

# NATURAL RESPONSE

IN CARMEL'S SANTA LUCIA PRESERVE, A MODERN STRUCTURE OFFERS A WELCOMING RESPITE FOR ITS TEXAS FAMILY WITH CLEAN LINES, OPEN SPACES AND A HOST OF WARM MATERIALS THAT SPEAK TO ITS SITE.

WRITTEN BY **JORGE S. ARANGO** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PAUL DYER**

**INTERIOR DESIGN** Kristin Rowell, Scavullo Design  
**ARCHITECTURE** Ken Linsteadt, Ken Linsteadt Architects  
**HOME BUILDER** David Stocker, Stocker & Allaire General Contractors Inc.  
**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE** Bernard Trainor, Bernard Trainor + Associates  
**BEDROOMS** 4 | **BATHROOMS** 6 | **SQUARE FEET** 5,900





A Carmel house's rustic entry door by Neff Mill & Cabinet emphasizes the modern farmhouse feel established by architect Ken Linsteadt. *Opposite top:* Landscape designer Bernard Trainor planted the entry courtyard with rosemary, manzanita, and African boxwood. *Opposite bottom:* Interior designer Kristin Rowell set a gold-dipped impala skull on the living area's concrete hearth.



There is a huge community of Texans who have settled in Carmel because of the weather," observes interior designer Kristin Rowell. It was a Texas couple with three children, in fact, who asked Rowell to appoint the interiors of the vacation home they were building in the Santa Lucia Preserve, an exclusive golf and equestrian community with homes on 2,000 acres of an otherwise undeveloped 20,000-acre former cattle ranch in the mountains above the town. Many original homes in the Preserve, Rowell says, are sprawling and Mediterranean in style. But the clients opted for a decidedly different direction. "They wanted it to be under 6,000 square feet," she says, and "to feel relaxed and casual, so you could show up with just your bags for the weekend and not have all the things that bog you down in a primary residence."





In the dining area, John Pomp Studios pendants from De Sousa Hughes hang above Siren chairs and a Rhodesian table, both by Holly Hunt Studio. The Kenjillo Nanao painting was purchased through Elins Eagles-Smith Gallery.



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Architect Ken Linsteadt responded to the clients' directive with a minimalist-modern, farmhouse-style structure he describes as "three gabled pavilions stitched together." Linked by flat-roofed galleries, the pavilions aptly separate the master bedroom, a study and one central volume with the living-dining area, kitchen and guest suite. To underscore the modern feel, Linsteadt inserted large expanses of windows and crowned the building with a zinc roof. He balanced those elements by keeping the interior "simple and restrained with a warmth of materials." And although green building wasn't a specified goal at first, it became "an intuitive part of the design," says Linsteadt.

"We incorporated many recycled materials and nothing that off-gassed," says builder David Stocker, starting to tick off the list. "Solar energy powers much of the house. There's reclaimed wood on the ceilings and walls, insulation is made of recycled denim, and a gravel entry

Rowell furnished the living area with a custom sectional, crafted by Roberto Barahona Co. and upholstered with a Rogers & Goffigon textile. A custom wool rug by Mansour defines the space; the coffee table is by Christian Liaigre.





Reclaimed barnwood frames a breakfast nook appointed with a lava stone-topped table from Sue Fisher King, a Gregorius Pineo pendant, and a banquette covered with a Glant faux leather. Backsplash tiles by Blue Slide Art Tile mark the kitchen, where pendants by Jonathan Browning Studios light the island's concrete surface.

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court allows rainwater to percolate into the soil.” The intention to paint some interiors was derailed after hand-troweling the plaster onto walls, he adds. It was so beautiful that “everyone looked at it and thought, ‘Why are we painting this?’ So we got it to no-VOC instead of low-VOC by leaving them natural.”

The use of recycled barnwood also evolved from the original concept. It was sourced from a Central Valley barn slated for demolition and was originally intended for the living area ceiling. But the material added such character and warmth that Linsteadt extended it into other rooms of the house, as well, and used it to wrap portions of the exterior.

When it came to selecting furnishings, “there was a sensitivity to keeping things low,” says Rowell, who worked alongside project manager Bailey Peters. “This was so we wouldn’t compete with Ken’s architecture, and also to let the view steal the show. And the palette is muted, which makes it feel timeless and soothing.” Blues were sparingly deployed as accents. The clients’ Kenjilo Nanao painting in the dining area, navy throw pillows in the living area, and powder blue chairs and pillows in the



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The swimming pool offers sweeping views of the mountains from its dramatic hillside perch. Trainor surrounded the area with more than 10 varieties of grasses and wildflowers that are native to the region.



A white-oak stairway fabricated by First, Last & Always descends to the media room between walls of hand-troweled plaster executed by Favazza Plastering. An Apparatus fixture hangs from the ceiling, which features reclaimed barnwood from Restoration Timber.



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master bedroom pop against neutral-hued furnishings with clean, simple silhouettes and no pattern. Metallic touches—such as quietly shimmering faux leather in the breakfast nook, an impala skull dipped in gold, and a spectacular spiky urchin-like chandelier in the master bathroom—thread in understated versions of Texas-style glamour.

Just as the design complements the architecture, the architecture was meant to work with the site. “One of the biggest challenges was the approach,” says Linsteadt. “You descend on the house from above, so how it looked from the top was important.” Landscape designer Bernard Trainor helped solve this problem by planting sedge roofs

Restoration Timber’s reclaimed barnwood resurfaces in the home office, where Arca Woodworkers used it to create shelving and a desktop. McGuire’s Bill Sofield Baton armchair pulls up to the desk, which holds an antique lamp from Antiques du Monde.



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on the separate garage and bunk room portions, which had the added benefit of creating “a good insulating cover” to keep the structures cool.

Trainor faced his own challenges, as well: mainly, he says, “trying to imagine what the grade and vegetation would have looked like” before the property had been leveled by previous owners. To this end, he planted more than 10 varieties of native grasses and wildflowers outside the Montana fieldstone and board-form concrete walls that enclose the buildings. Inside those boundaries, he chose more structured plantings of river birches, rosemary, manzanita, and African boxwood, noting, “It doesn’t start to get wild until you get beyond the walls.”

With the landscaping, siting and material selection, the house not only lives lightly on the land, but it also appears to recede into it. “The house is situated in a way that you almost can’t see it from across the canyon,” says Rowell. “It’s understated, and its organic materials allow it to blend into the natural surroundings.” **L**



Rowell chose a bed from Crate & Barrel for the guest bedroom and dressed it with custom linens and pillows. Artwork by Katina Huston from Dolby Chadwick Gallery hangs on the opposite wall, and Janus et Cie’s furniture appoints the deck outside.