

Studio Schicketanz

By Abigail Stone
Photos by Joe Fletcher

The home enjoys incredible views across the water; its location generates ample power to heat the pool as well as the homeowner's electric vehicles and return power back to the grid.



The home was positioned to take advantage of natural cross breezes and minimize the need for cooling. The use of wood visually warms the interior.



The courtyard buffers the home and its owners from coastal winds while also preventing the edible garden's non-native flowers and seeds from tainting the landscape.

THE TERM "SUSTAINABLE" doesn't usually conjure up an image of a 5,000-square-foot house on a three-parcel property that clocks in at 116 acres. That is unless that project comes courtesy of Studio Schicketanz. The firm has mastered the art of addressing the needs of their clients while causing minimal disturbance to the planet. Witness this project near Big Sur. From its visual footprint to its environmental impact, Studio Schicketanz has orchestrated a home that will not only withstand the test of time but will also actively improve its surroundings.

Sunk into a plot of land tucked between Highway 1 and Malpas Creek, the structure is so discreet that it's nearly invisible from the hiking trails above it. That sensitivity to the landscape seeps through every aspect of the project: the dirt excavated during construction was spread out and replanted with native grasses, further obscuring the structure from view; wind and sun angles determined the home's position with the aim of reducing its energy needs and to meet local requirements that homes cannot be seen from the viewing corridor off Highway 1; an electric composter turns kitchen waste into potting soil; and round skylights, chosen for their ability to merge into the terrain, illuminate the interior. "And then, of course, we have a fantastic solar location," says Mary Ann Schicketanz, the firm's eponymous founder. "We're actually selling power back to the grid."

An interconnected series of individual suites that spill out onto the pool and the courtyard enables everyone to enjoy their own private space.



A reverse-osmosis system eliminates harmful chlorine from the water.



Round skylights, chosen for their ability to merge with the terrain, illuminate the interior during the day.