

Outstanding





Architect: Brendan Riley of Ryan Group Architects
Builder: Jim Morrison Construction
Interior: Annie MacFadyen of Ryan Group Architects
Landscape: Jason Roach of Lasting Landscapes
Year Completed: 2010
Square Feet: 5,076

Mid-Century Magic

Collaborative effort thoughtfully evokes an earlier era

TEXT BY VANGELA WIGHTMAN
PHOTOS BY ETHAN ROHLOFF

On the list of misused and tired words, one will certainly find “synergy.” It is cast about from cocktail parties to client pitch meetings, yet its essence is truly embodied by this year’s Outstanding Home Award winner.

“How you make a decision among several people is to go around the room and everyone contributes,” says homeowner David Haig. “Success is achieved when you end up in a place seen by all participants as better than where you started.” For David and his wife, Colleen, of San Francisco, that achievement is obvious in their home on Lahontan’s 14th fairway.

“David and Colleen didn’t show up in our office with a single image of what they wanted; they had an intellectual expectation,” says architect Brendan Riley of Ryan Group Architects (RGA). “We understood our challenge as designing something sensible, practical and understated.”

Given this deceptively simple directive as a starting point and adding client programming that required distinct zoning, living space appropriately scaled for two people and a love of natural, beautiful materials, the simplicity and function of a 1950s aesthetic became obvious.

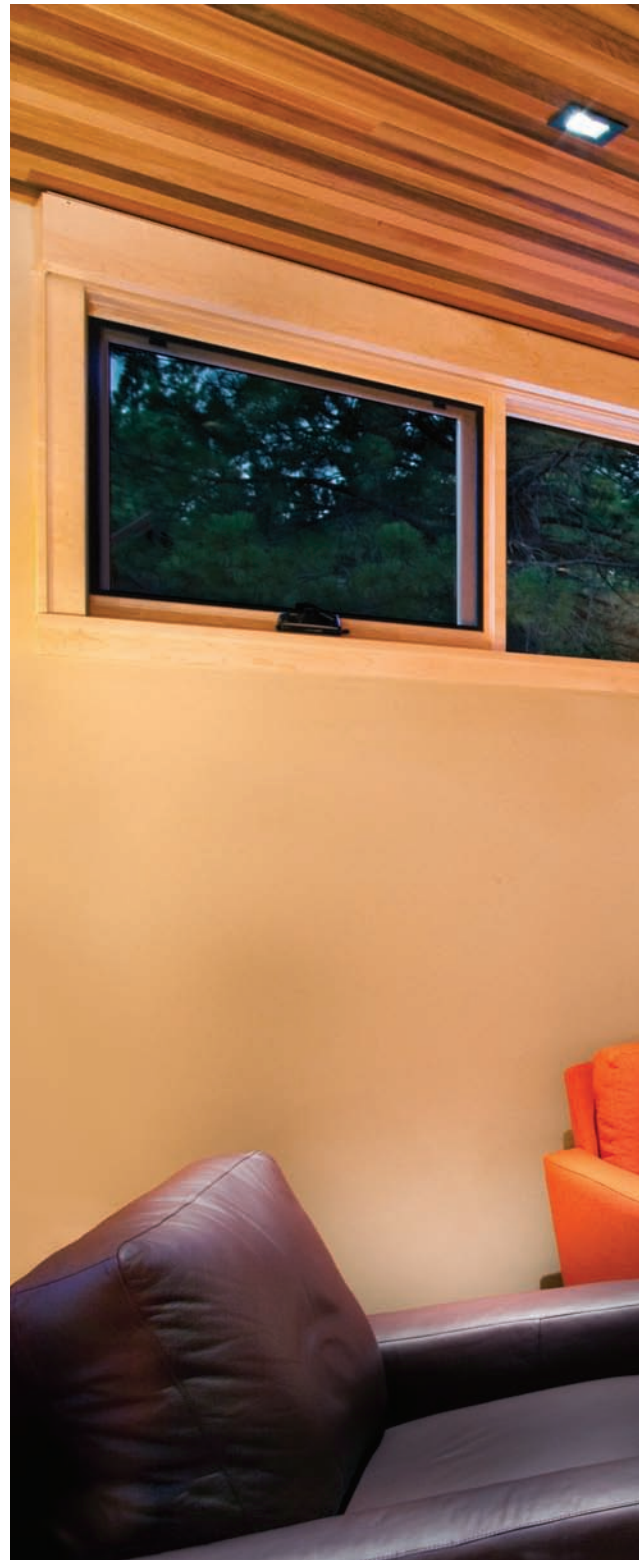
A transitional space that pulls together the interior and exterior, the backyard fire pit area features a bench whose detailing embodies the simple elegance of the home’s design and contextual response to the neighborhood.





