

AMERICAN PASTORAL

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The small knoll on the three-acre property commanded a seemingly endless vista. To one side, a copse of thick woods hid a hiking trail and a creek; behind it was a well-traveled road. "They really wanted a home that understood and intentionally used each of these situations," says EYRC Architects' Takashi Yanai of the house he designed in Portola Valley for a young, tech-adjacent couple and their children. "California modernism works well in this kind of setting, where you have an expansive landscape that indoor spaces can reach toward, and views that can be captured from the interior."

A gate separates the road from a motor court with a freestanding garage and an ADU that affords family, who enjoy extended visits, both privacy and autonomy. The home lies just beyond: Yanai conceived of a boomerang-shaped structure, with a pale ipe wood and glass exterior that disappears into its setting. With its apex angled towards the horizon, it seems poised for takeoff.



The two wings of the home stretch back to hug a courtyard that serves as the home's foyer; its variegated cobblestones nod to the husband's European upbringing. Modest ceilings and floor-to-ceiling glass walls act in concert to funnel the gaze through the home and out toward that astonishing view. That objective is supported by spare furnishings, including a Minotti sofa, a Draenert dining table surrounded by Poltrona Frau chairs and a sleek kitchen by HenryBUILT, all of which keep the focus on the exterior. Slatted dividers delineate the different areas; their airy construction partitions the expansive space without interrupting it. (Deployed in the primary bathroom, they conceal the bathtub while allowing the husband to shower outside.) Playful lighting, like Moooi's pendant in the dining room, mimic the swirl of leaves in the wind, a nod to the wild terrain beyond. Tucked beneath the home, the husband's office view frames a favorite tree perched in the grassy meadow that cascades down the rise. The seamless fusion between the manmade and natural environment comes courtesy of landscape architecture studio Terremoto.

An oculus illuminates the intersection that divides the home's public and private branches, creating a partially shaded patio that straddles the divide between indoors and out. The home's bedrooms and the wife's office, oriented towards the thicket of trees, takes advantage of the natural veiling. "We used the topography to our benefit," Yanai says, explaining how the design partners with the setting. "This home is all about the land, the view and the family's place in the world." ■ EYRC Architects, eyrc.com



