



Architect Steven Stept describes the house as “a series of stacked boxes,” constructed primarily of stucco, cedar and glass.

BOTTOM: The great room, above which is a green roof, offers views of the Foothills Open Space Preserve—a vista that informed Stept’s design of the house.

Coming Into View

On a parcel in Los Altos Hills, Feldman Architecture devises a singular home to match its terrain

by **ANH-MINH LE** photography by **ADAM ROUSE**

IT’S NOT A SETTING that one easily forgets. “When I first went there, it was so magical,” recalls Steven Stept, a managing partner of Feldman Architecture, of the parcel in Los Altos Hills. “As you walk down to the [site’s] edge, you have a 180-degree, really special view of the Foothills Open Space Preserve. It’s so quiet, serene and private. I may have seen one house in the distance.”

Stept continues: “Standing on the site, looking at that view, I thought, ‘This is what you want to experience every day, all day, when you’re in the house.’ That experience of connecting to the land drove the design.”

The two-and-a-half year project, dubbed the Slot House, culminated in a 7,000-square-foot structure that earned GreenPoint Rated Platinum certification. Stept likens it to “a series of stacked boxes” comprised primarily of stucco, cedar and glass, with some metal to complement the windows and a touch of concrete. The same porcelain tile is used in the front courtyard, back patio and interior flooring for cohesion.





CLOCKWISE: To create a symbiotic relationship between the house and the sloped terrain, steps—like those on the patio—were incorporated to allow the home to follow the angle of the incline; accounting for the sloped site, the entrance transitions down to the great room with six steps; the ceiling stays level, however, so the former space is nine feet high while the latter is 12 feet high; an element that inspired the home’s namesake “Slot” slices through the building, opening the upstairs to the downstairs, and gives you a great peek of the view,” says Stept.

The approximately four-foot-wide slot—which is part of the inspiration for the home’s name—spans both floors of the house. Its glass panels invite natural light while also permitting glimpses of the home’s green roof and, further in the distance, the preserve. The great room, which includes 43 feet of sliding glass doors, boasts the view that Stept remembers so vividly from his initial visit.

As memorable as the property is, the clients are equally so. Early on, the couple—the husband is an engineering director, the wife a wealth management executive—presented Stept with a dossier of sorts: 93 pages detailing their background (they met at age 15), along with their design and architecture likes and dislikes. “In a way,” says Stept, “it was the roadmap for me to unpack and unravel what this house should be.”

Among other things, the wide-ranging document

revealed that their styles did not perfectly align; she desired warmer quarters to balance his more modern and minimal leanings. Stept was able to “mesh the two worlds,” he says, in part by collaborating with the landscape and interior designers to effect areas for the wife. Outside, Arterra Landscape Architects introduced California red poppies for a hit of color. Inside, Amber Autumn layered in color, wallpaper and fabrics to amp up the coziness. (Another designer, Connie Wong, was tasked with selecting interior materials, such as the flooring and casework.)

Stept describes the couple as “super trusting. They were happy to be on this journey.” In turn, that allowed the architect to integrate bold statements and devise a house that fulfills his San Francisco-based firm’s ambition: “We’re definitely trying to create unique, one-of-a-kind solutions for our clients.”

