

# At Home in the Wine Country

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN IN THE CALIFORNIA VINEYARDS



Heather Sandy Hebert & Chase Reynolds Ewald

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and Chase Reynolds Ewald



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# Introduction

**The California wine country is a region**

without distinct edges, which seems only appropriate given its global influence. From the northern tip of San Francisco Bay up the length of the Napa Valley and beyond, arcing over to the Russian River Valley to the fog-draped coastal Sonoma hills, then down the coast to the Carmel Valley and continuing south to Santa Barbara County, California's wine country eschews definition as it continues to expand and evolve.

In recent decades, the region has come to be defined by its lifestyle as much as its wines. It has developed its own ethos, one whose contemporary expression is creative, sustainability minded, art-filled and bathed in light. Highly refined yet without pretense, it has a youthful attitude and a decided sense of fun. Central to California living is the indoor-outdoor experience; today's homes seamlessly integrate the region's sublime scenery and climate with its cuisine and lifestyle.

Each in our own way, we were destined to explore it. Heather was raised within the architecture community of Northern California, and went on to craft a career focused on translating the magic of architecture and design into words, both as the longtime marketing director for an international architecture practice and as a freelance writer. Chase came to the West Coast as a graduate student, in part to discover her fourth-generation California roots, and stayed to document the history, design, cuisine and art of the American West.

When we met, we were both at work on books exploring different facets of the West's vibrant architecture and design community. But one can't live in the Bay Area without encountering a steady stream of wine country news, outings, cultural references and, yes, design. We were both keenly aware of the extent to which wine country architecture had evolved in recent decades, and we were drawn together in our wish to showcase the wine country's unique lifestyle and sense of community. Indeed, as residents of the northern Bay Area, we are part of that community.

Life in the wine country is a unique blending of agriculture and sophistication, lived outdoors amidst surroundings of prodigious beauty. Those drawn to make their home—or second home—in the wine country are often linked to the growing of grapes or the making of wine, but not always. Some simply bring with them a love of wine and the vitality of community it engenders. Indeed, the wine country is a small world, close-knit and supportive, where a pace of life more attuned to the land and seasons allows its residents to form deep bonds. This is a place where new residents rub elbows with families who have cultivated the land for generations.

Nothing has illustrated that spirit more than the response to the fires that have increasingly become a part of the cycle of life in California, burning in the wine country again and again. In each instance, people banded together, supporting one another in a way that only a truly connected community can do, and illustrating for us the resiliency that can come only from a deep connection to the land and its people.

Here, time is measured in seasons, and the notion of renewal is integral to understanding the sense of place. Some vineyards have been in place for over a hundred years, drawing nutrients from roots plunged deep into the sometimes difficult soil. But each year brings new growth, a new crop and new possibilities. So it goes with the people of the wine country, a blending of old and new, sharing an entrenched love of the land and the lifestyle. This likely explains why so many who establish second homes in the wine country tend to spend more and more time here, until the wine country becomes home and their more urban residence becomes a place to visit.

*At Home in the Wine Country* showcases work from many of the region's top architects and designers. This virtual tour documents a native, terroir-derived style that has evolved dramatically since the days when the region looked to European chateaux for inspiration. The residences featured here comprise just a sample of the extraordinary breadth and depth of work being done today in the wine countries of northern and central California. From refined rustic to updated agrarian to unapologetically modern, the range of styles—as well as the varied approaches to managing environmental factors—is broad. While each project is the result of careful consideration of client, program and site, its starting point is always place.

Set within landscapes of extraordinary beauty, these homes also exist within a fragile environment. Since many dwellings are sited on hillsides within the wildland-urban interface, architects have become well-versed in design principles and practices that minimize impact on the existing environment and increase the structures' resistance to fire. While several homes in our book were threatened by the most recent fires of 2020, all have survived thanks not only to the courage of first responders and community residents, but also to design and building practices that increased their resilience.

