



Centric General Contractors

ON LOCATION NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

From fine artists to culinary geniuses to technology gurus, Northern California is home to creative and inventive individuals. Defined by its vibrant landscape, colorful architecture and rich history, the region is a cultural haven in which the design industry thrives. Read on for a glimpse into the local aesthetic from some of Northern California's most established professionals, hailing from San Jose to St. Helena.

Cass Calder Smith Architecture

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“A home’s real measure of value is in the gratification of the people who live there.”

Cass Calder Smith Architecture, established by UC Berkeley graduate and architect Cass Calder Smith, has been doing business in Northern California for more than 25 years. Founded in San Francisco, the firm now has a second office in New York, expanding its influence and project capability to encompass two of the country’s greatest cities. Smith has seen the area increase its international appeal and become more cosmopolitan and contemporary. Still, some of its more original characteristics remain. “It’s completely casual,” Smith says. “There is a strong emphasis on the outdoors and how it merges with the everyday. Recreation is a high lifestyle priority. In relation to design, I would term it casual modernism.” The area’s tendency to lean toward designs of this aesthetic is key for Smith, who calls the members of his team “card-carrying modernists.” Known for both commercial and residential projects, Smith has a unique perspective on the relationship between the two. “The common thread among all of our residential projects is a relatively consistent degree of informality,” Smith says. “Our clients want to live in relaxed but well-designed and nicely crafted homes. Our restaurant designs also reflect this casual modern lifestyle. I’m noticing a broad cultural shift toward informality.” The firm’s recently published monograph, *EAT LIVE WORK*, features not only 25 years of beautiful homes, but also a selection of commercial projects.

A VISIONARY CULTURE

Variable aesthetics. “Mountain homes are more rugged and rooted, while houses near the coast are delicate and light,” Smith says. “They all seem to be very connected to their landscapes.”

Global inspiration. Smith often travels to the Mediterranean, a location he favors for a quality of light similar to that of Northern California.

Resources + innovation. “This is a place of pioneers, so there is always a focus on the cutting edge,” Smith says. “For designers, moving here is very magnetic due to the natural beauty and the caliber of people.”

Must See, Must Do

- + Golden Gate Bridge
- + SFMOMA
- + Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA)
- + Muir Woods National Monument
- + Lake Tahoe
- + Yosemite National Park
- + California’s farmers’ markets



1. This project, located on a 20-acre site in the Santa Cruz Mountains, was designed for a San Francisco couple with six children. 2. This 1,900-square-foot sustainable beach house in Stinson Beach, California, is a second home for a three-generation San Francisco family. 3. Cass Calder Smith designed this 8,000-square-foot modern home in Marin County. Selective subtractions took the house back to a minimum form of glass, posts and planes.



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