

california

HOME+DESIGN

chdmag.com

BAY AREA BAUHAUS

IS THIS THE DAWN OF A NEW DESIGN MOVEMENT?



The team behind Scott and Tracy Lee's sustainable house in Mill Valley present their model for design-build success, p. 88

HARTLE MEDIA

CHDMAG.COM MAY 2010 \$4.99

05



0 71486 01804 9

PLUS
BRIGHT IDEAS
FOR INSIDE
AND OUT

MAY 2010

california

HOME+DESIGN



FEATURES

- 87 INFINITE POSSIBILITIES**
From open-air architecture to residences that represent a new generation of cooperative design, these homes prove that California is still leading the way.
- 88 IT TAKES A VILLAGE**
A custom, sustainable home in Marin epitomizes a burgeoning Bay Area design movement. BY ERIN FEHER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MILLMAN
- 98 TRAVELS ABROAD**
Designer Molly Leutkemeyer's Laurel Canyon home will take you around the world in a day. BY MARYJO BOWLING
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREYSTOCK
- 106 CAMP COUNCIL**
Cass Calder Smith designed a rustic compound in Aptos for a San Francisco couple and their extended clan. BY SARAH LYNCH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL DYER
- 112 FORMAL INVITATION**
A modern garden by Andrea Cochran takes a traditional Atherton residence by storm. BY MARY JO BOWLING
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARION BRENNER
- 116 LAND'S EDGE**
Big Sur is the dramatic setting for a seaside retreat designed by Mary Ann Schicketanz. BY LYDIA LEE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLAUDIO SANTINI



ON THE COVER

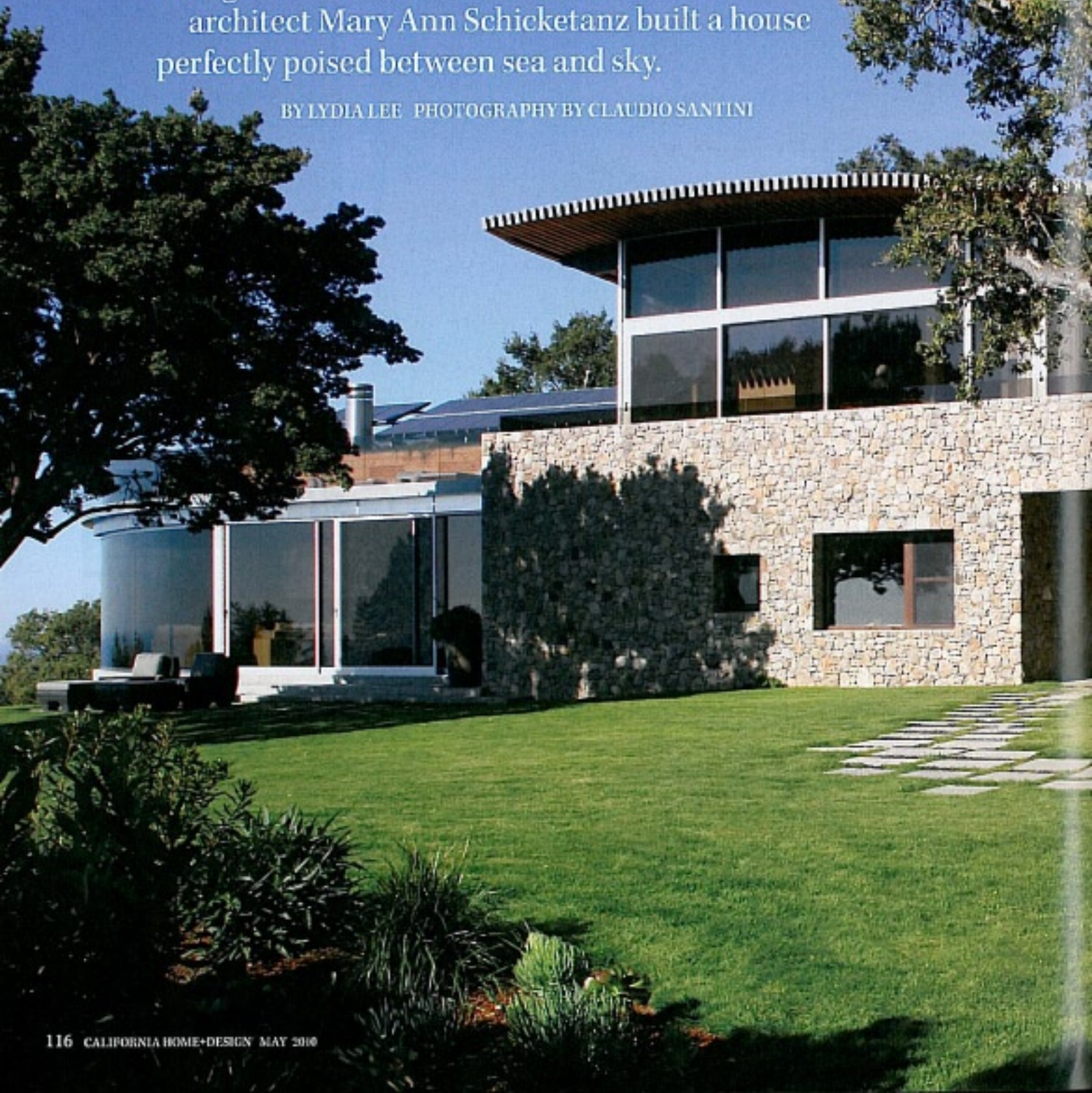
Matthew Millman photographed the creative team behind Scott and Tracy Lee's Mill Valley home (from left to right): Mark Rogero, Chris French, Erin Martin, Scott Lee, Tracy Lee, Brian Kennedy and Michael McDonald.

