

Sunset

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HOLIDAY
MENU
PAGE 100

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Labor of love

The idyllic vineyards and vistas of Northern California's wine country inspire a dream house built against the odds

BY IRENE EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY

FIVE MINUTES into their first conversation, Andy Katz and Ellen Riendeau knew they were destined to be a couple. "I told him my dream was to live in Sonoma County," Riendeau says of that fortuitous encounter at a Christmas party in Colorado, where they both lived. "And he said, 'That's my dream too!'"

Katz, a fine-art photographer who has published books on such places as Tuscany, New Zealand, and the Burgundy region of France, had long felt a connection to wine-country landscapes, in particular those of Northern California. Riendeau, a freelance graphic designer, had made multiple visits to Sonoma and had fantasized about moving there to stomp grapes. Six months into their relationship, they were visiting friends in the Alexander Valley, just outside the Sonoma County town of Healdsburg, when fate intervened. "I looked out at the view and said, 'I'd love to live here,'" Katz recalls.



An informal collection of squashes and gourds from the vegetable garden adds an organic touch to the dining area. **OPPOSITE** Andy Katz and Ellen Riendeau's home in Healdsburg, CA, capitalizes on its vineyard views with soaring windows on three levels. An expansive two-tiered deck provides entertainment space overlooking the couple's 3 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes.

Half-jokingly, his friend suggested the home down the hill: a dilapidated house that stood on an unkempt 4.8-acre parcel. "There were shot-out cars and cans of oil all over the place. It was straight out of *Deliverance*," Katz says. Even so, he went over the next day and asked the owner if it was on the market.

Neither Katz nor Riendeau had any experience building or remodeling a home, and they freely admit they had no idea what they were getting into when their offer was finally accepted. Still, armed with a combination of blissful ignorance and blind faith, they set out to build the home of their dreams.

Trial by fire

Selecting an architect was the first order of business. The couple chose James Trewitt and E.J. Meade of Boulder, Colorado-based Arch 11, who are known for their strongly contemporary urban homes. "I had always been drawn to modern homes in magazines," says Riendeau, "so I saw this as an opportunity."

They took the original house down to the foundation and started over with a 2,700-square-foot, three-level loftlike structure to maximize the experience of the surrounding countryside. "When we bought it, the only room with a view had a TV in the window," Riendeau says. "We just wanted as much light and as many windows as possible." In the new design, every room—even the master closet—opens onto a memorable vista, and spaces flow into one another with minimal interruption.

Given Riendeau's love for cooking and the couple's circle of chef friends, the kitchen is the center of the home. Their pride and joy is the Mugnaini wood-burning oven, which was craned in before the kitchen was framed. "We didn't even have a roof—for a while it was just four walls, two steel beams, and a pizza oven," Riendeau says, laughing.

A well-developed sense of humor was the essential factor in getting through the three-year construction process, which was fraught with stress and unforeseen calamities. Pipes burst in the basement a week after the floors were installed; the septic system was irreversibly damaged by a backhoe; a worker ran over an electrical line and set off a small fire. "We had just plain bad luck," Riendeau says. Some mistakes were also a product of sheer inexperience, like the time they painted the interior in the dead of winter, leaving an empty house with closed windows and no ventilation. "When we returned, the paint had fallen off the walls," she recalls. The home's final price tag was three times their initial budget, and the couple often found their finances stretched to the limit.

Their design education was costly and hard-won, but the couple rose to the occasion. Katz fulfilled his longtime goal of growing grapes by planting 3 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon vines on-site; their second harvest is just behind them, a fact that fills them with wonder. The life they envisioned has come to pass. As Riendeau says with a bit of awe in her voice, "We pinch ourselves every day."

INFO Designer: James Trewitt; architect: E.J. Meade; both of Arch 11, Boulder, CO (arch11.com or 303/546-6868). Resources: See page 142.

