

# LET IT SHINE

Designer Jennifer Robin and architect Timothy Chappelle perfectly blend indoor and outdoor spaces for an active family, creating a resortlike home in Atherton.

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAUL DYER

The Atherton home perfectly blends outdoor and indoor environments.





**THE PROJECT**

An active Atherton couple with an equally active family—three boys and dog—wanted to build a home that would blur the lines between outstanding architecture, interiors and the surrounding landscape. They ultimately would construct a 12,000-square-foot house with six bedrooms, six baths, two powder rooms, a gym, pool and a one-bedroom guesthouse.

**THE TEAM**

To create a seamless and stunning design, the couple chose to work with architect Timothy Chappelle, the principal at Arcanum Architecture (arcanumarchitecture.com), whose work is characterized by a strong indoor-outdoor relationship that connects homeowners to the natural beauty of their surroundings. “We have a unique design process, where we

flesh out design ideas in the beginning through a Socratic dialogue,” says Chappelle. “The process allows the owners to evaluate different design concepts early on and make decisions without looking back.”

For the home’s living spaces, the couple tapped Jennifer Robin of San Anselmo-based Jennifer Robin Interiors (jrobininteriors.com). “I blend traditional elements, modern lines and organic materials,” says Robin. “I like to layer as many natural textures into a space as I can, including character-grade wood, leather, stone, metal and linen. My goal is to reflect my clients’ unique story and for the design to enhance and support their lifestyle. I also think it’s important to sprinkle in some whimsy.”

Robin says she begins the process by simply listening to her clients, while absorbing cues, both verbal and visual, that give her a path to understanding their lifestyle.



Interior designer Jennifer Robin eschewed a formal living room in favor of a space that’s at once casual and elegant. Opposite page: A reclaimed-wood coffee table was crafted by Statsky Design.



An intimate dining space is grounded in natural materials and neutral hues. Opposite page: The kitchen features rift-sawn cabinetry with customized oxidized walnut cabinets.

**THE GOALS**

Robin had a simple goal for this project, which was designed during the pandemic: function first. “This busy family needed a spacious and durable home that supported working, studying, playing, entertaining and athletic activities,” she says. “In this uncertain time, my goal aesthetically was to create a sanctuary for the family.” This often meant Robin employed custom finishes, while organic and natural materials were blended together for a spalike experience.

From an architectural standpoint, Chappelle had a similar approach; he wanted to create a calming environment that connected the homeowners to the natural beauty of Northern California. “We had an amazing property to work with—it has mature oak trees covering the site,” he says. “Our goal was to break up the architecture as much as possible and weave it into the landscape to allow the homeowners to take full advantage of the natural surroundings. The architecture celebrates that beauty with multiple corridor views and courtyard areas that connect the interior and exterior spaces.”

**THE CHALLENGES**

“The unusual shape of the property created some privacy issues, so we used the shape of the buildings to protect the inner arrival courtyard from outsiders,” says Chappelle. “This adds to the mystery of the house.”

The architect adds that the material selection was incredibly important for this project, and the entire team worked together to get every detail right. Primary materials for the home are stone veneer from the Napa Valley, resawn wood siding and plaster. “We wanted to complement the beauty of the natural surroundings. The materials for the buildings were chosen for their simplicity and harmony with the natural materials already on the site—helping to ensure that the architecture would mature and blend with the site as the materials age,” says Chappelle, who notes his favorite design detail is the entry courtyard, with its beautiful indoor-outdoor transition.

**LIVING ROOM**

As the homeowners and their guests enter the house, this is the first room they encounter, so Robin says she wanted to create a distinct vibe for the entire property in this space. “I



didn’t want the formal living room—I wanted it to be inclusive and inviting for the entire family and their guests,” she says. “The scale and proportion of every piece needed to be perfect to ensure the high-volume space felt inviting and complemented the architecture.”