CLAUDIO SANTINI

Land's Edge

Along California's most famous coastline, architect Mary Ann Schicketanz built a house perfectly poised between sea and sky.

BY LYDIA LEE PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLAUDIO SANTINI





Inspired by the rocky coast, the home's first floor was designed with a heavy rock base. Floating above it, the curving roofline is an homage to Big Sur's rare California condors, who pay an occasional visit to the property.

The open living-dining area has transparent walls, but the reclaimed teak floor grounds the space in the rustic landscape. The vintage rosewood dining table is from Hedge in San Francisco, and filled with Diet Boat leather chairs.

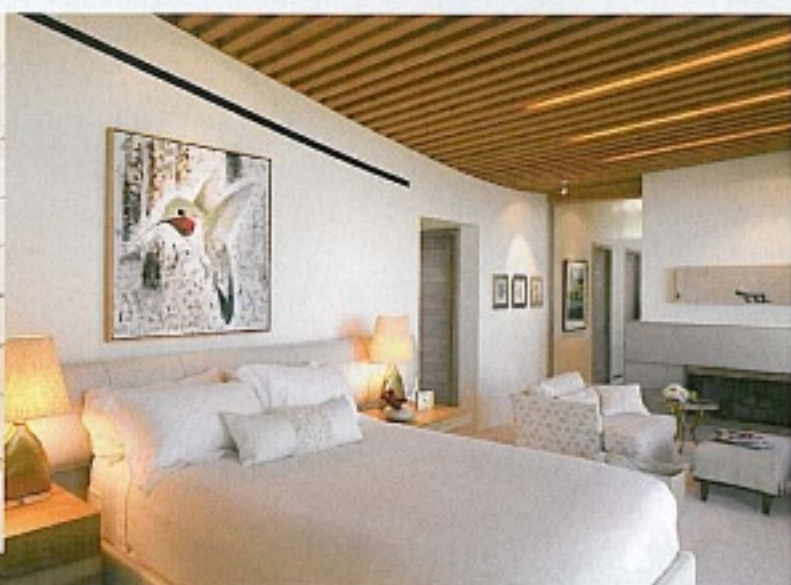


The painter Francis McCormus once wrote that Big Sur was "the greatest meeting of land and sea in the world." The dramatic coastline, with its towering headlands and wave-sculpted rocks, makes every turn on Highway One yet another vista point.

And so, when asked by her clients to design a house here, architect Mary Ann Schicketanz wanted to give them the best possible view of those celebrated Big Sur headlands. She created a long, narrow lookout point: The length of the house is perpendicular to the coast, and at the very end, it cantilevers over the edge of the cliff. Floating on a stone pedestal, the glass structure is the architect's deft maneuver to bring her clients a little closer to nature.