What they learned

Once a complete neophyte to the design process, Ellen Riendeau acted as the home's interior designer.

"I started by looking through magazines for products I liked, then shopped online because I didn't have time to visit showrooms," she says. Here are three of her tips.

CREATE A COLOR PALETTE FROM NATURE

Leaves, rocks, and other natural objects from around the property inspired Riendeau's choice of furnishings and finishes. The bamboo floors reflect the golden hues of the surrounding grasses; the rich tones of the cabinetry and sofa were inspired by madrone and manzanita bark.

DON'T IMPEDE THE VIEW

The bench in the corner of the living room, the low-backed chairs and sofas, the platform bed in the master suite, and the airy shower-stall doors were all chosen to preserve the vineyard panoramas. And instead of pricier glass tile for the shower, "it turned out that plain white tile worked best, because it didn't compete," Riendeau explains.

INVEST IN THE THINGS YOU TOUCH

"Spend more on the stuff you come into contact with frequently—drawer pulls, doorknobs, the floor," Riendeau says. "Also give yourself little luxuries in the areas where you spend the most time—for me it's the kitchen, since I love to cook."






TOP ROW The vineyards of the Alexander Valley glow in the soft November light; Riendeau prep a pizza lunch in front of her beloved Mugnaini wood-burning oven; a grapevine's delicate tracery is a microcosm of the season's hues. **LEFT** Vertical bookshelves add a sculptural element that echoes the shape of the windows. **RIGHT** The angular lines of the living room furniture complement the home's structure. **BOTTOM ROW** Katz and Riendeau harvest their grapes under the guidance of friend and vineyard manager Victor Arreola; streamlined drawer pulls emphasize the shape of the galley-style kitchen; the couple's 6,400 vines are planted closely together, "stressing" the grapes to produce better wine; a simple lunch of homemade pizza and a local Cabernet on the ipe wood deck just off the kitchen.







An elevated walkway of ipe wood through Asian-inspired bamboo plantings creates a meditative journey to the front door.

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Katz's ethereal Tuscan landscape anchors the master suite, which overlooks the living and dining areas; a living room bench provides a serene perch (the structure in the distance is a guesthouse and Katz's photography studio); a handsome wood stump helps ground the airy feel of the shower stall. ■

The life they envisioned has come to pass. As Riendeau says with a bit of awe in her voice, "We pinch ourselves every day"

Resources



Following are sources for some products in this issue. Care has been taken to verify information, but info can't be guaranteed. Items not included may have sources named elsewhere in the issue, have come from personal collections, or have been discontinued.

NOVEMBER IN THE WEST Page 23: Handspun-hemp towels used as napkins (\$22 each), pale green ceramic plates (\$80 each), and ribbed-glass tumblers from Japan (\$6 each) from the Gardener (thegardener.com or 510/548-4545). Motto bowls (\$9 cents each) and Rara wineglasses (\$2.99 each) from Ikea (ikea.com or 800/434-4532). **Page 28:** Ribba extra-deep 19-inch square frame (\$20) and Lack side table (\$13) from Ikea (see above). Velcro sticky-back strips (velcro.com) available at hardware stores. Abrasion-resistant 1/4-inch plastic for tabletop from TAP Plastics (\$12 per square foot; tapplastics.com or 800/246-5055).

CRAFTY MAKEOVER Page 58 (left): Lotus fountain (\$579) from Fountain Depot (fountaindepot.com or 805/208-4876). **Page 58 (top right):** Similar pots available from Asian Ceramics (asian-ceramics.com or 626/449-6800). Fu dog sculpture (\$39) from Fountain Depot (see above).

