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A vignette by
 San Francisco's
 Jay Jeffers, winner
 of the Residential
 Interior Design
 (under 3,000 sq. ft.)
 Award, p. 94

TOP: PAUL DAVID; DESIGN: LARRY DROZDZAK; ARCHITECT: ARNOLD BERNSTEIN; CHAIR: CHRISTOPHER JIM ANTONI; PERSPECTIVE: BOB TOM FOW; BOTTOM: FERRIS; METAL: VIKTORIA; MARK: DAVID P. GORDON; PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS TAYLOR



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CALIFORNIA HOME+DESIGN 87

CH+D AWARD FOR RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE (UNDER 3,000 SQ. FT.)

CASS CALDER SMITH
CCS ARCHITECTURE, SAN FRANCISCO



Cass Calder Smith

In the heart of Sonoma's Wine Country, a picturesque five-acre field dotted with walnut trees was rife with possibilities. Thankfully, the land's owner and her architect, Cass Calder Smith, were in agreement that it should remain a picturesque field dotted with walnut trees. The owner's initial idea was to revamp the small 1970s stucco house that sat at the edge of the property, but Smith had even grander ideas. However, a whole new house meant a whole new budget—and for this particular project, the funds were set in stone. "I had to compete with what it was going to cost to renovate this little house," recalls Smith, who quickly convinced his client that a new house was the way to go. "That just forced a certain simplicity that had to be radical and a little bit ruthless."

Inspired by the agricultural vernacular of the area, Smith envisioned a pavilion-like house set at the very heart of the property and offering equally beautiful views from all sides. Instead of traditional stud framing, Smith chose low-cost, eco-friendly structural insulated panels to create a modest 20-by-100-foot rectangular structure. The building was clad in vertical 2-inch-wide cedar strips that were coated with bleaching oil to create a uniform, silvery gray patina. The boxy structure was beautifully clean and modern, but Smith

The galvanized steel canopy over the house offers shade, while helping to blur the distinction between indoors and out.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JO PETERSON



*“It had to be radical
and a little bit ruthless.”*



The vertical cedar cladding on the house was finished for a uniformly gray patina. OPPOSITE: The pool, built along the same axis, feels almost like an extension of the house



knew the design needed something to set it apart. Referencing the industrial sheds that still pepper the Northern California landscape, he designed a rectangular galvanized steel canopy. "The house and canopy together

are much more interesting than either would be separately," says Smith. ABOVE: The linear landscaping reflects the architecture. OPPOSITE: Smith gave the roof of the house a slight slope, and counterposed the canopy's pitched roof.

"The house and canopy together are much more interesting than either would be separately," says Smith. Positioned carefully among the existing walnut trees and wildflowers, the house and pool are set on a cross-axis with the garden and existing garage. The landscaping, a close collaboration between architect and owner, needed to adhere to local agricultural guidelines. New pepper trees and an herb-and-vegetable garden were planted, and oversize galvanized steel tubs were potted with local wildflowers.

Inside the house, the notion of radical simplicity was strictly adhered to. The interior colors were kept neutral in tints of white, and Smith laid blonde bamboo floors throughout. The owner of the home, who lives there with her son, made only a few requests, but a fireplace was a must. Smith suggested a modern gas hearth that would be friendlier to both the environment and the owner's budget.

By relentlessly paring down both the design and the budget, Smith was able to honor his word: The final project cost less than \$200 per square foot. "When I was approached with this project, I said, 'I can give you a good house, and it's probably not the house you would ask for, but it will be good. It'll be clean and modern. It will have high ceilings, it will have good light and it will have great connections to the outside.'" —Erin Feher