

A photograph of a modern house at dusk. The house features large glass windows and doors, some of which are illuminated from within, showing interior spaces. A swimming pool is visible in the foreground, and a covered walkway with recessed lighting extends from the house towards the pool. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall atmosphere is serene and sophisticated.

100 more
of the world's best
houses

images
Publishing

Edited by Robyn Beaver

Mountain Cabin

California, USA

WALKER WARNER ARCHITECTS

222

The clients' love for this beautiful mountainous region began many years before they decided to build a weekend cabin there. Their wish was that the buildings would be as minimal in size as possible, respecting the land and the peace of its surroundings. They asked that the indoor/outdoor connections be maximized so that rooms could borrow space and beauty from the surrounding landscape. They envisioned a cabin that would slip into the landscape as if it had always been there, and always would be. This cabin would be passed down through the family from generation to generation.

The architects' goal was to make the cabin as flexible and efficient as possible. Rooms were designed to spill out into the site with 10-foot-wide (3-meter) sets of doors opening to the meadow. Communal living spaces in the cabin were created to provide more expansive spaces for nighttime activities. The bulk of the cabin was reduced by employing built-ins throughout, to give rooms ship-like efficiency, and by lowering plate heights to make rooms cozy and intimate. Doors and windows push sliders above the main roof plane where necessary and fit between members of the timber frame to give the cabin a strong sense of connection between indoors and out. As a result, no room feels crowded. Each shares the expansiveness of the immediate and distant views beyond.

The material palette and detailing were approached with three goals: to allow the site and cabin to flow into one another; to use environmentally sourced materials; and to give the cabin a sense of permanence. The material palette was reduced to essentials: wood, steel, and stone. The materials appear both on the interior and the exterior of the cabin, blurring the line between inside and out. Minimal detailing allows the full beauty of the materials to be revealed without the distraction of busy details. A timber frame was an ideal solution to a short building season and the doors to use reclaimed material. Additionally, stone was salvaged from a ranch where a quarry had been abandoned a hundred years ago. Granite that had been split and then left to weather in the elements was carefully installed to expose its natural patina. Artisans were brought in to share their special talents. Custom elements, from light fixtures to sinks carved from blocks of stone, give the cabin the feeling of a rare gem.

1 View across pond to cabin and meadow

Opposite:

View through dining room doors to granite peaks





3 Upper level floor plan
 4 Lower level floor plan
 5 Built-in bench under low roof
 6 Living room fireplace
 7 Bedroom open to balcony and deck
 8 Dining room bay and adjacent deck
 9 Stone tub in master bath
 Photography: Cesar Rubio

