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ART HOUSE

A Texas couple dreamed of a home in the rolling hills of Santa Fe that showcased their spectacular art collection.

Erinn Morgan finds a minimalist masterpiece of glass and light

JEANNE AND MICHAEL KLEIN instantly loved the rugged Santa Fe hillside that would one day incorporate their second home — and a celebration of both art and nature. “This land was appealing to us because you could see the changing colors of the dramatic New Mexico sky to the west and also view the high alpine mountains to the east,” says Jeanne. In addition, the 20-acre space backed right up to the Santa Fe National Forest.

Impassioned art collectors from Texas, the Kleins’ vision was to build a stunning, modern glass home where they could live, day to day, with spectacular, contemporary pieces while also celebrating the sublime natural



POINT OF VIEW
A structural glass wall — the first of its kind in North America — is the only support for the Klein home's cantilevered roof.

landscape. “With [architect] Mark [DuBois], we were able to be adventurous and build a glass house in the desert,” explains Jeanne. “We wanted an abundance of glass to really live in nature, but we also had this art collection that we wanted to build a house for.”

The Kleins’ art collection includes pieces by contemporary and minimalist masters Ellsworth Kelly, Kiki Smith, Richard Serra and Donald Judd. “We didn’t want to build a separate structure for the art. We wanted to walk through it every day — all day,” says Jeanne.

Since the 8,000-square-foot Klein home was built just outside Santa Fe 10 years ago, it has been acclaimed as among the finest American homes built for art. One of the centerpieces is an Ellsworth Kelly sculpture around which the living room was designed.

Another key piece: a James Turrell *Skyspace*, embedded into the center of the house. It offers a contemplative space in which to experience the ever-changing Southwest sky.

Ensuring the perfect placement for the home’s vital art pieces, the Kleins and DuBois, of New York City-based Ohlhausen DuBois Architects, positioned the art before the house was even designed. Then DuBois created huge hallways where the art is

placed. These linear spaces are juxtaposed against big, open living areas accented by glass walls.

“As an architect, you have to really understand what your clients are looking for,” DuBois says. “In the case of the Kleins, they love the outdoors, they’re very social people, and they also have a spectacular art collection. Our challenge was to feel really connected to the landscape but also create a fabulous place for living with art.”

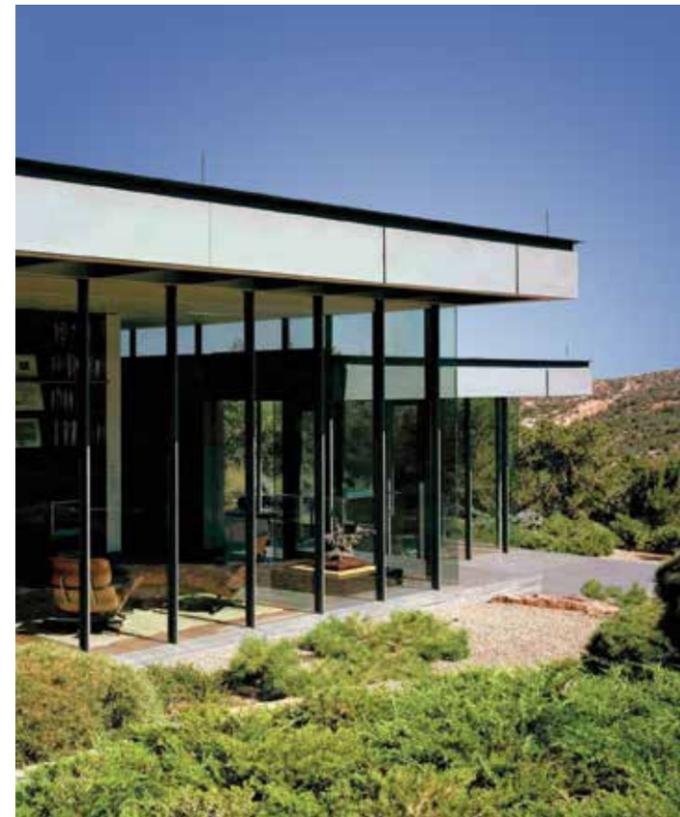
The Klein home uses a simple, elegant materials palette of concrete, basalt, zinc, walnut — and lots of glass. A unique structural glass wall that passes through the center of the home is the only support for the structure’s cantilevered roof. According to DuBois, this utilization of structural glass is the first of its kind in North America.

