

EASY FRONT-YARD MAKEOVER

Sunset

READY
FOR
SPRING!

STEAL
IDEAS
FROM THIS
FAMILY-
FRIENDLY
CABIN

APRIL 2017

CRAVE-WORTHY
SALADS
WILDFLOWERS
IN BLOOM

+10
STEPS TO A SMARTER
HOME REMODEL

SUSTAINABLE
DESIGN

THE FAB LIFE

A family creates an idyllic weekend retreat that revolves around nature.

By Leilani Marie Labong

WHILE VISITING New Zealand with their three kids, Grant and Shaya Kirkpatrick fell in love with what the locals call the *bach* lifestyle. “We’d see Kiwis pack up their car, throw a kayak on the roof, and head out to a rural cottage to spend the weekend,” says Grant. “It was a big inspiration.” So when they returned to their home in Los Angeles, they started seeking out their own get-away-from-it-all space—and found it on a 30-acre lakeside parcel of golden grass and stately oaks near Paso Robles, California.

The landscape was so pristine that the couple couldn’t imagine tractors and bulldozers wreaking havoc on it. Consequently, Grant, who’s an architect (kaadesigngroup.com), designed a low-slung, 1,000-square-foot prefab dwelling inspired by Cliff May’s iconic ranch houses. Constructed from redwood and Cor-ten corrugated steel—materials that blend in with the landscape—the home was partly assembled ahead of time to minimize construction on the property. “This cabin has the lightest touch on the land,” says Shaya, who helped found nonprofit environmental organization Grades of Green. Two years later, the couple added a second entirely prefab structure on the property to make room for guests.

Since 2005, Split Rock Ranch, as the Kirkpatricks call it, has been a beloved gathering spot (kids Jack, Ryan, and Allie are now 22, 19, and 16, respectively). Weekends are spent hanging out by the lake and playing board games; the Kirkpatricks also host an annual friends-and-family Olympics, complete with vineyard dash and paddleboard race.

Next year, Split Rock will surpass its humble beginnings with a full array of solar panels, taking the homestead—which already has its own groundwater supply and septic system—completely off the grid. “We feel a real sense of accomplishment here,” says Grant. “But we realize that much of that came from the ability to appreciate the serenity.”

Photographs by THOMAS J. STORY



TAKE THE LIVING OUTSIDE

Maximizing the views—and increasing their usable living space—were top priorities for Grant and Shaya (left) as they dreamed up their pair of prefab homes. Made of untreated, naturally decay-resistant redwood, a wraparound boardwalk and three large decks add approximately 800



square feet of space to the main house (above). The decks are furnished with weatherproof pieces made of nautical rope. *Hom prefab structures, homlifestyle.com. Furniture, tidelli.com.*

CHOOSE LONG-LASTING MATERIALS

Grant engineered low-pitched roofs made of aluminum, which needs less

maintenance and often lasts longer than shingles. The 3-foot-deep overhang keeps the windows shaded on sunny days and dry on rainy ones.

TWINKLE, TWINKLE

A redwood table (top right) is set amid the oaks, creating a magical little dining space. Above the table, Grant arranged pendant lamps on

tension wires, one high and one low, to achieve a random pattern. He always uses halogen bulbs outdoors. "They'll probably never need replacing," he says.

PLAY IT SAFE

"Fire's a scary thing here," says Shaya. "Although we love our fireplace, we are really cautious." The custom Cor-ten steel fireplace (right)



features a pulley door that seals off the flames when it's time to turn in. Dead trees and dry brush are cleared regularly, and three 5,000-gallon reserve water tanks are always hooked up to hydrants.

KEEP CLOSE

An open-plan space that includes the den, single-wall kitchen, and dining area forms the heart of the Kirkpatrick's home. "The design is great for family togetherness," says Shaya.

BUILD IN HIDING SPOTS


At just 1,000 square feet, the home doesn't have a lot of room for extraneous furniture. Grant designed a large in-wall storage unit for the living room (top left) as well as spacious wardrobes for each of the bedrooms (right). He used Forest Stewardship Council-certified alder, an

inexpensive hardwood that brings out the grain of the sustainable cork floors.

CUSTOMIZE CABINETS

"The kitchen is all about maximum function in minimum space," says Grant. "Everything has to be able to store cleanly." The alder-wood cabinets (top right) have drawer pullouts and racks to pack away all utensils; pantry items and cleaning supplies are stashed in a more generous cabinet across the living room.

HARNESS THE SUN

During the day, large windows and French doors (right) let the sun pour in. "At night, we use battery-powered candles to save electricity and create a cozy mood," says Grant. The solar panels he plans to install next year will cover the home's already low energy needs. 



TOP RIGHT: BLUE CERAMIC BOWL BY DIINO SOPHIA FROM NICKY KEHO