and jurors may select one modern work and one traditional work for Project of the Year, if they so choose.

The jury will select winners in the residential categories listed here. All non-winners will be considered—with permission from the entrant—for future publication in Residential Design magazine.

Whole-House Categories

1. Custom Urban House \$125
2. Custom Rural or Vacation House \$125
3. Custom Period, Contextual, or Vernacular House (these projects are welcome in the Urban and Rural house categories as well) \$125
4. Custom Renovation (substantial additions or alterations to an existing home) \$125
5. Custom Period, Contextual, or Vernacular Renovation/Restoration/Preservation (substantial additions and alterations to or restoration of an existing home; these projects are also welcome in the Renovation category) \$125

Residential Special Project Categories

6. Architectural Interiors or Custom Details \$100
7. Custom Outdoor Living or Landscape Design \$100
8. Custom Accessory or Outbuilding \$100
9. Residential, Special Constraints (single-family dwellings built to sustainable standards programs, stringent architectural review, or pattern book; adaptive reuse to residential; affordable, extraordinary budget or size constraints, pro-bono project; prototype dwelling or special construction technology applied) \$100
10. Custom On the Boards \$100

Residential Design Project of the Year

The jury will choose an overall Project of the Year from among the built project entries.

Deadlines

Regular deadline to enter: Dec. 10, 2019

Late deadline (\$50 late fee required): Dec. 16, 2019.

Stay tuned for more information on entry details and additional deadlines.

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RD RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

Architecture Awards 2020

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Stay tuned for more information on entry details and additional deadlines.

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Case Study at PAC-CLAD.COM/CARSON

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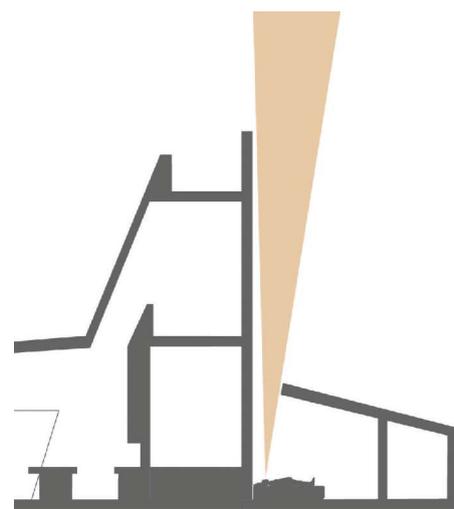
Celestial Reasoning

TOMECEK STUDIO ARCHITECTURE
DENVER, COLORADO

Savvy clients hire architects because they want to tackle head-on the deficits and bounties of their sites. In this case, the conservation-conscious couple purchased a stunning 9-acre site adjacent to a small graveyard in Salida, Colorado. The long-range mountain vistas are unmatched from this raised plateau in the valley, but there's no ignoring the neighbors—those interred and those visiting periodically to pay their respects. It was clear they needed some expert design guidance.

They turned to Brad Tomecek, AIA, of Tomecek Studio Architecture, whose website touts “We Design Experiences.” Certainly, the proof is in this project, which manages to transform the valley of death into a celestial celebration of life. Once commissioned, Brad launched a thorough investigation of his clients’ attitudes about life and death—about what disturbs them and what uplifts their spirits. He plumbed burial rituals through the ages for design inspiration, and local building traditions for ideas about materials and methods.

The result is a modern, off-the-grid cabin that mediates between earthly existence and spiritual enlightenment. The ground-floor living quarters facilitate tasks of daily life but, as the levels rise, those mundane pursuits give way to creative expression (an art and writing studio) and ultimately culminate in a roof deck with 360-degree views of the mountains. Back downstairs in the master bedroom, a viewing shaft in the ceiling directs the gaze to the heavens—as centuries of burial chambers did, conveying the soul to its final destination. —*S. Claire Conroy*



Project: Cemetery Residence, Salida, Colo.; architect: Brad Tomecek with support staff Ramune Rainer and Will Oliver, Tomecek Studio Architecture; builder: Fish Builders, Salida; project size: 1,257 square feet; site size: 9.1 acres. Renderings: Tomecek Studio Architecture

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