

GRAY GARDENS

AN APTOS HOME EXTENDS ITS MODERN OUTLOOK TO THE VERY EDGE. BY LYDIA LEE



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The Aptos home of Faye and Jay Stone overlooks the entire sweep of Monterey Bay; the water feature has modern lines and a limestone wall with a hand-chiseled pattern; a field of English lavender blooms in the backyard.



Some people have to be sold on the modern tropes of crisp geometry and clean spaces. Not so Faye and Jay Stone. When they decided to build a new home in Aptos, their interest in contemporary design continued well past the front and back doors. “I wanted everything to be very simple and flow together,” says Faye. The couple found a good match for their minimalist sensibilities in San Francisco landscape architect Randy Thueme, who is known for distinctively modern garden design.

Working with Gary Garmann, the late Santa Cruz architect who designed the 2005 residence, Thueme created outdoor spaces to match the clean lines and uniform palette of the house. Paved with slabs of the same gray quartzite used for the floors inside, a front courtyard and large wraparound terrace extend the living

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ABOVE: Instead of a pool, the Stones opted for a bocce ball court. LEFT: The wood-burning oven is painted the same calm gray shade as the house's exterior and interior walls; it is often fired up to make pizza during bocce games with friends and family.

space beyond the house itself. "The outdoor areas have a luxurious sense of space and a very easygoing feel," says Thueme.

A pool was originally planned for the secluded one-and-a-half acre lot, but the Stones decided they'd prefer a bocce ball court. Nearby, an outdoor kitchen is outfitted with not only a gas grill but also a wood-fired pizza oven. The Stones frequently have guests over for a glass of wine, homemade pizza and a game of bocce.

Along the back of the bocce court, a 22-foot-long water feature continues the architectural formality of the space. The water pours out of the end of a wall, an effect that renowned modernist architect Luis Barragán would appreciate. Thueme placed his geometric fountain so



visitors at the front door can see through the house to the cascading water in back and the ocean's infinite horizon beyond. The sound of water splashing from the fountain into a basin three feet below also covers the noise from the highway running below the bluff.

In the backyard, Thueme kept the plantings streamlined. "The site is so big, and I knew the Stones wanted to keep things neat and organized," he says. A large field of English lavender flows down the hill. The rest of the plants are similarly low-maintenance, and provide soft contrast to the hardscaping's disciplined lines.

In the sunny entry courtyard, banks of Mexican feather grass and evergreen currant

ABOVE: Paved in gray quartzite and concrete slabs set in gravel, the front courtyard is a sheltered, sunny area where the Stones can enjoy their sculpture collection amid the olive trees and beds of Mexican feather grass (left).

mix with non-fruiting olive trees. Thueme also planted a small selection of cutting flowers that fit in with the Stones' architectural tastes: calla lilies for the spring, and kangaroo paw and white agapanthus for summer.

More olive trees are planted in a grove near the house. Two dozen trees, in a tight geometric

grid surrounded by a flat plain of mulch, form a minimalist's orchard. This fall, the trees will be ready to be harvested for the first time—an event highly anticipated by the Stones, who are looking forward to producing their own olive oil.

"The garden plays right into the simplicity of the house," says Faye. "It's a very relaxing, restorative space." ■