

OUTSIDE THE BOX

AT LAKE TAHOE'S IDYLIC MARTIS CAMP,
A BOLDLY MODERN HOME BLENDS SEAMLESSLY
WITH ITS NATURAL SURROUNDINGS



STORY BY NORMAN KOLPAS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY

Approached from the street as night begins to fall, the home glows from within as if preserving some of the summer sunshine. The structure consists of a series of wedge shapes, each designed to orient living spaces to the best possible view. Angled limestone walls extend out from the building to form patios and terraces.



Measuring 6 feet by 9 feet, the pivoting door leading to the back patio was custom made from wood, steel and glass. The limestone wall that passes seamlessly through the sidelight and a pair of glass-and-metal Lu sconces by Kevin Reilly for Holly Hunt enhance the indoor-outdoor connection.

The living is easy at Martis Camp, a private 2,177-acre enclave nestled in the Sierra Nevada

between Truckee, California, and north Lake Tahoe. With amenities including an 18-hole Tom Fazio-designed golf course, a “Family Barn” offering kid-friendly activities, miles of hiking trails and parklands, and world-class year-round recreation on water and ski slopes alike, it’s no wonder it’s often named one of the best luxury communities in the country.

But one aspect in particular appealed to a Southern California couple when they decided to purchase a 1.8-acre lot for their own family’s getaway. “They wanted to live in a home that was out of the ordinary, almost sculptural,” explains Sally Brainerd, a partner in the Edwards, Colorado, firm of RKD Architects. And Martis Camp, she says, “really wants residents to be adventurous in their architecture. They encourage owners to think outside the box.”

Embarking upon a painstaking analysis of topography,

views and sunlight, Brainerd and her team developed a plan to make the most of the site, which backs to a beautiful pine-forested hillside to the north and faces south toward the slopes of the Northstar Ski Resort—but also has neighboring homes to the east and west. Their initial drawings, she says, consisted of “arrows all over the page,” with the aim of best orienting each living space to its immediate surroundings and the vistas beyond, while keeping sightlines clear of nearby homes.

As a result of those studies, the organizing principle for the house became what Brainerd describes as “a series of wedge forms” of varying sizes that maximize the aesthetic connection between the interior spaces and the surrounding environment. Complementing those dramatic angles are beamed ceilings that arch across rooms and extend through exterior window walls to become overhangs for a >>

BELOW, LEFT: The rear patio gives way to a stretch of lawn and the pine forest beyond, views of which are maximized throughout the house. BELOW, RIGHT: Situated in an upstairs corner that feels like a tree house, the game room features a table with built-in lazy Susan. Surrounding it are wing chairs by Berman Rosetti upholstered in hunter-green chenille.



ARCHITECTURE BY **RKD ARCHITECTS** INTERIOR DESIGN BY **BETHE COHEN DESIGN ASSOCIATES**
CONSTRUCTION BY **JONES CORDA CONSTRUCTION**

BELOW: Located above the garage, one of two master bedrooms offers vistas south toward the ski resort and west toward the sunset. The wall behind the bed strategically blocks a street view. Elegant blue velvet, upholstering the chaise and covering two throw pillows, evokes the color of the sky. BOTTOM: The adjoining master bathroom feels serenely cool, even on hot summer days, with its gray-painted walls and light stone floor.



SUMMERY STYLE

The home's design team shares tips for year-round, warm-weather style:

COMPLEMENT, DON'T COMPETE:

Let Mother Nature set the tone for a selection of materials and forms that feel in perfect harmony with the surrounding landscape.

BREAK THE RECTANGLE:

Feel free to avoid conventionally shaped rooms. "If you think of indoor and outdoor spaces together as one big room," says Sally Brainerd, "the division between them can take whatever form it needs to."

LET THERE BE LIGHT:

Think of your lighting scheme in terms of indoor-outdoor flow, choosing fixtures that work well in both environments.

TURN, TURN, TURN:

For rooms in which indoor pursuits vie with scenic beauty, consider chairs that swivel. In the summertime, you can open the windows and look outside, and on cold winter nights you can turn your attention to the fireplace.

COMBINE COZY WITH PRACTICAL:

Select upholstery that not only feels comfortable and softens hard surfaces but is also durable and easy to clean. In a natural setting, warns interior designer Vivian Soliemani, "light colors can show dust and get very dirty very quickly."



The limestone-clad architectural wedge that orients the living room includes a fireplace detailed by interior designer Vivian Soliemani. It features a concrete hearth and mantel and, beneath a steel header, an inset of red marble that joins the lamp bases and the chairs around the table in adding a punch of fiery color to the otherwise muted palette.

“THE OWNERS WANTED US, AS ARCHITECTS, TO WALK OUT THERE ON THE SITE AND BE INSPIRED BY WHAT INSPIRED THEM: THE SUN, THE VIEWS AND THE WONDERFUL PRIVATE FOREST.”

Sally Brainerd




series of patios and terraces. To temper all that visual drama, Brainerd deliberately kept the ceiling heights fairly modest, even in the spacious living room, where it ranges from 12 to 16 feet. “We didn’t want anyone to say, ‘Wow! Look at that ceiling!’” she explains. “The goal is to push your gaze outside.”

To emphasize that indoor-outdoor connection all the more, the architect selected a range of building materials that harmonize with the home’s natural setting. Neatly cut limestone forms the interior walls and most exterior walls and patios. The floors are clad in ash olive boards and the ceilings in clear pine punctuated by Glulam timber beams and blackened-steel crossbeams.

In a similar spirit, interior designer Vivian Soliemani, creative director of Bethe Cohen Design Associates in the Silicon Valley town of Campbell, California, says the home’s interior color palette was inspired by the sur-

rounding views. “All of the tones are very muted,” she says of the range of soothing greens, taupes and browns. For the elegant yet spare built-in cabinetry Soliemani designed for many of the living spaces, she and her clients selected a variety of wood veneers ranging from walnut to sycamore to more exotic choices like anigre, an African hardwood. At the same time, she made sure to include many luxurious textured fabrics, among them velvet, chenille and mohair. “They help soften the very strong architectural elements and materials,” she notes.

The result of such careful attention to detail by architect and designer alike is an exceptionally comfortable home that drinks in all the sun-drenched splendors of its mountain setting—and maintains a feeling of summer-like ease even when the owners return six months later during ski season. Sometimes “out of the ordinary” is unusually perfect. ○

more  For a guide to this home’s products and pros, visit mountainliving.com/outsidethebox.



ABOVE: Custom built-in cabinetry visually softens the dining room’s massive stone walls while providing useful storage space. Here, the interior designer chose the same sycamore veneer used in the kitchen. Off-white leather chairs surround a custom marble table with metal frame and base by Kolkka Furniture. FACING PAGE: Cabinets faced with sycamore veneer and green marble countertops create a subtle harmony between the kitchen and its forested surroundings, as do a kitchen table fashioned from a natural slab of redwood and chairs upholstered in light-green Ultrasuede.