The couple who commissioned the house hail from Laguna Beach. After visiting Big Sur for 18 years, they decided to buy a place where they could retire. They found a tear-down house on a bluff with spectacular views. And not long afterwards, they were able to find their perfect architect. "We had planned to interview a number of other architects, but knew pretty quickly after we met Mary Ann that she was it," says the wife. "I loved her organic approach and how all her work showed respect for its surroundings, which was something that was important to us."

Schicketanz, whose firm Carver + Schicketanz is based in



Carmel, has designed numerous homes in the area. She is used to solving the puzzle that comes up again and again: How can you build on a site so that the very thing that drew you to the place—the superlative, unspoiled coast—is preserved?

"The parcel was on a ridge, and the most common approach is to design the house parallel to the coast so that the views are open to the water," says Schicketanz. "We did just the opposite, so you look not directly at the water but down the amazing coastline in both directions. If you put the house parallel, when you drive up all you see is house. So it was important in our design to make sure that when you reach the property, you get the immediate sense that you are on the ocean."

After making the key decision to site the house against a hillside to the north, Schicketanz laid out a thin structure whose floorplan looks like a knife. The tip points towards the ocean, where a small deck hovers over the vertiginous bluff. The curving blade, a third of which is cantilevered off the slope, contains the main quarters. On the first floor, there is an open living-dining-kitchen area and an office space; above, the second floor is occupied by a large deck, a meditation room and the master suite. The handle of the knife contains the garage and guest quarters. In a reference to the surrounding landscape, a significant portion of the first level is clad in rough-hewn granite. "The color of the ocean is very dominant, so we created a heavy base of rock that looks like it is coming out of the mountain," says Schicketanz.

She carefully scripted the entry sequence so that there would be a dramatic view right from the start. The approach to the house is through a cutout in the granite wall. In the tunnel-like passageway, the front door is to the left; upon entering, the view is of the ocean. The main living area is open to the vista with glass walls. The second level, with the master suite, is also all glass. "They wanted a coastal home that could stand up to the forces of nature," says Schicketanz. "The glass structure

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The guest bathroom's view is precisely integrated with the mirror; the master bedroom's white walls take on the changing colors of the brilliant sunsets; an organically shaped tub in the master bath is accompanied by an atmospheric painting by artist Brad Durham.



In the second-floor meditation room, a lumiere chandelier by Jean de Merry, a pair of J&B Italia Metropolitan high-back chairs and porcelain side tables by artist Kim Yik-Yung are a good excuse to stop and contemplate the beauty of man-made objects.





that cantilevers over the edge creates a nice contrast: The heavy elements feel very heavy, and the light elements are really light."

Designed as an extension of the hillside, the spaces feel almost like covered rock ledges. Terraces on both floors are tiled in the same limestone floors found within. On the second story, the clients can open the doors of their master bath to an indoor/outdoor shower, and from there, they can walk right onto the hill. On the other side of the master suite, a meditation room faces the ocean. Sliding screens and a giant pocket door make it feel like a sheltered part of the wide terrace. "You don't know when you're inside or outside sometimes, it's such an easy transition," says the wife.

Overhead, the roof figuratively takes flight with a shape inspired by the wingspan of the California condor. The clients are patrons of the Ventana Wildlife Society, which has been working to reintroduce the native condors to this area. When Schicketanz found out about her clients' cause, she came up with a modified version of a butterfly roof. One small section of flat roof is covered with solar panels, which supply nearly all

ABOVE: The roof deck, which hovers over the cliff, has glass walls to protect it from the wind and a living roof installed with solar panels. RIGHT: At the bluff's edge, a hot tub blends tastefully into the landscaping.



of the house's electricity needs, thanks to a deliberate focus on maximizing passive heating, cooling and natural lighting.

A separate exercise/yoga studio has been terraced into the hillside, and given a sod roof that has been dubbed the "infinity lawn," because it abruptly drops off into the open ocean beyond. It's here, on the edge of the property, where the clients find themselves spending as much time as they do in the main house. "It's one of my favorite places to hang out," says the wife. "It's subterranean and very cozy, but there's glass on two sides, so you overlook the coast and the ocean. It's an incredible piece of heaven." ■