

# CALIFORNIA HOMES

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The dining room, with furniture from Holly Hunt, has an unobstructed canyon view. Brad Durham's oil on canvas painting, "Seeing the Moment" (1995), is a focal point.







# A Rural Outlook

A Contemporary House In Los Angeles  
Is Tucked Away From The Crowds

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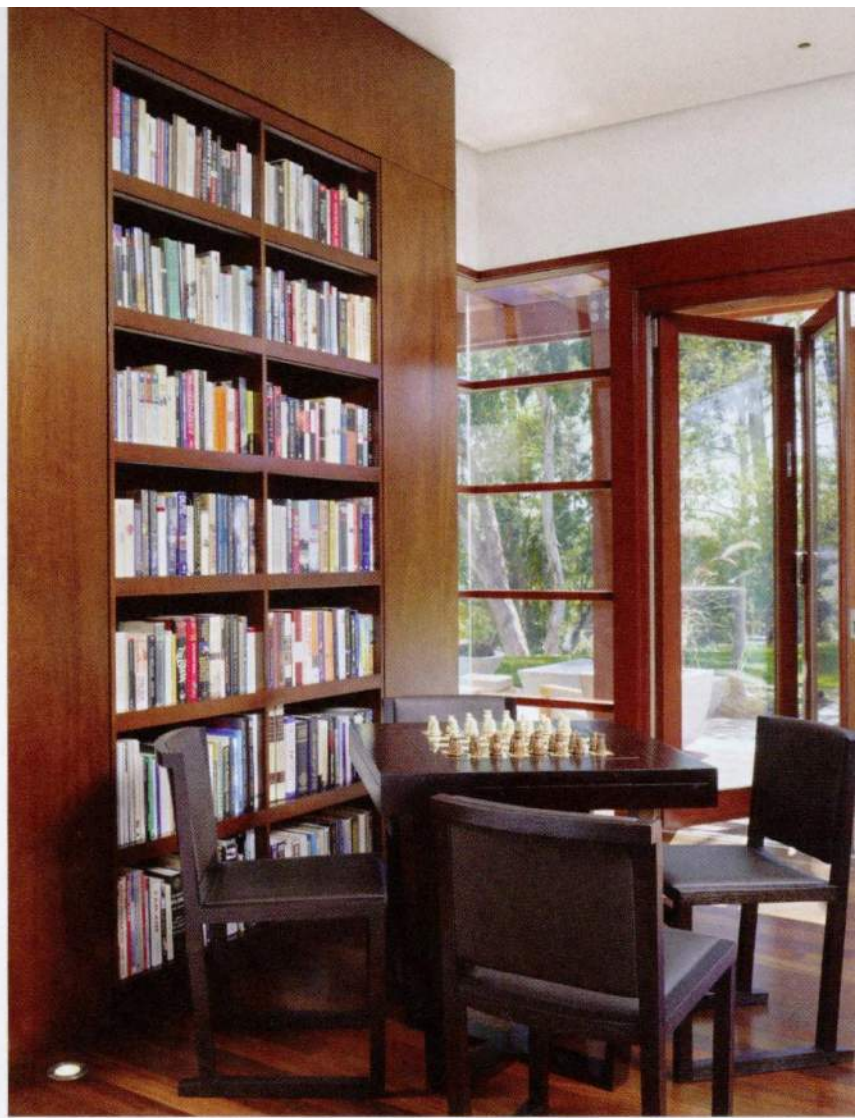
**F***Framed by canyons of pine and eucalyptus trees,* this nearly 10,000 square foot house built of natural materials and glass is a quiet sanctuary with not even a whisper of noise from nearby Sunset Boulevard. The owners, a California internet entrepreneur and his novelist screenwriter wife, wanted to live in tune with nature in a timeless modern house. Architect Chris Kempel of Rockefeller Partners and Alana Homesley of Alana Homesley Interior Design achieved just that. "There were only so many ways to take advantage of the canyon views," says Kempel. "Although it's a large property, only a third of it is buildable." Not only did he manage to get verdant views, but on clear days the Pacific Ocean can be seen. Rockefeller Partners was familiar with the more than three acre property since they had designed a house on it for a previous client. That project fell through, but when the current owners were looking for an architect, Rockefeller Partners was an obvious choice.