TRANSFORM WITH COLOR Page 71: Cranapple paint on walls (item 1015; color is discontinued, but many stores can mix it or provide a similar shade) and Silver Lining paint on trim (item 32-32) from Pratt & Lambert (prattandlambert.com or 800/289-7728). Vintage photographs, homeowners' own. **Page 72:** Contractor for kitchen was Matt Sears Wood and Metalworks (503/957-4649). Aged Mint paint (item IB77) from Ralph Lauren Paint (ralphlaurenhome.com or 800/379-7656). Silver Lining paint on trim and cabinets from Pratt & Lambert (see above). Rhodes pendant in Antique Black (item PD-14-1-4) and Opal glass shade (item OP-2250-09-4, \$203 each light, as shown) from Schoolhouse Electric Co. (schoolhouseelectric.com or 800/630-7113). Carrara marble tiles and counter from EuroStone (eurostoneinc.com or 800/632-5811); counter with drainboard fabricated by De La Tierra (503/720-6581). Mahogany counters by Hardwood Industries (hardwoodind.com or 800/745-6620). Thermador

stainless steel 36-inch range and chimney-style wall hood (thermador.com or 800/735-4328). Sub-Zero built-in refrigerator (subzero.com or 800/222-7820) with custom chalkboard front fabricated by W.H. Cress Company (whcress.com or 503/620-1664). Antique cast-iron table base with custom-honed Absolute Black granite top from Classico Marmo (503/233-0224).

Page 73 (top): Refinished and painted antique table from Antiques & Oddities (about \$1,350; similar items available; antiquewholesale.net or 503/222-4246). Kilim rugs from Pakobel (similar items available; pakobel.com). Vintage photographs are homeowners' own. Looking for Home (acrylic on canvas) by Jody Katopothis (jodykat.com or 503/957-3167). **Page 73 (bottom right):** Split Pea paint on exterior (item 16-28) from Pratt & Lambert (see above). Night Flower paint on door (item 1344) from Benjamin Moore (benjaminmoore.com or 800/672-4686). **Page 74 (top left):** Colonial Red spray paint on lockers from Rust-Oleum (rustoleum.com or 800/323-3584). Filtered Sunlight paint on walls (item 2154-60) from Benjamin Moore (see above). Spellman light fixture in Matte Bronze (item CM-15-1-6) with shade (\$162 as shown) from Schoolhouse Electric Co. (see above). **Page 74 (top right):** Five-Needled Pines paint on beadboard (item 8205) and Luna Moth paint on walls (item 8192) from Sherwin-Williams (both colors are discontinued, but many stores can mix them or a similar shade; sherwin-williams.com or 800/474-3794). Bathtub from Sunrise Specialty (sunrisespecialty.com or 510/729-7277). Sage wall sconce in Matte Bronze (item WM-40-1-2.25; \$109) from Schoolhouse Electric Co. (see above) with vintage shade. Rustic star from Cottage Gardens of Petaluma (\$35-\$175; similar styles available; cottagegardensofpet.com or 707/778-8025). Ribbon shower curtain in bright multistripe from Garnet Hill (\$78; garnethill.com or 800/870-3513). Sussex towel bar, hook, and shelf from Pottery Barn (\$24-\$69; potterybarn.com or 800/922-5507). **Page 74 (bottom left):** Soothing Celadon paint (item ICC-95) from Behr (behr.com or 877/237-6158). Mendocino bed from Pottery Barn (\$1,099-\$1,199; see above) refinished in orange paint by Northwest Refinishing (503/670-0410). Eileen Fisher rippled cotton coverlet in soft white (\$198) from Garnet Hill (see above). Nate Berkus chunky knit throw in turquoise from Linens 'n Things (\$80; lnt.com or 866/568-7378). Drapery and valance designed by homeowner and fabricated by Ginger Abernathy Creations (gingerabernathy.com or 503/788-1142).