From design to completion, this home project took more than 3 years. DuBois notes that the design went fairly quickly, but the implementation of the structural glass wall added time to the schedule.

“We worked very closely with the contractor, fabricator and a British engineer in New York City,” says DuBois, who adds that key people from the engineer’s firm went on to design all the Apple stores with load-bearing glass. “We actually built a full-sized glass panel as a mock-up and sent it to a lab for testing since this was the first time load-bearing glass was used in North America — and there was no way to know if it was going to work.”

DuBois points to the fact that the Kleins’ interest in exploring this design element speaks to their adventurous and courageous nature. “They’re really interested in

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PERSONAL SPACE
Clockwise from top left: Concrete provides a soft, textured backdrop for the Kleins’ art; clean lines and glass allow the New Mexico landscape to take center stage; a James Turrell *Skyspace* offers a spot to contemplate the changing Southwestern sky; designers used an elegant palette of basalt, zinc and walnut throughout the home; a sunshade runs the length of the house, softening sunlight and creating a modern shaded porch.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: FRANK OUDEMAN (2), DAVID MARLOW, FRANK OUDEMAN, DAVID MARLOW, PREVIOUS SPREAD, FRANK OUDEMAN



A WELCOME SIGHT
Specially designed trails,
colorful plantings and
outdoor art installations
lead to the guesthouse.

exploring new things,” he says. “They treated this a little bit like an art piece — they were creating an environment.”

An engineering success, the Klein home’s sheer walls of glass ultimately fuse the indoors with the outdoors, realizing their goal of living in the natural setting. “As you sit there you get this gorgeous view of the mountains and you get to see the changing colors and storms coming in — it’s just so beautiful to be able to experience this glass,” says Jeanne.

The profusion of glass, however, also delivers a plethora of light into the house, creating a challenge for showcasing the Kleins’ artwork. “Most collectors build houses with beautiful, elegant white rooms with light that is very controlled,” says DuBois. “But then you can’t really appreciate the home’s natural setting. We had the challenge of embracing the landscape but making the art really sing.”

Concrete was used as an unusual yet highly effective backdrop for the Kleins’ collection. “I didn’t know how much I would love the gray background for my art when I was used to white backgrounds,” says Jeanne. “I love the texture and color of the concrete as a backdrop.”

Much of the featured artwork is located in long hallways that are protected from light variations. In addition, a long, frosted glass sunshade was built through the center of the house to temper the strong New Mexico light. “The sun in Santa Fe is so intense we needed to filter it,” says DuBois. “The sunscreen that runs the whole length

of the house softens the light and also creates a porch underneath it.”

The Turrell *Skyspace* — a cube that is 20 feet by 20 feet by 20 feet with a sky viewing space cut from the top and open to elements — also required special consideration to integrate it into the home. “It’s such a simple thing, but it is so powerful,” says DuBois, who sank the *Skyspace* area 4 feet into the ground with stairs for access. “Turrell makes us appreciate how our perception works.”

The Kleins’ collection also extends outside the home into the natural land surrounding it. “We made trails around the house with Andy Goldsworthy, and we have five pieces of his art there,” Jeanne says. “We also have extended trails with installations by other artists — those trails hook up with the National Forest trails.”

In the end, the Kleins have realized their dream to live with art and nature. “Different years, different weeks, I change my mind on what I love most about this home,” Jeanne says. “But there is no question that my favorite thing is that I live with the art every day — and every day I am walking through art.” ☀

HOME TOUR: CABIN FEVER

See how one family transformed a dark, dated cabin into a contemporary retreat at doradomagazine.com/cabinfever.