The owners' favorite feature of the house is the way rooms can be opened up to nature, giving it an easy indoor/outdoor feeling.





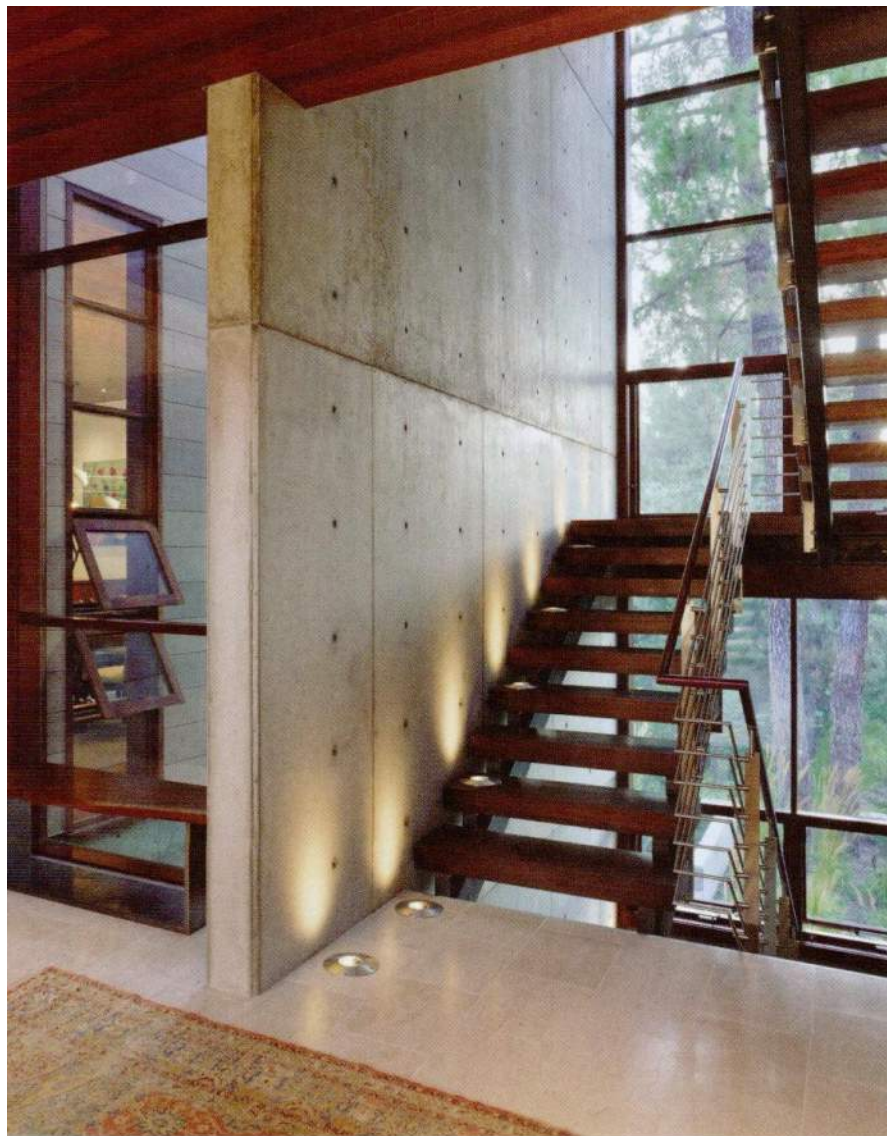
"When we sited the house it was important that it wasn't one massive block of a building," explains Kempel. To achieve that, they created a mini campus of buildings. The main house has two wings, one housing the main living area with the master bedroom, living and dining rooms, kitchen and family room. There is also an office with an exterior entrance. Most of the design energy is in this main wing where there are larger windows and a slightly different roof form.

