



TROPHIES

Against the Grain

California is known for its anything-goes attitude. But amidst the traditional log homes of Lake Tahoe, a modernist retreat stands out.

BY VANESSA GRIGORIADIS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY VANCE FOX

BLUEPRINT

Location Truckee, Calif.
Closest skiing Northstar-at-Tahoe, a five-minute drive
Square footage 4,000
Architects Kurt Reinkens of MWA Inc. Architects and Gerry Rodriguez of Robert Marr Construction
Design strategy Aficionados of mid-century modernism, the Wards decided to build a home that suited their tastes rather than one that fit in with the local architecture. The most difficult element to get through the community's design review board was the home's tower, seen here protruding above the living room. "They didn't like the light that emanates from it," says Rosemary Ward. "But I think they've gotten used to it."



Larry and Rosemary Ward's 4,000-square-foot home is the most controversial in North Lake Tahoe's gated community of Lahontan, Calif. It's not every day, after all, that a modernist house is built on a golf course. "Everybody who walks in says, 'Whoa!'" says Rosemary, who, with husband

Larry, a private equity investor, built the second home for their Laguna

Beach-based family. The Wards knew that if they were ever to build a home, they would make a statement. But they never envisioned that statement would be so dramatic.

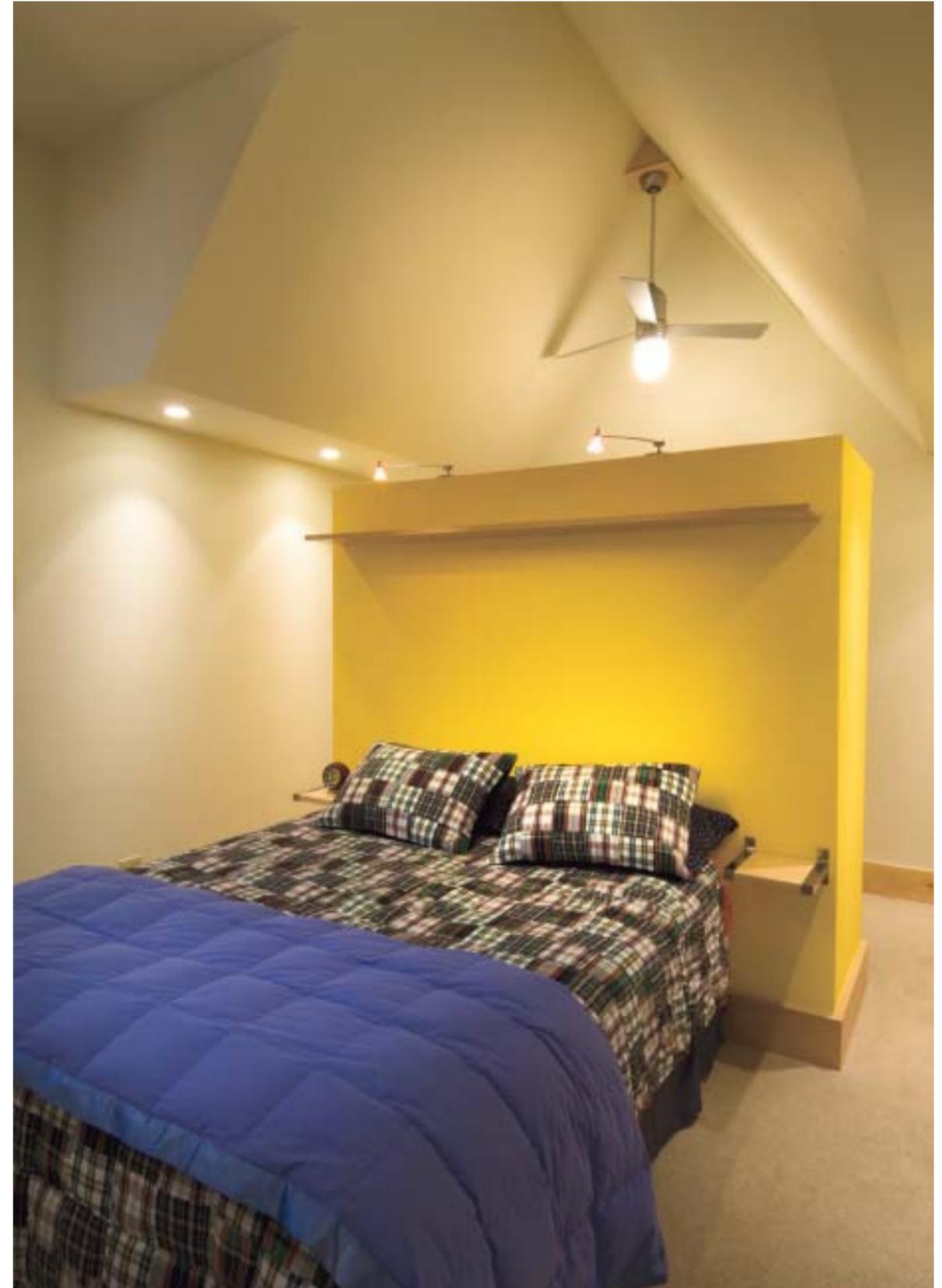
"We'd been clipping things out of magazines for 20 years, thinking we were going to build a modernist first home," says Rosemary. "Then we thought, why don't we do it here?" The result turns heads—a crisp geometry among Tahoe's typical log homes.

