



# ELEVATED NATURE

Malcolm Davis Architecture creates a sleek new home in a storied modernist community

by *ROBIN WYSE* photography by *JOE FLETCHER*



**OPPOSITE PAGE:** The home's streamlined two-volume structure preserves trees and boulders on the gently sloped site. **THIS PAGE:** Custom built-in seating in the living room is tucked beneath wall-mounted overhead sconces by WAC Lighting. A Jøtul direct-vent gas stove warms a minimalist seating arrangement of the client's Ligne Roset furniture.



**OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT:** Wall and floor tiles by Porcelanosa layer warmth and texture in the master bath. **LEFT:** Windows by Milgard frame sweeping views of the ocean from built-in seating in the lofted master bedroom. **THIS PAGE:** Concrete flooring, Hansgrohe fixtures and Wolf appliances provide industrial detail in the open kitchen, which also features backsplash tile by Ann Sacks.



**T**his contemporary retreat, nestled between a rock outcrop and Highway 1 in Northern California's Sea Ranch development, is a sophisticated evolution of mid-century Bay Region style. Designed by Malcolm Davis Architecture for a tech-industry couple, the home's modest footprint and elemental, cedar-clad form honors the coastal enclave's modernist past without falling into cliché. "Instead of trying to paraphrase a Sea Ranch house, I always look to the original vernacular architecture of rural sheds and barns in the area," says Davis, whose firm has added more than 15 new homes to the development over the past 25 years.

Sited on a sloped lot in a wooded area, the 1,800-square-foot residence consists of two sleek volumes—one a private two-bedroom wing, the other with shared living spaces—linked by an entryway "hinge" covered in corrugated Core-Ten steel, which sets off the structure's predominant clear cedar siding. "The general massing frames ocean views to the west and buffers strong winds, creating a sheltered outdoor living area on the ocean-facing deck," Davis notes. Several beautiful boulders and trees on the property, accentuated by native planting by Floriferous Landscaping, also define the house's dialogue with its setting.

The exterior language of natural material continues in the home's airy, open-plan interiors, with thermal-mass flooring in slab concrete and red oak and walls lined in plywood throughout. "The plywood is central to the character we wanted—it's a simple-looking aesthetic but it takes a surprising amount of rigor to pull it off," says Davis of builder David Hilmer's meticulous craftsmanship. Prioritizing sustainability, strategically placed windows capture solar gain and operable skylights pull in fresh air while flooding the space with daylight. "We wanted the sun's movement to animate the building with changing light and shadow," notes Davis.

Sleek Ligne Roset and Stonco lighting, Hansgrohe fixtures and white quartz countertops lend an industrial note to the space, and the modernist clean-lined furnishings—all selected by the homeowners—complete the interiors with what Davis calls a "Scandinavian feel" informed by the couple's Northern European roots. Among the home's many built-in features and space-saving elements is a lofted study located a few steps up from the master bedroom level, which was an original request from the client. "There's a colossal view from here," says Davis, "so if you've got to work from home, it's a pretty inspiring spot to do it."