

Tree House A series of cantilevered pavilions has a natural synergy with the surrounding trees and the softly rolling hillside. See *Resources*.

UNDER THE EAVES

In Portola Valley, Field Architecture honors a deep connection with the land

BY EVA HAGBERG FISHER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN MERKL
OPENING PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE GOLDBAND

Natural Surroundings
(THIS PAGE) The living room showcases the home's simple material palette: wood, concrete and black steel. The modern fireplace is by Ortal. See *Resources*.



JESS FIELD wants to talk about trees. We're supposed to be talking about his firm's latest project, a Portola Valley home designed for a retired, but very active, couple: Avid photographers Steve and Ellen Goldband. Its modern, cantilevered pavilions are sited on a rolling hillside with gorgeously unending ocean views, and are complemented by a guest house, tennis court and Zen garden. Yet, all we can do is talk about trees.

"This project is a case study in how the spaces we inhabit weave together with the spaces that nature has already created," Field says, noting that when he first saw the site, he realized it was "a microcosm of what a native California landscape looks like." What particularly struck him, and the clients, were the clusters of oaks. Building the house became about more than just acknowledging the trees; they became the foundation for his design logic: "We felt like these clusters of mature oaks were a family," says Field, "and that we needed to seek their invitation, and then join that family and participate in that ecology."

The architect's task was to translate this desire to commune with the environment into built form, as well as ensure it fit within the program and budget. The answer was to create smaller distributed pavilions that work together—and with the landscape—to produce a multivalent home. Field designed concrete elements with the verticality of tree trunks, and steel horizontal cantilevered canopies that extend laterally, "like an architectural echo of the form of the oak tree," he says. He also observed the pattern of the sun to maximize thermal management, incorporating passive heat-gaining concrete stone walls and using glass judiciously.

Neighboring Woods (CLOCKWISE FROM THIS PHOTO) Field designed the home to feel embraced by the surrounding oaks. The dining room pendant is by Sonneman; Paul Ferrante's Dante bench is from Hewn. In the living room, the iron and leather Giac chair by DLV is through Coup D'Etat, the Andou table by Jonathan Browning is through De Sousa Hughes. Ted Boerner Thicket coffee table is from Hewn. See *Resources*.





“THIS PROJECT IS A CASE STUDY IN HOW THE SPACES WE INHABIT
WEAVE TOGETHER WITH THE SPACES THAT NATURE HAS ALREADY CREATED”



Complementary Composition (ABOVE) A framed photograph of a Tadao Ando structure taken by the homeowner graces the home's entryway above the Inflecto settee by Chuck Moffit from De Sousa Hughes. **Industrial Impact** (LEFT) In the kitchen, a smooth-finish concrete wall, inspired by Ando, boasts reclaimed oak shelves. The countertops are brushed stainless steel. See Resources.

Leafy Bower (THIS PAGE)
In the master bedroom, a photograph by the homeowner, Steve Goldband, hangs above the bed. Bedding and throw are through Jessie Black. Soft seating is by Della Robbia. See Resources.



Inside, the 3,200-square-foot home has the feeling of a tree house. The main living space—which encompasses a soaring living room, dining room and kitchen—has spectacular views that Field engineered to focus on the oaks, and a glass wall that slides opens onto an outdoor terrace. The exterior material language concrete continues indoors, and includes dramatic concrete slabs inspired by homeowner Steve Goldband's and the architects' admiration of Japanese architect Tadao Ando (a photo of an Ando structure taken by the homeowner graces the home's entryway). The master bedroom opens up into a Japanese rock garden, a contemplative space for the owners to breathe deeply, and connect with the outdoors.

Field also thought about the local ecology in broader terms by conserving a wildlife corridor, which allows the homeowners to watch an incredible stream of deer, bobcats and mountain lions parade through the property. The project overall speaks to the firm's history of working in a deep relationship with the land. "We wanted to take the question of indoor/outdoor living to a much deeper level," Field says. The clients agree with that sense of deep connection. "It's not just a peekaboo effect," the homeowner notes. "It's an actual immersion." 🌻

Earth, Air & Water A Hansgrohe shower fixture in the master bath (top) is just steps away from the Zen garden (right). See Resources.