The other wing accommodates six bedrooms and bathrooms with three of those bedrooms for the owners' children, a separate mother in law suite and two guest bedrooms. There is also a children's playroom. The four car garage is a separate building, as is a pool house that is original to the property. The pool house is in a post and beam style which fits perfectly within the new construction while adding a touch of history since this property once belonged to actor Lorne Greene of "Bonanza" fame.

"We were fortunate to find architects with whom we worked really well," says the owner. "We started with our vision of a perfect home and how we would interact with the space. We spoke a lot about the quality of light we hoped the spaces would achieve, and the feeling of inside and outside spaces meeting seamlessly." For the last year of this four year project, the owner was involved almost full time, making on the spot material decisions, resulting in an extremely collaborative process.

As the clients wished, the outdoors is a major part of the house, with tree and canyon views seen from every room. The entry is made dramatic by floor to ceiling





windows bordered in mahogany that frame gigantic pine trees, resulting in the welcoming touch the owners desired. "We used high grade cedar for the floors and the siding. Eucalyptus bark was the inspiration for the color stain of the cedar. Concrete is used as both a foundation and a finish material," notes Kempel. The low maintenance concrete walls are reminiscent of those at the Getty Villa, and add a tactile indoor outdoor element.

Designer Homesley's dictate from the owners was to make the house warm and livable, without using design or furniture that was too minimal or too mid-century. "The furniture pieces were selected for their clean lines and simplicity. The fabrics are mostly linen velvets, cotton velvets, microsuedes and silks. The color palette is mostly neutral as I mainly used taupe, gray, olive, raisin and dark ink, which are a favorite selection of the clients. Their own artwork added punch," says Homesley. Only a few bright colors were used, like the fuchsia pillows in the living room, and the red in the theater pillows.

"A lot of time and effort was put into the details of this house, as you can tell by studying the way materials come together," describes Kempel. There are special elements, like the way the stairs and landing float away from the concrete walls. This was done to give the illusion of being in a tree or on a bridge, to keep with the rural theme of the house. One of many green aspects is the natural ventilation created by operable windows that, because of their placement and size, allow the homeowners to use the air conditioning system less frequently.





The honed Lagos Azul limestone fireplace softens the ledge stone wall.  
LEFT The entry hall has poured in place concrete walls and a Gascogne beige limestone floor.

“The furniture pieces were selected for their clean lines and simplicity.” — *Alana Homesley*





In the master bedroom, the bed rests on a pure silk rug. There is a special built in nook for reading and relaxing.  
RIGHT At night the house comes alive through strategic lighting.







"The main building is really organized around the hearth," continues Kempel. It was here that Homesley suggested honed Lagos Azul limestone for the fireplaces in the family room, living room and master bedroom, to juxtapose the heaviness of the ledge stone wall running through the major spaces.

"The Lagos Azul brings refinement and a different layer to the house," explains Homesley. "The Gascogne beige limestone floor in the entry and kitchen has a similar effect." The ivory lacquer of the Poggenpohl kitchen was also selected to balance the darkness of the stone wall.

Although most of the property is intentionally not landscaped, there is a large swimming pool that helps cool the hot air coming up out of the canyon, as well as an expansive grass lawn. "It was important to the owners that there was a grassy area for the kids to play on. And, at night the area is spectacular since you get the reflections of the Chinese elm off the pool," Kempel says. The trees are lit evenings so there are no black holes when looking out of the windows. Farmed tropical hardwoods are used in the decking and trellis. These materials are extremely durable, as well as ecologically sound.

"I like the beautiful, simple lines of the house," says the owner. "There is a perfect intersection of outside and inside and the ability, in good weather, to combine both by opening up large sections of the walls in the living and family rooms. I like the fact that each room is the right size and that every room gets used." It is, in reality, a family home that is both comfortable and sophisticated. <sup>[4]</sup>