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ARCHITECTURE / **MALCOLM DAVIS, MALCOLM DAVIS ARCHITECTURE**
INTERIOR DESIGN / **LORI YEOMANS, LORI YEOMANS DESIGN**
HOME BUILDER / **STEVE NICHOLLS, MUELLER NICHOLLS BUILDERS**

TREE LINES

A HILLSIDE HOUSE IN PORTOLA VALLEY FINDS ITS CONNECTION TO NATURE.

WRITTEN BY **KIMBERLY OLSON** / PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOE FLETCHER**

Right: In renovating a couple's home in Portola Valley, architect Malcolm Davis expanded a guesthouse on the property to incorporate a sitting area and a second-floor artist's studio, which connects to the main house with a bridge.

Opposite: Davis reworked the lower level of the main house to include a light-filled family room. Designer Lori Yeomans appointed the space with an Eero Saarinen table by Knoll and Bruno Hansen chairs. The custom walnut-and-steel bench is from Original Timber Co.

As they ascended a forested hillside and then entered the driveway of a prospective home in Portola Valley, an active couple—cyclists and nature lovers—were transfixed by the magical scenery. "You could see the expansive western vistas," says one half of the pair, "and my wife said, 'I don't care what's here. I just need to see these views.' So we were sold before we even really saw the house."

As it turns out, the home also had its charms, with its midcentury modern style and relatively open layout, but it didn't take advantage of the views afforded by its hillside perch and sported mismatched renovations from previous owners. After living in the residence for a few years, the couple decided to make some changes. Preferring to renovate the house rather than raze it and start from scratch, they turned to architect Malcolm Davis to visually tie it together and create a functional abode that would match their lifestyle. "If I can alter a home and still make it work, it's like retelling a story," Davis says. "It's informed by other voices and periods, making it a richer experience."

Davis started by reworking the floor plan and opening up the house to the outdoors. "When you walked in, there was a clutter of decks blocking your view from the entry," he says. "There were two dining spaces next to each other and smaller windows that looked out to the biggest view." Davis addressed all those issues and more, starting on the upper main level of the house, where he removed posts from the open kitchen, living and dining areas to create a better physical and visual flow. He then expanded the existing kitchen along the home's west side, positioning a large island in place of one of the previous dining areas. He added a length of cabinets beneath a row of windows and flanked the stove with pocket doors that access a large pantry. Near the open kitchen in the dining area, the

In the living area, Yeomans covered a vintage tête-à-tête sofa by Edward Wormley for Dunbar from Coup D'Etat with a Primo mohair by Holly Hunt. A Warren Platner chair and a coffee table by Isamu Noguchi for Herman Miller rest on a Tibetan wool rug from Aga John Oriental Rugs.

The dining area features a custom walnut table crafted by Gianni Corvasce Restoration encircled with vintage Kai Kristiansen dining chairs from Chris Howard Antiques & Modern; the 1970s brass-and-Lucite chandelier is by Gaetano Sciolari. The space opens through sliding doors by Fleetwood Windows & Doors to a spacious new balcony.

Vertical-grain Douglas-fir cabinetry crafted by the project's builder, Mueller Nicholls Builders, defines the kitchen. Tiles from the Heath Ceramics Dual Glaze collection run above the Wolf range. The KGBL barstools are from De Sousa Hughes.

Davis designed the kitchen with a pantry—which runs the width of the space and has two entrances—to provide essential storage. Oak engineered flooring, supplied and installed by The Wood Floor Company, offers a warm texture.

architect swapped corner walls for retractable glass doors and designed a cantilevered balcony that wraps three sides of the room. “The dining room is like a glass porch that acts as both the indoor and outdoor dining space,” Davis says. “It can be shuttered, screened or completely open.” A pitched ceiling with exposed beams and metal trusses crowns the dining area and connecting living area for a cohesive and airy feel.