Seventeen homes—plus four unique auxiliary structures, including a pool house, a party barn, and a dining pavilion with production gardens—laud wine-country living in an atmosphere of understated, family-focused hospitality.

For one retiree, a sustainable structure with rammed-earth walls within an 18,000-acre eco-development near Carmel is a nature-focused forever home. Further

north in Glen Ellen, a simple farmhouse-style weekend retreat represents the culmination of one designer's career interpreting wine-country style as a transplant from the UK. In the hills overlooking Sonoma, a collection of boxes juxtaposes geometric black-and-white forms with disappearing walls against a verdant landscape. Set amid the vines on the floor of the Napa Valley, a cluster of buildings expresses California's agrarian traditions while deftly incorporating a subtle nod to the architectural legacy of the famed Sea Ranch. On a forested hillside, a thoroughly contemporary abode is built as a transparent envelope from which to experience nature, and becomes an expression of the soul of both its place and its owners. A historic bungalow in downtown Sonoma retains its original charm while embracing an exuberantly modern addition for owners of a wine business. Perched on a hillside not far from downtown Napa, a simply rendered house overlooks vineyards with a sweeping view of the valley below, the result of one man's lifelong passion for the work of East Coast icon Hugh Newell Jacobsen.

No work of this type is possible without a legion of architects, interior designers, contractors, landscape architects, engineers, sustainability consultants, lighting designers, art experts, artists and photographers. Without their creativity, passion, institutional knowledge and hard work, projects of this quality would never come to fruition. And none of it would appear in formats like this without homeowners willing to share their most intimate spaces. These are the places to which they retreat to rejuvenate, entertain and make memories, the places in which they can most be themselves. Yet they invite readers in so that these homes—beautiful, unique, responsibly designed and carefully crafted—can be seen, providing us all with pleasure and inspiration.

We couldn't have created this book without their generosity of spirit and their respect for craft, nor could we do what we do without the editors, graphic designers and visionaries at Gibbs Smith Publisher. For that shared vision we are grateful.

*At Home in the Wine Country* pays homage to a world and a lifestyle that is ever innovating, adapting and evolving. As is often the case with projects like this, the more we explore, the more we find. We are in awe of the talent and artistry assembled within these pages. We're honored to be able to showcase these uniquely sophisticated place-based expressions of home in the wine country.

HEATHER SANDY HEBERT Chase Reynolds Ewald

# Vintner's View

"We imagined kids running in and out (we even sampled concrete wet to see if it was slippery), with everyone having meals together." — ELIOT SUTRO

**For a San Francisco family living in a traditional Edwardian during the week, their wine country weekend retreat would be the opposite in style: contemporary, compact, understated, muted in palette, anchored into the landscape and filled with light. It would also be eco-conscious and energy efficient, a factor that drove all the choices for materials and furnishings. The result is a home at one with its place amidst the vines on a hilltop overlooking Healdsburg's Dry Creek Valley.**

The project kicked off with the same architect and interior designer who had collaborated on the extensive remodel of the family's Edwardian. Sutro Architects and Adeeni Design Group were able to hit the ground running from the first visit to the property, during which they walked the eighteen-acre site to discuss the most fortuitous placement and orientation of the home. Arterra Landscape Architects and Upscale Construction joined the team, helping weigh the options for a new house on the hillside that would enjoy views without being visible from below, and the original structure, a small abode nestled in the trees (so small, in fact, that during the year the owners stayed there, the kids slept in bunk beds in the garage).

The owners envisioned a house within a vineyard; at the same time, they wanted to disturb the landscape as little as possible. Entirely surrounded by Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot vines, the two-level home is built into the hillside, with concrete retaining walls following the contours of the landscape. The scale is modest and low impact. The public rooms open fully to the outdoors while the owners' private suite is a tranquil retreat. The big open room downstairs was designed by the three kids; their space has multiple bunk bed configurations and its own basketball patio. On its west side, smaller windows and three maples (which also provide fall color and a place to string a hammock) help manage the intense sun.