Page 74 (bottom right): Sugar Loaf paint on walls (item 45-A; color is discontinued, but many stores can mix it or a similar shade) by Ace Hardware (acehardware.com or 866/290-5334). Star light fixture from Sturbridge Yankee Workshop (\$300; sturbridgeyankee.com or 800/343-1144). Watercolor paintings (left to right) *Life Is Good There* and *Greek House* by Jody Katopothis (see above). Bottlecap and chain mail sculpture, *Self Portrait*, by Francesca Quagliata of 4th Street Design (4thstreetdesign.com). Coral ceramic garden stool from Cargo (\$140; cargoinc.com or 503/243-7804).

NATURAL THANKSGIVING STYLE Page 76: Cotton-and-linen tablecloth (\$132) and napkins (\$18 each) by Transylvanian Images and Coupe plates (\$26-\$32 each) by Heath Ceramics from Spring (astorecalledspring.com or 415/673-2065). Ella tumblers (\$42 each) and Vivian goblets (\$52) by Juliska from Sue Fisher King (suefisherking.com or 888/811-7276). Plants and terra-cotta pots from Flora Grubb Gardens (floragrubbgardens.com or 415/626-7256). Vintage

silverware and chairs are stylist's own. **Page 78 (top left):** Napkin by Transylvanian Images from Spring (see above). Placecards by Maybelle Imasa-Stukuls (may-belle.com or 415/786-3515). **Page 78 (top right):** Napkin by Transylvanian Images (\$18) and Heath Ceramics bud vase (\$20) from Spring (see above). Gift card by Maybelle Imasa-Stukuls (see above). Plate and silverware are stylist's own. **Page 78 (bottom left):** Heath Ceramics Coupe plate (\$26) from Spring (see above). Wooden crayons from Urbanweeds (\$27 per set of 12 or \$2.50 each; urbanweeds.com or 206/632-7680). Silverware is stylist's own. **Page 78 (bottom right):** Large ceramic bowl (\$105) and plates (\$26 each) by Heath Ceramics from Spring (see above).

LABOR OF LOVE Page 95: Custom glass tabletop with Parsons base in natural steel (\$380) and Milan chairs in chocolate leather (\$199 each) from Room & Board (roomandboard.com or 800/486-6554). Five-pocket bread riser (table centerpiece) from Lime Stone (\$210; limestonehealdsburg.com or 707/433-3080). **Page 97 (top center):** Wood-fired Medio 110 oven from Mugnaini Imports (\$3,550; mugnaini.com or 888/887-7206). **Page 97 (middle right):** Sectional sofa in chocolate leather (\$7,400 as shown) from Bee Market (bee-market.com or 415/292-2910). Barcelona coffee table from Design Within Reach (\$1,183; dwr.com or 800/944-2233). Brindled Hide Rug (\$675), throw pillows (price upon request), and round wooden tray (\$125) from Lime Stone (see above). **Page 97 (bottom right):** Vista chairs (\$139 each) from Room & Board (see above). **Page 98 (top):** King-size B102 bed from Bee Market (\$2,400 as shown; see above). *Tuscan Cypress Grove* photograph (over bed) by Andy Katz (\$1,600; andykatzphotography.com or 707/433-9396). **Page 98 (bottom left):** Monkeypod stool from Lime Stone (\$293; see above). **Page 98 (bottom right):** Bench (\$1,100) and cushion (\$350) from Bee Market (see above). **Page 99:** Landscape architecture by Guenther Vogt (bouquets.org or 800/825-6768).

A SEATTLE CHEF'S NEW THANKSGIVING

Page 100: Cameron platter (\$45) from Crate and Barrel (crateandbarrel.com or 800/967-6696). Vintage serving tools are stylist's own. **Page 101:** Studio dinner plates in cream (\$48 for four) and linen hemstitch dinner napkins (\$54 for six) from Pottery Barn (see above). **Page 103 (left center):** Sausalito fish platter in Blanca (\$26) from Pottery Barn (see above). **Page 103 (top right):** Studio serving bowl (\$75 for set of three) from Pottery Barn (see above). **Page 107:** Nilsson round salad plate (\$13 each) from Crate and Barrel (see above). ■

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