

Peace de Résistance

A modernist lakeside lodge takes root in the western North Carolina wilderness, giving rise to a cool summer playground that feels like a native species unto itself.

INVISIBLE WALLS

A flagstone and oak terrace is designed with retractable screens to immerse the refined sitting area in the mountain landscape.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY CLIFF FONG
ARCHITECTURE BY PLATT
LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY ROB WESTMORE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ
STYLING BY MORGAN HEWITT
WRITTEN BY STEPHEN WALLIS



ELEVATED GARDEN
The residence is partially shrouded by a **living roof** planted with native grasses and wildflowers.



TOP AND INSET: A stone path leads from the front entrance, accessed via a carport extending off the main house, to a lakeside porch. Planters, Willy Guhl. Garden sculpture, Carl and Ethan Peverall

FLAT ROOFS

are something you don't see much on Lake Toxaway. In fact, until recently, local building rules didn't permit them. Rather, deep in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, about an hour south of Asheville, the state's largest private lake is ringed with impressive vacation homes that tend toward a classic lake-lodge look: lots of stone and wood topped by imposing peaked roofs.

But about five years ago, a West Coast-based couple resolved to build something different. Working with Platt, an architecture, construction,

and interior design firm headed by the father-and-son team of Al and Parker Platt in nearby Brevard, they came up with a plan for a compound of three buildings, all defined by a distinctly modernist horizontality. And, yes, flat roofs.

Set on five sloping, wooded acres that wrap around a small finger of the lake, the residence is composed of a main house and guest house, each with three bedrooms, plus a boat house that shelters kayaks, paddleboards, canoes, a powerboat for waterskiing and fishing, and a classic 1941 Gar Wood cruiser. Utilizing local materials like Fines Creek granite for walls and chimneys, weathered hemlock reclaimed from old barns for ceilings, and white oak for floors and millwork, the Platts also incorporated abundant glass to maximize natural light and lake views.

Everything was designed with an emphasis on integration with the landscape, including those flat roofs, which are almost entirely planted with native grasses and wildflowers. "We worked with the Lake Toxaway Community Association to modify their guidelines to embrace strong environmental solutions," says Al, "and they changed their covenants to permit flat roofs so long as they are 80 percent green."

In addition to improving heating and cooling efficiency, absorbing rainwater, and providing habitats for pollinators like bees, the roofs enhance privacy



MAGIC MILLWORK
A motorized panel disappears to reveal a **secret walk-in bar** behind an oak bookcase. The artwork is by Alexander Calder.



In the great room, a Dante drum chandelier (Downtown) illuminates a custom pool table by century-old maker Blatt Billiards.



MOUNTAIN RICHES
A wealth of materials, like **reclaimed brushed hemlock** ceiling cladding, white oak millwork, and granite, was sourced within a one-hour radius of the house.



ABOVE: In a narrow finger cove, the owners' 1941 Gar Wood cruiser ties up just outside the entrance to the boathouse.



RIGHT: Double terraces extend from the guest house. Lower seating, James Perse. Cushion fabric, Donghia

by blending the home into its surroundings. "When you soften the horizontal lines with the living roof and you clad the structures on the lakeside in glass that reflects the forest, it effectively camouflages the house," notes Parker. "It becomes almost invisible." Except at night, when the interiors cast a lantern-like glow on the darkened lake.

Because the homeowners love to entertain—"they always come with a pretty significant entourage," notes AI—the priorities were primarily comfort and fun. Both the main house and guest house feature multiple terraces and spaces for outdoor cooking and dining. There's also a firepit, docks for lake access, and a small beach. Creating the mix of communal and private spaces, both indoors and out, for relaxation

and recreation was about achieving "a layering of different experiences," as Parker puts it.

To make sure everything was outfitted with requisite sophistication and style, the owners' longtime interior designer, Cliff Fong, was involved from the earliest stages, overseeing finishes, furnishings, and art. The Los Angeles-based designer has worked on nearly a dozen homes for the couple and their children over the past decade and says the last thing he wanted to do was "import a bunch of stuff from Italy and have a super-slick, fancy house. It was essential to create something that was harmonious with the landscape."

