

P E N D U L U M

CALIFORNIA COASTAL RETREAT | | This Home on the Northern California Coast Connects with Nature in Every Aspect

June 18, 2022

There's something singularly magical about the northern California coast, where wildflower-laden bluffs meet the churning pacific and gray whales seasonally leap from the waves.

This landscape was like a siren call to a couple, both Massachusetts natives, who craved a return to life by the ocean. The wife wanted the traditional Cape Cod architecture of her childhood, while the husband loves the streamlined simplicity of minimalist design. To strike a balance, they turned to architect Brooks Walker and designer Kristi Will to wed two different visions of seaside living.



The residence basking in the sunset glow.

To bring the couple's vision to life for a complete experience, the team had to craft the design to consider the outdoor environment, the exterior architectural elements, and the visual and tactile elements within.

When driving up to the property for the first time, "all of a sudden, we were sitting on the edge of this beautiful coastal prairie with the ocean just beyond," recalls landscape architect Ron Lutsko. "It's something that we really seized upon, to make sure visitors experience this the way we did, but through our design." To ensure that the homeowners and their guests can experience this feeling each and every time they set eyes on the property, the landscape design team embraced the natural environment and enhanced it by adding native grasses and bulbs. Stepping out into the backyard is like stepping into a coastal meadow.

To integrate traditional Cape Cod architecture and to keep the architectural design modern and simplistic, Walker began with peaked roofs, shed dormers and white trim. Next, the architects toyed with traditional lines, designing asymmetrical gables and minimalistic window frames. Viewed from the outside, the composition

of the architecture is interesting and captivating because although there is asymmetry, the design also strikes a balance with gabled roofs on either side of the home.

Modern picture windows add visual interest to sightlines both when viewed from the inside out and outside in. Each window is framing a piece of nature that changes with the seasons, offering dynamic views different from a singular large floor-to-ceiling window approach.



Brazilian azul bahia granite backsplash with a beautiful watercolour effect mimicking the gentle flow of the coastal waves.

Other architectural elements that both embrace nature by adding a sense of earthiness and instill a sense of home would be the Cape-Cod style shingle siding. The design team used reclaimed sinker cypress—a southern wood that spent a century at the bottom of a river, where the elements created what the architect describes as a unique mottled texture.

The interior design utilizes a clean white palette and traditional materials to let nature take center stage. From the exterior one can see the cutouts in the roof and also how the modern picture windows are oriented for the beautiful landscape views beyond.

Besides simply letting nature in, interior design elements like the white granite used throughout the ground floor, which is flamed and brushed to look like beach sand frozen in time, and the Brazilian azul bahia granite kitchen backsplash which has a beautiful watercolour effect, recreate the feeling of being outdoors within the living space.



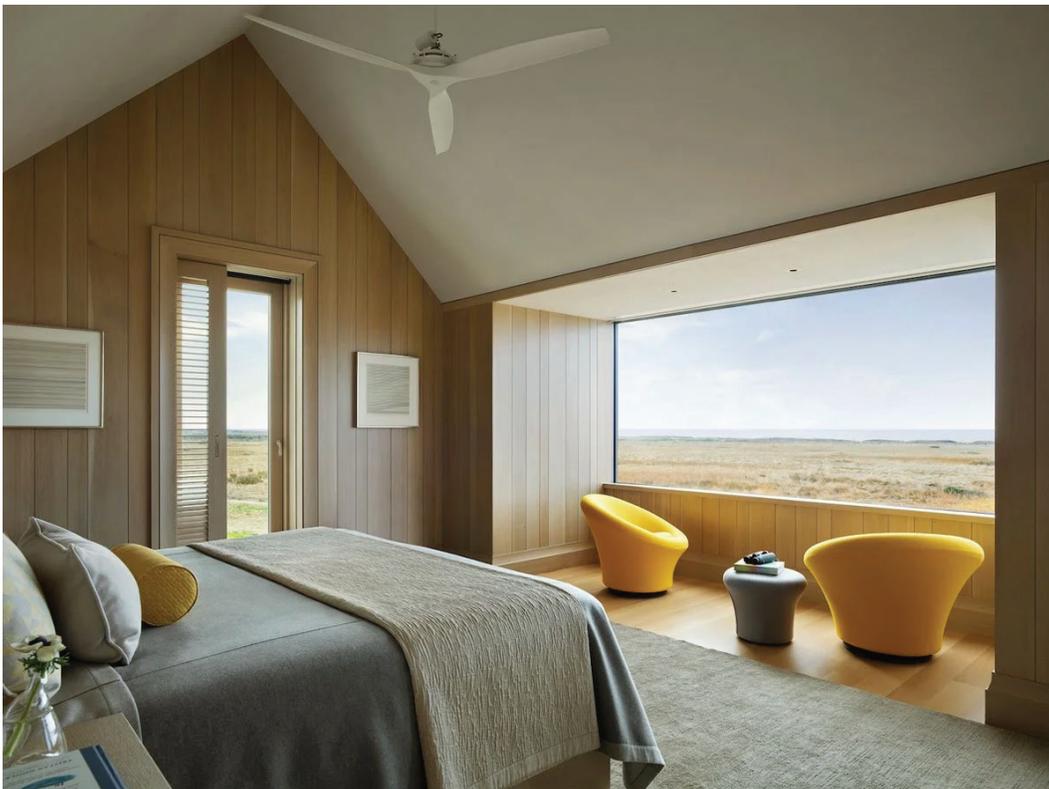
Every room within the home seeks to connect with nature. This bathroom on the second level offers a framed view cutout from the roof of the home on the second floor.



To echo the movement of the undulating cliffs in the surrounding landscape, Will searched for furniture with sculptural lines, like these Vladimir Kagan curved sofas in the living room.



A reading space that takes advantage of natural light.



The bright yellow, sculptural Pierre Paulin mushroom chairs connect with the similarly sculptural cliffs beyond the window.



The dining room is oriented towards the best view of the sunset.

Will was also very intentional with how she selected the furniture for the space to emphasize movement and fluidity inspired by the undulating cliffs outside. Pieces full of character served to anchor each room in the home by adding colour and vibrance, such as furniture with sculptural lines, like Vladimir Kagan curved sofas in the living room and bright yellow Pierre Paulin mushroom chairs tucked away in the master bedroom. The striking designs were selected also for the tactility of the materials, such as plush velvets and soft silks, marrying comfort and modern design.

The home also features some of the last pieces created by the late acclaimed architect Zaha Hadid, known for expressing fluid, wave-like gestures in static forms. In the living room, Hadid's "Ultrastellar" coffee table grounds the space with tide-like ripples carved into walnut, while her liquid glacial table is the centrepiece of the dining room.

With guidance from art advisor Jacqueline Becker, the home's collection is equally dynamic with works such as Leo Villareal's Rothko-inspired led light installation, which bathes the living room in revolving shades of sunrise yellows to twilight blues.

Blurring indoors and out, it's these details that celebrate the natural landscape that first captured the homeowners' imagination. Each room has its own personality but it's all about providing this great backdrop to the view that's happening just beyond.

PROJECT DETAILS

Walker Warner Architects team

Principal: Brooks Walker

Senior Project Managers: Anne Griffes, David Shutt

Architectural Staff: Rob Campodonico, Brennan Stevenson, Andy Lin, Boyce Postma

Project Team

Architecture: Walker Warner Architects

Interiors: Kristi Will Design

Landscape: Lutsko Associates

Builder: Matarozzi Pelsinger Builders

Photography: Matthew Millman

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