"The house was built using passive house ideology," explains Stephen Sutro. "It's super insulated and oriented so that the sun doesn't penetrate and generate too much heat during hot summer days. Expansive windows facing north toward the primary views allow a lot of glass without a lot of sun. This house has no air conditioning, but it doesn't get too hot because the mass of concrete keeps the temperature stable."

The unique experience of the home is announced upon arrival, as it has no formal driveway. Guests park near the original structure and then ascend







**PREVIOUS OVERLEAF:** A weekend retreat perches above acres of vineyards in Healdsburg's famed Dry Creek Valley. Designed by Sutro Architects and built by Upscale Construction for a Bay Area family, the home is eco-conscious, energy-efficient, open to nature and full of light. The open-plan living room, dining and kitchen are open to the outdoors on two sides. The ceiling is cedar, the cabinetry walnut.

**OPPOSITE:** Claudia Juestel of Adeeni Design Group worked with the owners to choose a mix of new, custom and vintage furniture while striving to limit the number of different materials used. Fabrics are all comfortable, casual and understated in color. The sofas and chairs are covered in a natural linen; the integrated bench by the board-formed concrete fireplace is upholstered in an indoor-outdoor fabric.

a Corten steel stairway to a path of decomposed granite lined with lavender that leads up through the vineyard, past concrete retaining walls and raised Corten steel beds planted in vegetables, to a level expanse comprising the pool area. With an outdoor shower and kitchen, hot tub, and contemporary steel and wood arbor with raised concrete firepit, the outdoor space fully engages with the upper level of the home, whose roof extends toward the pool to create an ample covered patio. "The pool is a central part of the experience," explains Eliot Sutro. "We imagined kids running in and out (we even sampled concrete wet to see if it was slippery), with everyone having meals together. Our clients were not interested in an overscaled house."

In both architecture and furnishings, there was disciplined focus on using fewer materials. The simplified palette is expressed in reclaimed barnwood siding; concrete floors, fireplaces, countertops, and backsplash; cedar ceilings; and large expanses of glass. Walnut was chosen for cabinetry, stairs, furniture and bathroom sconces, teak for dining chairs and outdoor furniture, steel for the hood and countertop, and bronze for hardware.

The interiors were kept simple and casual, furthering the goals of livability. Fabrics are comfortable and subdued, while the furnishings are a mix of new, custom and vintage. An outdoor end table was handcrafted from a tree from the wife's father's property. The three interchangeable dining tables (made from reclaimed barnwood, to speak to the siding) are on wheels so they can be used inside or out in various configurations. Over-counter shelves are open for ease of access, while a large kitchen window acts as a pass-through to the dining table by the pool. The application of cedar and walnut on the ceiling and in the kitchen cabinetry warms up the open living spaces, defined by white walls, concrete floors, walls of glass, and a board-formed concrete fireplace. Mouth-blown custom kitchen pendants based on a 1970s design speak to the clients' interest in mid-century style, while a grape-like cluster chandelier adds a sense of airiness without impeding the view.

For much of the year, explains designer Claudia Juestel, "Healdsburg is hot and sunny, so the goal was a light and airy space with a fresh white backdrop. (We tried six samples of white wall color because there was so much green coming in from the vineyard and hills.) We agreed to put color very strategically into the art and accessories to keep with the calm vibe they were going for, and we limited the palette to the colors of the vineyard." These pops of green appear in the kitchen counter stools, the built-in fireplace bench, the powder room mirror, and a vintage cast-iron sink. Juestel worked with local artists on custom designs, including a weaver who hand-wove fabric with light green stripes from organic linen yarns and alpaca for the throw pillows.

The overall effect is not only cohesive, says Eliot Sutro, but "a warm version of contemporary. That is intentional and speaks to the character of the family."