For one thing, that meant a restrained, neutral palette. "I didn't really want anything to pull focus from the view or get lost in the view," Fong says. To preserve

ABOVE: The dining table and chairs (Lucca Antiques) are crafted of reclaimed wood and leather. Chimney stone, Fines Creek granite. Vintage artichoke lighting, Poul Henningsen



A rosewood, birch, and teak table by Tapio Wirkkala pairs with a Brenda Antin sofa in the master sitting room.

sight lines to the outdoors, he used mostly low-profile furniture upholstered in cozy, pale-hued fabrics.

Reflecting the clients' strong interest in 20th-century design, Fong sprinkled the interiors with significant vintage pieces. "In particular, I thought Scandinavian furnishings were well-suited to the setting and the architecture," he says. In the great room's main sitting area, he grouped a Hans Wegner Papa Bear chair with a Danish tile-top table, a rustic stool picked up at a local antiques shop, and a sprawling Poliform sectional sofa—a perfect spot for lake vistas afforded by the room's 14-foot-high glass wall.

Poul Henningsen pendant lights add vintage flair above the dining table that comfortably seats at least eight and in the kitchen, where Fong commissioned local craftsmen to create cabinetry inspired by the work of George Nakashima. Out on the adjacent covered terrace, a pair of inviting Vladimir Kagan swivel chairs rotate between facing the fireplace and the surrounding canopy of pine, oak, sourwood, and black gum trees.

The entertaining spaces—which are located on the upper floor, with the bedrooms below, as in the guest house—are where most of the indoor activity happens, especially around the great room's custom-made billiards table and secret bookcase bar, which can be cleverly revealed for cocktail hour by raising a mechanical panel displaying an Alexander Calder painting. The Calder is among a modest

"The last thing the owner wanted [was] a super-slick, fancy house. It was essential to create something harmonious to the mountains."

—INTERIOR DESIGNER CLIFF FONG

LESSONS FROM A MASTER
Fong designed the cabinetry in the spirit of midcentury woodworker **George Nakashima**.

A custom-colored center island is fitted with Juno limestone counters, which also forms the backsplash. Wicker stools, Stahl + Band



number of modern and contemporary artworks acquired for the house, including pieces by Antoni Tàpies, Nobuo Sekine, and Mark Roeder.

Of course, much of the action here is focused on the outdoors, where local landscape architect Rob Westmore masterminded an array of gardens, lawns, pathways, water features, and a meandering entry drive, all “without compromising the property’s woodland character,” he says. Westmore explains that he and his team salvaged and relocated as many of the trees displaced by construction as possible, supplementing them with regional species such as red buckeye and witch hazel. It was a process he describes as being more about “preserving and healing the woods than landscaping.” Even where Westmore created more traditional border gardens, he made sure to incorporate lots of native woodland shrubs, herbs, and wildflowers.

It’s a magnificent setting that the family enjoys year-round. “They really use the house in every season,” says Parker Platt. “In the summer they come for the lake, obviously. They take advantage of our Appalachian changing of the leaves in the fall, and they even visit in the winter.”

And they relish sharing it. “These clients,” Al says, “have a greater flair and orientation for entertaining than anything we’ve ever experienced.” ♦

ABOVE: View of the guest house, half hidden in a cove of trees, from the main dock



ABOVE: In a guest room, preweathered ipe paneling highlights the softness of an Italian upholstered bed (Poliform). Bedding, Matteo

RIGHT: A sunken tub is crafted of gascogne blue limestone. Carved oak sculpture, George Peterson. Folding chair, Mary Brogger



SLIDING WINDOW WALL
This glass functions like a transparent pocket door, fully opening the wife’s bath to the lake breeze.

A pair of Vladimir Kagan swivel chairs makes for cozy hearthside seating on the terrace. Upholstery fabric, Pierre Frey. Mantel artwork, Nobuo Sekine

“There is something *amazingly relaxing* about being 100 percent surrounded by nature. *There’s comfort in the landscape.*”

—ARCHITECT AL PLATT

