







# Cinematic Caterpillar of the Preserve

By Adam Joseph | Photos by Joe Fletcher

When landscape designer Joni Janecki first drove up to the 2.8-acre lot at the Santa Lucia Preserve in Carmel Valley, she was struck by the curvature of the land. There wasn't yet a road leading all the way to the site, so Janecki, president of the Santa Cruz-based Joni L. Janecki & Associates, hopped out of her car and walked the rest of the way, taking in the flavor of the land along the way. "The hills flow into one another, creating something spectacular," she says. "That had a big impression on me."

Janecki envisioned a visually unobtrusive structure situated low between the surrounding hills. She sought to combine native plants with ornamentals and succulents to contrast the beauty of the natural grasslands, punctuating various outdoor living spaces while blending the home with the undulating hills. Her concept complemented the vision of Jonathan Feldman, founding partner and CEO of the San Francisco-based Feldman Architecture, and the homeowner. "We envisioned an indoor-outdoor house with sunlight streaming in everywhere," says Feldman. The segmented rooms and S-shaped structure-hugging contours, sinuous on the land, gave Caterpillar House its moniker.

The symbiosis of sustainability and modern design helped earn Caterpillar House the first ever LEED® Platinum certification for a custom home on California's Central Coast. The openness of its 2,800 square feet seamlessly blends outdoor with indoor living spaces. The great room's south-facing glass doors open to a covered porch and patio with expanding/contracting sun shades.

Moreover, the home produces its own annual energy requirements using a photovoltaic panel system. Natural ventilation, ceiling fans, cross ventilation, shading trellises, and an insulated, recirculating hot water system create passive cooling and heating. Collected rainwater, stored in

a trio of tanks that blend into the landscape, supplies the property with all its irrigation needs.

One of the home's most spectacular features that also demonstrate the synthesis of design with sustainability are the walls, which are constructed using excavated earth. The labor-intensive rammed earth walls not only curve along the contours of the home's design but also use thermal mass to regulate the interior temperature.

A decade after Caterpillar House was completed, Hollywood came knocking. The house is the sole setting for *Malcolm & Marie*, filmed in secret during 2020's sheltering-in-place. Shot in crisp black and white, Sam Levinson's intimate dive into a couple's schizophrenic relationship, which unravels over one night, stars John David Washington as a pretentious up-and-coming filmmaker and Zendaya as his erratic, emotionally damaged girlfriend. The two characters go from hectically stomping throughout the home to lovingly embracing each other on the couch, bed, or floor. They move with ease from elegant indoor spaces to the crafted outdoor areas. In one scene, Marie sits on a patio chair and smokes a cigarette; a feeling of brief solace emits as she looks out to the Santa Lucia grasslands illuminated by moonlight.

"I was smiling the whole time I watched," says Feldman. "Every shot is gorgeous, so they did us a service, making us look like brilliant architects—there was an artistry to it all."

***For more information, visit [feldmanarchitecture.com/project/caterpillar-house](https://feldmanarchitecture.com/project/caterpillar-house).***

"*Malcolm & Marie*" is available for streaming on Netflix.