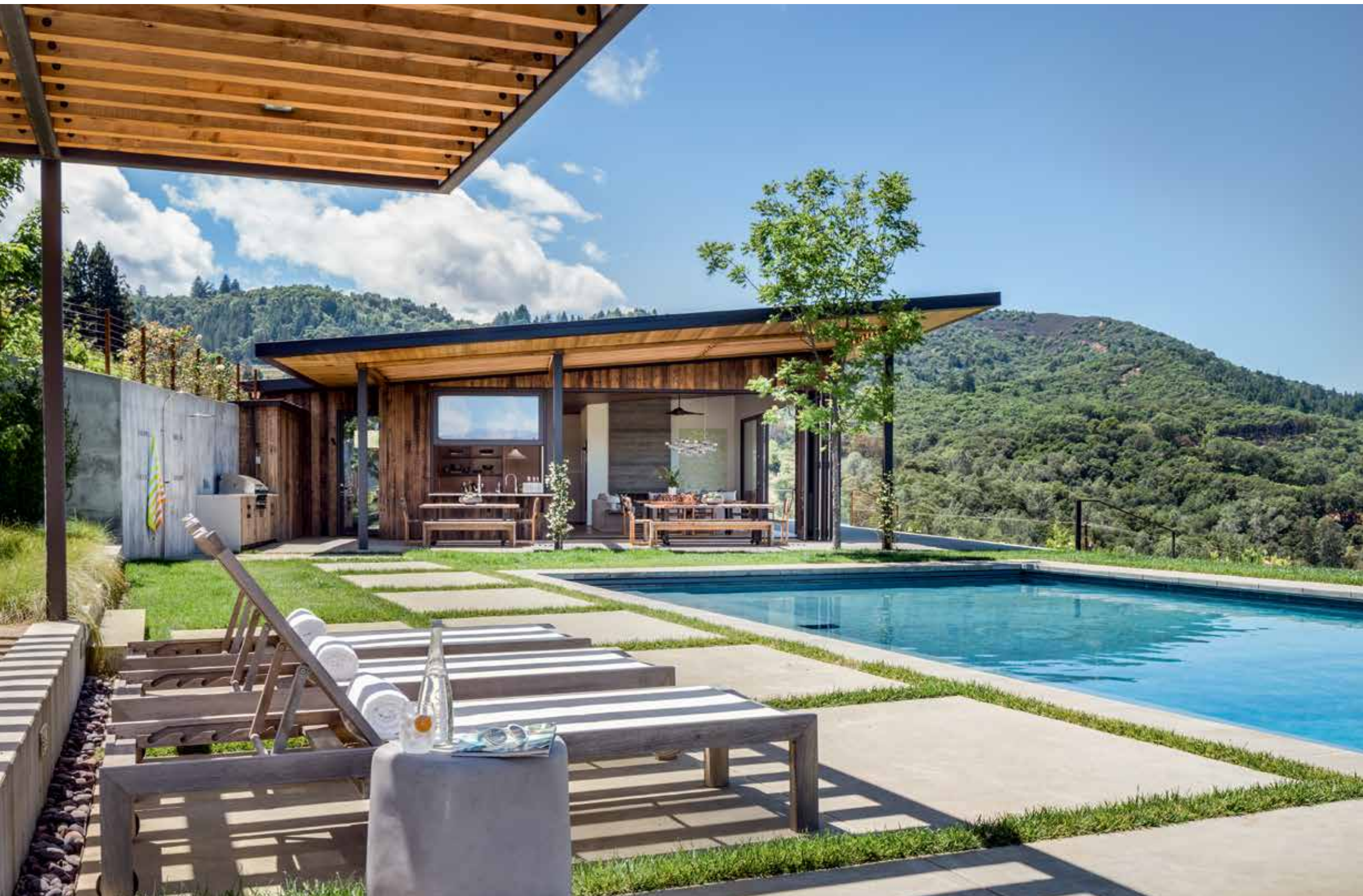


**ABOVE:**  
Pops of lime green appear throughout the house. The cast-iron sink is vintage.

**RIGHT:**  
Open shelving and a waterfall countertop treatment create clean lines, while a pass-through from the kitchen to the patio makes for effortless entertaining. In the spirit of using fewer materials, Juestel chose the same concrete for all countertops and the backsplash. To avoid the grout lines that come with tile, she had a single sheet of concrete embossed with a texture for interest. The silver mirror induction cooktop blends in with the stainless-steel countertop surrounding it. The clients like midcentury design and chose custom mouth-blown pendants in the kitchen based on a 1970s design in metal.