The master bedroom boasts an elevated fireplace inside and a private balcony with views of the golf course outside.

“I’ll walk down into the kitchen and just completely forget why I’m in there. There is a preponderance of beauty and also such a user-friendly, comfortable feeling.”
–Colleen Haig



(top left) A broad sheltering form at the front door creates a sense of entry; the vertical form beyond contains the stairway that leads to the master suite. **(bottom left)** “Lighting is so critical to spaces and not everyone appreciates that,” says architect Scott Ryan. “I’m grateful that David and Colleen do.” Multiple-layered lighting enhances the kitchen space when day lighting recedes. **(above)** The den is a more intimate space to unwind, a retreat from the otherwise open plan of the rest of the home.



The exterior is finished cleanly with basalt fieldstone, cedar siding and hot rolled steel panels—all appropriate for its alpine setting—but the house sidesteps being neatly categorized as “mountain modern” with its surprising mid-century style.

“The sensibility that’s represented in mid-century design paralleled what we were hearing from David and Colleen,” says Riley.

The majority of the house sits on one level, reaching out horizontally to capture spectacular views of Lookout Mountain

and the Pacific Crest from almost every space. Except for a few gable forms, rooflines are mostly low-pitched sheds, keeping the structure humble and deferential to the landscape. The entry is instantly warm and inviting, the daisy-shaped wood veneer light fixture in the foyer the first of many whimsical touches. As the entry opens to the living spaces beyond, the soothing ambiance created by the surrounding natural finishes and muted tones are dotted with punctuations of orange.

“The house wanted this warm color palette,” says interior



The living room, located off the main entry and dining room, features a warm, comfortable interior with 1950s-era furnishings.

designer Annie MacFadyen. “Orange as an accent just solidified itself.”

“I am wounded from the orange and brown shag carpet of my youth, and here, Annie comes up with all this orange and brown!” says Colleen with a laugh. “But I’m much more comfortable with it now.”

“This is the best house that Jim Morrison and Ryan Group have done together.” –Scott Ryan

“We didn’t do anything here the way we do it everywhere else, and we didn’t do it ‘modern’ or ‘contemporary,’” says contractor Jim Morrison, who has built several RGA houses and lives in one himself. “We did it RGA’s way (specifically for the Haig residence). We discussed every aspect. We could spend weeks talking about it. I’d say, ‘Scott, don’t sweat the

small stuff!’ but he’s very focused on the details.”

Ryan, principal and RGA founder, who also collaborated on the project, doesn’t hesitate to add, “Why wouldn’t you want to sweat the small stuff? That’s the best part.”

And indeed it is. Attention to detail throughout every single inch of the residence is evident, from the radius-wrapped glass dot tiles on shower seats to the maple window trim that provides a vertical nest for the blinds to the many built-in furnishings. The scale of the entire house hits the perfect note between wide open and warm cocoon.

Colleen will say that RGA was commissioned to stay on the project “through soap dishes,” meaning that the architects and interior designer remained full participants with the contractor and craftsmen through completion, a circumstance that is not necessarily common in residential construction. But it is exactly this longevity of cohesiveness, this uninterrupted harmonizing of multiple voices that is necessary to create something deserving of the word “synergy.” **TQ**