Why, hello there. Some of you may remember that I served as editor-in-chief of Modern Luxury Interiors California a few years ago. After receiving a promotion to editor-in-chief of Modern Luxury’s sister magazine, Angeleno, I took some time to focus solely on that. While I still keep that role—along with the editor-in-chief title at Modern Luxury Beverly Hills—I’m very excited to dive back into all things design.

And that’s not all. After covering Southern California only for the past year, we’re bringing Northern California back into the fold. There’s boatloads of incredible design talent coming out of the region, and I’m delighted to explore it all again.

One Northern California project I’m particularly jazzed about is Tierwelthaus, or “Wildlife House,” by Feldman Architecture, which is pictured here. Located in Portola Valley, the first thing you notice is the home’s extensive horizontal louver system that covers the exterior. It is visually intriguing—and sets a beautiful stage for the natural surrounds—and also practical in that it provides privacy for the homeowners. Chatting with architect Chris Kurrle about how he and his team brought the project to life made me think back to my first job as an editorial assistant to the architecture editor of Home|Style magazine. It’s been quite a while since I held that position—nearly 20 years—but talking with Kurrle reminded me how lucky I felt back then to dip a toe into such a creative and interesting world.

I hope you find inspiration in this issue’s lineup, which contains projects from Pamela Pennington, Shannon McLaren Wilkins and Gray Malin; lots of design news; and “The 50,” our feature that highlights some of the state’s top designers, showrooms and services. Happy reading!

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Sometimes, it takes two attempts to make something perfect. Such was the case with Tierwelthaus, a single-family Portola Valley home that underwent not one but two renovations by Feldman Architecture. Initially acquired in a bankruptcy sale, the original owner worked with the San Francisco-based firm to remodel the home’s interiors but, two-thirds of the way through the project, sold the property.

The current owners—who also have a home in New Zealand—sought to complete the interiors and the exteriors with Feldman Architecture. “We had a modern, polished interior, while the exterior was a bad 1990s California ranch home,” explains Chris Kurrle, who worked with Anjali Iyer and Katharine Hebden to design the project. “The new homeowners were captivated by the interior and wanted to bring the exterior up to the same level.”

To do so, Kurrle and team had to tackle several challenges, including creating a defined entryway, privacy and curb appeal, and integrating the new design into the surrounding landscape. The most impactful change they made was incorporating a louvers system made from an innovative, self-extinguishing Italian product called Woodn. “[Using the louvers] gave us a really strong architectural statement,” Kurrle says. “They dealt with curb appeal and privacy issues, and also allowed us a really clean way to simplify the facade and make it more of an architectural gesture.”

Another consideration was the landscape design, which was beautifully imagined by Surface Design Inc. “They did a great job keeping the palette simple through a deserty landscape that ties in the indoor-outdoor connection,” Kurrle says. “By clearing the shrubs and land covering, we exposed the native landscape, which helped dissolve the contrast between the new and the natural.” The drought-resistant plantings—agave plants, cabbage trees and succulents, inspired by New Zealand and South African landscapes—truly set it apart.

An unexpected outcome of the new design ties directly into its name, a German word that translates to “Wildlife House.” Because it had been acquired in a bankruptcy buy and unoccupied for a while, many animals took refuge: An owl and squirrels settled in during phase two of the renovation. That’s since been resolved, but bobcats, deer and birds still roam the property. “We were blown away by the amount of wildlife,” Kurrle explains. “It turned the homeowners into these wildlife watchers. They have binoculars and spotting posts that are readily accessible in the house for anyone to run, grab and see.”