**PREVIOUS OVERLEAF:**

The chandelier over the dining table is suspended slightly higher than usual in order to avoid blocking the view; the choice of an airy fixture with grape-like glass balls furthers that goal. Juestel worked with a local artist to hand-weave the fabric for the throw pillows from organic linen yarns and colored alpaca. The end table was made from a tree trunk from the wife's father's property.

**ABOVE:**

The furniture in the dining area and on the terrace is interchangeable. The tables are made from reclaimed barn wood, echoing the siding, and are mounted on wheels to create different combinations. The chairs are teak and the views are endless.

# The Teams

## AGRARIAN SPIRIT

### Vineyard's Edge, CALISTOGA

Architecture: WADE DESIGN ARCHITECTS  
Interior Design: GEREMIA DESIGN  
Landscape Design: GROUND STUDIO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
Construction: TOTAL CONCEPTS  
Photography: SUZANNA SCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY

### Modern Agrarian, RUTHERFORD

Architecture: PFAU LONG ARCHITECTURE  
Interior Design: PFAU LONG ARCHITECTURE  
Landscape Design: LUTSKO ASSOCIATES  
Construction: GRASSI & ASSOCIATES  
Photography: ART GRAY PHOTOGRAPHY

### Woodland Farmhouse, VALLEY OF THE MOON, SONOMA

Architecture: NICHOLAS LEE ARCHITECTS  
Design: ROSSI SCOTT  
Construction: EAMES CONSTRUCTION  
Photography: ADAM POTTS PHOTOGRAPHY

### Rustic Estate, CALISTOGA

Architecture: AMY A. ALPER, ARCHITECT  
Interior Design: JENNIFER ROBIN INTERIORS  
Landscape Design: MERGE STUDIO, INC.  
Construction: TOTAL CONCEPTS  
Photography: JOHN MERKL PHOTOGRAPHY

### Nestled in Nature, SONOMA

Architecture: MICHAEL GUTHRIE & COMPANY ARCHITECTS  
Interior Design: JEFF SCHLARB DESIGN STUDIO  
Landscape Design: ROCHE + ROCHE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
Construction: REITER FINE HOME BUILDING  
Photography: AUBRIE PICK PHOTOGRAPHY, MARION BRENNER PHOTOGRAPHY

### Refined Farmhouse, CALISTOGA

Architecture: POLSKY PERLSTEIN ARCHITECTS  
Interior Design: PAULINA PERRAULT INTERIORS  
Landscape Design: LUCAS & LUCAS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE; OWNERS  
Construction: ARMADA BUILDERS & INTERIORS  
Photography: LAURA REOCH, SEPTEMBER-DAYS PHOTOGRAPHY

### A Cottage Reborn, CALISTOGA

Architecture: BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON  
Interior Design: BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON  
Landscape Design: EINWILLERKUEHL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
Construction: FAIRWEATHER & ASSOCIATES  
Photography: MATTHEW MILLMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

### Historic Meets Modern, SONOMA

Architecture: WADE DESIGN ARCHITECTS  
Interior Design: JENNIFER ROBIN INTERIORS  
Landscape Design: ROZANSKI DESIGN  
Construction: EARTHTONE CONSTRUCTION  
Photography: PAUL DYER PHOTOGRAPHY

### The Bird House, OAKVILLE

Architecture: JACOBSEN ARCHITECTURE  
Interior Design: JEFF ATLAS (OWNER)  
Landscape Design: TERRE FERMA LANDSCAPES  
Construction: CENTRIC GENERAL CONTRACTORS  
Photography: ADAM POTTS PHOTOGRAPHY, DOUGLAS STERLING PHOTOGRAPHY

