

Sheldon Harte

By Katherine Nelson
Photography by John Merkl



LEFT: The dramatic vestibule entry sets the tone for the home with its sliding steel doors, antique treasures and palette of natural materials such as limestone and weathered wood.

ABOVE: Chaise lounges by Sutherland, fabric by Perennials and in-pool furnishings by Ledge Lounger create poolside areas for relaxing and conversation.

BELOW: Located in one of the two outbuildings, the combined lounge/theater contains a bar area and opens directly to the pool terrace. It provides a place for "movies, banter and fun," Harte says.





The dining area features a table with a reclaimed French factory industrial base from 1900 and a pair of Macassar Ebony wood Empire chests circa 1860.



The great room mixes a variety of stunning antique finds from Europe with a sheep sculpture by François-Xavier Lalanne for a playful touch.

This powder room charms with its linen upholstered wall panels and glove sconces in cast iron by Paul Ferrante.



Subtle geometry in the zinc backsplash, custom made by Concept Studio, and furnishings adds to the nuance of this dark formal kitchen. The space is anchored by an antique steel table that is more than 11 feet long and was originally made for the Bank of France.



Soothing blues and greens adorn the primary bedroom, which features an iron bed with an upholstered alpaca headboard and a hanging fixture with rings of alabaster custom made by Paul Ferrante.

The primary bath elevates the modern farmhouse sensibility with a pewter-clad bathtub and flooring comprised of slabs of rare turtlestone bordered with limestone.



An outdoor shower, which adjoins the primary bathroom, is topped in a canopy of woven willow branches.

DESIGNER SHELDON HARTE'S clients, a couple with three grown children, desired nothing less than a dream home. The five-acre Wine Country getaway in Healdsburg was to be a gathering spot for friends, family and fun where the couple could relax and entertain in high style.

Though the house was five years in the making, the result is well worth the wait, offering a one-of-a-kind ode to Wine Country. The project blends spectacular views and an indoor-outdoor sensibility with a stunning array of European antiques, exquisite materials and a touch of industrial chic. “The client has tremendous personal style and didn’t want clichéd Wine Country decor like grape motifs or wine barrels,” says Harte, ASID, CID and principal of the firm Harte Brownlee and Associates. “The project turned out to be one of my all-time favorites.”

In search of the perfect site, the couple explored several properties before deciding on a parcel of land known as Alexander’s Crown that offers expansive views of Alexander Valley and the Russian River. Kirby Lee, of the firm Backen and Gillam, who transitioned to her own firm toward the end of the project, headed up architecture. Together Lee, Harte and the client became “the design force of nature,” Harte says. The team envisioned the home as three discreet but related structures situated along the length of the “crown.” What came next was a design process that ranged from “the initial architectural planning, county submissions and revisions to a lengthy construction process with 300-plus pages of drawings between the architect and my firm for interior detailing and very custom, individualized designs,” Harte says of the extraordinary scope. The resulting design comprises a main residence along with two outbuildings: the first outbuilding is a combined lounge/theater with two guest suites and a gym, while the second, called the “the Treehouse,” offers additional room for guests and a sleeping loft. All of the spaces are appointed with unique furnishings “obtained on three buying trips to

Europe as well as a fun couple of days at Round Top Antiques Fair in Texas for a great mix,” Harte says.

Guests enter the home through a vestibule that features 10-foot-high custom sliding steel barn doors. This space establishes the tone of the home, which contrasts a 19th-century Italian saddle workshop table discovered at a shop in Paris with intriguing treasures such as antique French oak orange crates, milk baskets and well buckets with custom lanterns crafted by Paul Ferrante. On display is a masterful mix of old and new, raw and polished texture, weathered limestone and patinated metals including copper and zinc. The rich history of the objects establishes a sense of authenticity that continues throughout the home.

In the main residence, the great room is flanked by jaw-dropping vistas of vineyards and mountains. The natural colors of Wine Country echo inside with

reclaimed oak beams and floors and a neutral palette accented by rich reddish tones found in Pierre Frey dining chair upholstery and a cognac leather 1960s Arne Jacobsen Egg chair. Each piece introduces yet another layer of texture and depth, such as a 1918 Lanvin coffee table with a honed crystal rock top purchased at the Paris Flea Market on a buying trip with Lee Stanton, a contemporary metal and parchment floor lamp by Mauro Fabbro and a carved chair dating to the 1500s and found in England. Topping the scene is bold artwork by Beatriz Milhazes and a matching pair of custom Mondrian-style lighting fixtures with box shades made from antique French linen sheets.

The idea of indoor-outdoor living takes center stage throughout the home, with pocket and French doors connecting the various spaces and the interior



to the outside. The great room flows on one side to a porch with a pizza oven and an outdoor grill where the family can share meals and entertain. The other side opens to a loggia overlooking the client's vineyards. Here, as everywhere, flexibility is key. These two screened areas "can be used together or separately for different times of the day or season," Harte says.

Along with embracing outdoor living, a focus on entertaining is a vital component of the home. There are two kitchens: a "dirty" pantry kitchen for catering and mess (the client loves to bake) and what Harte calls a "noir kitchen" with dark metals and woods for more formal gatherings. "The clients are consummate entertainers," Harte says. "There are seating areas

outside that accommodate all different size groups and types of events."

Even with a large footprint, cozy spaces are found in conversational groupings as well as the overall layout. For example, "the main house has the most used rooms on the first floor, including the primary bedroom, so that when only the couple is in residence the house feels more intimate," says Harte. Ultimately this Wine Country escape serves as a testament to the clients' embrace of beloved friends and family and the sense of togetherness that this special place provides. As Harte says, "The family loves how versatile the home is for everyone to be there yet find their own spaces."

The family room in the main residence sets a cheerful note with pops of red, teal and honey yellow. The swooping sofa is from Coup D'Etat and the ceiling-mount fixture is by Paul Ferrante.



One of two screened porches in the main house, this area boasts an outdoor grill, an early-20th-century wood chopping block and an antique bottle dryer.