"Lots of people have more traditional views on architecture. And those houses are beautiful. But this is what we absolutely love," she says.

The home's location—a five-minute drive from Northstar-at-Tahoe and on the edge of the Lahontan Golf Course—is "heaven," says Larry. He grew up skiing in Ohio and Colorado, and he and Rosemary became serious skiers while living in Orinda, Calif. They taught

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WIDE ANGLE Clockwise from top: The Wards' living room flows into the raised kitchen and dining room, as concrete floors give way to clear maple trim. In the living room, with Lookout Mountain rising in the background, modernist furniture—including a circa-1952 Hans J. Wegner lounge chairs and a Modercina reproduction couch and daybed—sets off the exposed steel beams, custom light fixtures by Lightspan and a stainless-steel fireplace fabricated by an artisan in Bainbridge Island, Wash. In one of their daughters' bedrooms, the Wards designed a yellow cube to serve as a headboard with a vanity and dressing area hidden behind it. The cube allows the room to be sparse with furnishings, hides the bath from the main space, adds a block of lively color and interacts with the angled ceiling to create eye-catching shapes. A concrete block wall marks movement from the dining room into the guest master suite, a strategy the architects used to demarcate public and private space in the home.





their four kids—now 13, 16, 18 and 20—to ski from the ages of 2 and 3 at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows (and are pleased to report that none has switched to snowboarding). Larry and Rosemary are also avid golfers—“or rapid, if you will,” jokes Rosemary.

Once they had settled on

the lot, they hired architects Kurt Reinkens of MWA Inc. Architects and Gerry Rodriguez of Robert Marr Construction to design and build their home. “They were dream clients—very educated,” says Rodriguez. The couple worked closely with the archi-

tects and contributed significantly to the blueprint. “This is a site- and client-specific design,” says Reinkens. “It’s the ultimate unique home.”

The team incorporated modernist elements like steel beams and concrete walls. They also chose materials that would blur the relationship between the indoors and out.

They poured concrete floors inlaid with slate in both the living room and patio, and opened up every room with windows that boast views of Lookout Mountain. A stainless-steel fireplace and kitchen hood are skewed at interesting angles. The mud-room bench is a plate of steel

resting on boulders.

After hitting the slopes, it’s family night in the bright living room. The brood skis almost every day they’re in Tahoe. Larry even goes out on Christmas and New Year’s Day. (“That’s the best,” he says, “because

everybody else is hung-over.”) They don’t plan to add much to the home over the years, except maybe hang one of their daughter’s paintings in the foyer. “We don’t want lots of geegaws,” says Rosemary. “It’s perfect here as it is.” ♦



OPEN SPACE Clockwise from left: The kitchen’s stainless-steel hood, also made by the Washington-state artisan, is angled to respond to the rotated fireplace across the railing in the living room. Matching cabinets, appliances and backsplashes enliven the walls and provide contrast for the honey-colored wood. Topped by a four-inch end-grain butcher block, the kitchen island cleverly hides the power and gas lines. The maple banister allows for minimal physical separation from the dining room, which was important to Rosemary, who didn’t want to be away from the party while she cooks. The Wards’ master bedroom, with a reproduction Alvar Aalto chair and art on loan from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, has a bed that faces large French doors, which lead to a private patio. The clean-lined south-facing master bath catches the winter afternoon sun, with outlets and bath sundries hidden behind built-in mirrors.