

“Creating a place that family  
and friends want to gather at  
is always the ultimate goal of  
architecture.”

— Timothy Chappelle

Timothy Chappelle

Arcanum Architecture



The design team at Arcanum Architecture is always up for a challenge. Founding principal Timothy Chappelle has tackled his fair share of challenging projects and sites over the years, and therefore welcomes each new twist and turn as a problem to be solved rather than a stumbling block. He had begun sketching out plans on a house for a Bay Area couple on their existing property in town when they asked his opinion on buying an expansive hilltop set on a winding ridge, complete with a vineyard. It was an easy “yes.”

The site is a vulnerable ridgeline with exposure to the valley below, and the irregular serpentine shape of the ridge required plenty of creative planning for laying out a master plan. It was by far one of the most complex hillside properties Chappelle and his colleagues have worked on, with the variety of slopes inspiring an unorthodox solution.

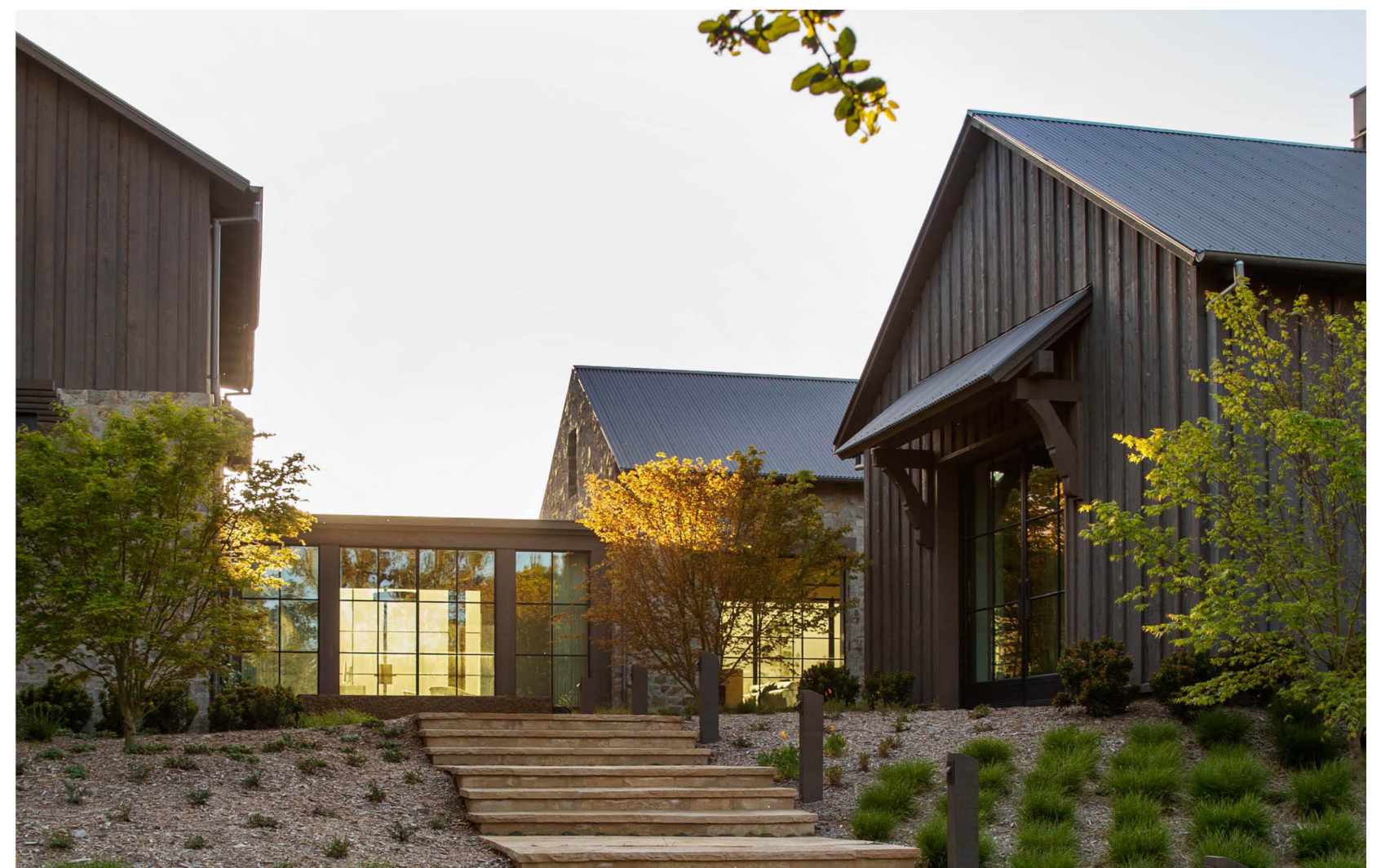
The concept of a family compound, with the home and buildings spread out across the site, led to a wholly unique layout. The house is an assemblage of standard home features — living room, dining room, kitchen, bedrooms, and more — creatively assembled end to end in a rambling, informal shape, linking different components of the home with one-of-a-kind views and outdoor spaces. Most of the house is one story to allow for tall, vaulted ceilings in the main rooms. Instead of traditional double-loaded hallways, the house is linked by connecting public spaces that maximize natural light and cross-ventilation.

With a traditional, large, square box house, you get warm and cold sides depending on the time of day. Narrow houses like this one allow users to track the path of the sun all day long. This also surrounds the inhabitants with nature, no matter which part of the house they find themselves in.

The owners desired a home that would sit quietly on the site, and not overwhelm its picturesque surroundings. This led Chappelle to seek out natural materials for both inside and out, which will age and patina over time rather than requiring constant maintenance.









"Don't overlook 'quiet architecture,' which integrates with the natural environment."

— Timothy Chappelle





Stained board-on-board clear Western Red Cedar on the exterior is complemented by an irregular-shaped local stone veneer with flush mortar and a corrugated metal roof. Inside, Jen Macdonald of Jennifer Robin Interiors utilized smooth veneer plaster walls framed by wood ceilings and columns. The result is a timeless building that feels like it has already been there for a long time.

The compound's unusual layout produced the bonus of myriad outdoor spaces, such as an entry courtyard, outdoor area level with the family room terrace, outdoor dining terrace, a living room fire pit-viewing area, and destination pool deck. With so many alfresco areas available, it's easy to feel immersed in nature no matter where in the home you are. An intensive planting plan by the landscape architect Ground Studio included the revival of an existing vineyard and addition of an olive orchard surrounded by meadows of natural grasses, which truly drive home the idyllic atmosphere of living here.

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*Interior Design: Jennifer Robin Interiors  
Landscape Architecture: Ground Studio  
Builder/Contractor: Mike Smith Construction  
Photographer: Paul Dyer*