The updates continued downstairs, where Davis dropped the floor and combined what were the master bedroom and a den into one spacious family room. The ceiling now rises to more than 10 feet, and windows on three sides flood the space with light. “Even though you’re on a lower floor, you’re getting as much light as possible,” the homeowner says. As the master bedroom was repurposed, the couple—who were then soon-to-be moms—wanted to relocate the master next to the two existing bedrooms, one of which would become their daughter’s room, so they’d all be on one level. “My wife had the idea to move the master suite up to the other side of the house, and Malcolm ran with it and made it even better,” the homeowner says. The architect added a new wing on the east side, adjacent to the existing bedrooms, and capped the room with a shed roof. “Kicking that roofline up gives you a view up to the sky and a feeling of openness,” Davis explains.

The couple’s visitors, too, got upgraded arrangements. Davis expanded the detached one-room guesthouse by adding a sitting room, dubbed the lanai, on the ground level. He then designed an artist’s studio on the top floor, which is connected by a bridge to the main house. “The bridge plays up the idea of this art studio being removed and special,” says the architect, who also added a large deck off the guesthouse to incorporate several native live oaks. “We worked around the existing site and the oak trees,” says the project’s builder, Steve Nicholls. Landscape designer Randy McDannell, who was working through his firm, RS McDannell Exterior & Landscape, at the time of the project, was also respectful of the existing grounds and worked with plants native to the county. “The goal was to replant the garden areas as naturally as possible,” he says.

Davis expanded the existing guesthouse to include a sitting area, called the lanai. Yeomans furnished the space with a down-filled Grotto sofa and acacia coffee table, both by Blu Dot, and Diamond chairs by Harry Bertoia from Hive in Portland, Oregon. The rug is by Chilewich.

In the lower-level family room, a Line bar by Nathan Yong from Design Within Reach stands against one wall, while a circa-1875 Oushak rug from San Francisco Rug Gallery grounds the space. The bronze anodized windows are by Fleetwood Windows & Doors.

The roof and exterior of the guesthouse are clad with Cor-Ten corrugated steel, installed by Bill Hamilton Roofing, to evoke the area's agricultural buildings. A bridge connecting the building to the main house was fabricated by Bob's Iron. The property's new landscaping was designed by Randy McDannell and installed by Elements Landscape.

While Davis clad the exterior of the main house with stucco and cedar burned in a *shou sugi ban* technique, he sheathed the guesthouse's simple form with Cor-Ten corrugated steel. Inside the buildings, warm oak and Masonite floors, along with white walls, create a clean look. The couple's designer, Lori Yeomans, chose furnishings within a muted palette to complement the restrained aesthetic. "We didn't want the interiors to overwhelm the views," Yeomans says. Given the homeowners' appreciation of midcentury modern style, the designer selected pieces such as a 1950s tête-à-tête sofa in the living area. "It's a two-sided piece, so you can sit on one side and speak to somebody in the living area, or sit on the other side and look at that beautiful vista," says the designer, who paired the piece with Warren Platner side chairs. A Gaetano Sciolari light fixture and vintage chairs carry the aesthetic into the adjacent dining area. "We didn't overload the house with furniture," she says. "We wanted every piece to stand alone. It's very calming."

That calmness infiltrates every aspect of the home. "They're unpretentious people, and they wanted a subtlety of materials," Davis says of the owners. "They wanted something quiet that blended with the landscape, like the local barns and sheds. This design was about opening the house up to nature, so you're just looking out at this big valley and a sea of trees."

Bronze anodized sliding doors by Fleetwood Windows & Doors connect the master bedroom to a wraparound deck. U-Turn Swivel chairs by Niels Bendtsen from Design Within Reach stand on a wool rug from ABC Carpet & Home in New York and provide a prime viewing spot.

Below, left: In the guesthouse bedroom, Blu Dot's Woodrow bed in walnut is dressed with RH bedding. The artisan-made pillows and coverlet are from The Loaded Trunk. An Isaac Plug-In sconce by Schoolhouse Electric & Supply Co. illuminates a floating teak shelf from Mid Century Møbler.

Below, right: Skylights were used in the master bathroom and elsewhere in the home to animate spaces throughout the day. The freestanding bathtub is by Blu Bathworks, and the flooring is slate.

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