## WINE COUNTRY CONTEMPORARY

### Black Box House, LOVALL VALLEY

Architecture: BEVAN & ASSOCIATES  
Interior Design: BEVAN & ASSOCIATES; OWNER  
Landscape Design: LUCAS & LUCAS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
Construction: TRAINOR BUILDERS  
Photography: DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

### Vintner's View, DRY CREEK VALLEY

Architecture: SUTRO ARCHITECTS  
Interior Design: ADEENI DESIGN GROUP  
Landscape Design: ARTERRA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
Construction: UPSCALE CONSTRUCTION  
Photography: CHRISTOPHER STARK PHOTOGRAPHY

### Winged Retreat, CARMEL VALLEY

Architecture: AIDLIN DARLING DESIGN  
Interior Design: MCBRIDE DESIGN  
Landscape Design: GROUND STUDIO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
Construction: CARROLL & STRONG BUILDERS  
Photography: MATTHEW MILLMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

### Ridgeview House, VACA MOUNTAINS

Architecture: ZACK I DE VITO ARCHITECTURE + CONSTRUCTION  
Interior Design: ZACK I DE VITO ARCHITECTURE + CONSTRUCTION, OWNER  
Landscape Design: RANDY THUEME DESIGN  
Construction: FAIRWEATHER & ASSOCIATES  
Photography: CESAR RUBIO PHOTOGRAPHY

### Sunrise Pavilion, RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

Architecture: FELDMAN ARCHITECTURE  
Interior Design: STUDIO COLLINS WEIR  
Landscape Design: ARTERRA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
Construction: CELLO & MAUDRU CONSTRUCTION  
Photography: ADAM ROUSE PHOTOGRAPHY

### Forest Aerie, HOWELL MOUNTAIN

Architecture: SIGNUM ARCHITECTURE  
Interior Design: SHAWBACK DESIGN  
Landscape Design: JACK CHANDLER DESIGN  
Construction: CELLO & MAUDRU CONSTRUCTION  
Photography: ADAM ROUSE PHOTOGRAPHY

### Sustainable Sanctuary, CARMEL VALLEY

Architecture: FELDMAN ARCHITECTURE  
Interior Design: JAY JEFFERS—THE STUDIO  
Landscape Design: JONI L. JANECKI + ASSOCIATES  
Construction: GROZA CONSTRUCTION  
Photography: JOE FLETCHER PHOTOGRAPHY

### Downtempo, FRANZ VALLEY

Architecture: SIGNUM ARCHITECTURE  
Interior Design: ALISON DAMONTE DESIGN  
Landscape Design: TERREMOTO  
Construction: METHOD HOMES; FAIRWEATHER & ASSOCIATES  
Photography: BRUCE DAMONTE PHOTOGRAPHY

## RECREATION & RENEWAL

### Zinfandel Barn, OAK KNOLL DISTRICT

Architecture: FIELD ARCHITECTURE  
Interior Design: SHAWBACK DESIGN  
Landscape Design: SURFACEDESIGN  
Construction: GRASSI & ASSOCIATES  
Photography: MATTHEW MILLMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

### Pool House in a Meadow, VICHY DISTRICT, NAPA

Architecture: BEVAN & ASSOCIATES  
Landscape Design: LUCAS & LUCAS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
Construction: TRAINOR BUILDERS  
Photography: ERIC RORER PHOTOGRAPHY

### Garden to Table, SONOMA

Architecture: ANDREW MANN ARCHITECTURE  
Garden Design: CHRISTA MONÉ  
Construction: SAWYER CONSTRUCTION  
Photography: DAVID WAKELY PHOTOGRAPHY

### Inside-Outside Barn, NAPA

Architecture: WILLIAM DUFF ARCHITECTS  
Interior Design: ROBERT WILLIAM DAILEY DESIGN & DECORATION  
Landscape Design: STEVEN ARNS, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT  
Construction: CENTRIC GENERAL CONTRACTORS  
Photography: MATTHEW MILLMAN PHOTOGRAPHY