Standout pieces include an oversize custom reclaimed wood coffee table crafted by Statsky Design ([statskydesign.com](http://statskydesign.com)), a natural allo rug by Stark ([starkcarpet.com](http://starkcarpet.com)), ottomans by Formations ([formationsusa.com](http://formationsusa.com)), an oak side table by Gregorius Pineo ([gregoriuspineo.com](http://gregoriuspineo.com)) and a custom sofa with a metal table lamp by Elan Atelier ([elanatelier.com](http://elanatelier.com)). Robin’s team also strategically concealed a television behind pocketing doors in the maple and mercury glass cabinetry; they also added art by Tom Lieber from Dolby Chadwick Gallery ([dolbychadwickgallery.com](http://dolbychadwickgallery.com)).

**KITCHEN**

To avoid this space from feeling too modern or cold, Robin’s team layered in a range of textural materials. “We blended wire-brushed rift-sawn cabinetry with customized oxidized walnut cabinets,” she says. “A custom zinc hood sits atop a striated marble backsplash from Ann Sacks ([annsacks.com](http://annsacks.com)) and custom colored concrete counters. Fluted glass pendants from Tom Kirk Lighting ([tomkirk.com](http://tomkirk.com)) and leather swivel stools from Berman Rosetti ([bermanrosetti.com](http://bermanrosetti.com)) add further textural interest.”

For more intimate family meals, Chappelle created a breakfast or lunch dining area, and Robin chose a custom-designed reclaimed wood dining table by Statsky Design, a leather Christian Liaigre ([studioliaigre.com](http://studioliaigre.com)) bench and antique French oak chairs.



Much like the rest of the home, the owner's suite connects to the outdoors with natural tones—a bed from Jeff Martin Joinery completes the look.

#### DINING ROOM

Robin knew the family wanted warmth and intimacy in the space, so she designed two large light fixtures, blending a metal grid with rope and linen drum shades. Christian Liaigre chairs surround a table by Tod Von Mertens (todvon.com), with head chairs from Powell and Bonnell (powellandbonnell.com). "The bar grounds the space, and we repeated the oxidized maple cabinetry here with a fluted glass inset into metal upper cabinets and mercury glass backsplash tile," says Robin.

#### OWNER'S SUITE

The goal for this area paralleled the rest of the home: a connection to the landscape. Plaster walls and a cedar ceiling continued in the suite, layered with an opal glass light fixture from McEwen Lighting Studio (mcewenlighting.com) and a soft alpaca rug from Erden (erdenusa.com).

"A Jeff Martin Joinery (jeffmartinjoinery.ca) bed grounds the space with customized reading lights built into its oxidized maple frame," says Robin. "Bedside mirrors reflect the exterior views and reflect light from the bedside lamps by Dmitriy & Co (dmitriyco.com). The primary bath continues the blending of organic materials and was designed to feel like a spa retreat and celebrate its connection to a private garden. Everything is textural, warm and relaxed."

Stunning Beverley Blue quartzite slabs from Integrated Resources (marblecompany.com) grace the vanity and tub-surround. The rustic glazed shower tile is from Ann Sacks with a customized glass mosaic from Waterworks (waterworks.com) featured at the bench wall. Finishing touches include fixtures from Kallista (kallista.com), sconces from Urban Electric (urbanelectric.com) and a chandelier from Ochre (ochre.net).



Architect Timothy Chappelle incorporated many opportunities for flora to blend seamlessly into the home. Opposite page: Light streams in the en suite bathroom.



**THE OUTCOME**

As she assesses the work her team put into every room—coupled with Chappelle’s impeccable design—Robin says the home has become a self-contained modern-family sanctuary. “The home’s design has something for everyone, with spaces to accommodate each member of the family’s needs, including work, entertaining, outdoor sports or alone-relaxing time,” she says.

The design and architecture team also recently heard from one of the homeowners, whose praise checks off all of the boxes for achieving perfect and impactful design: “Just over a year living in our home, it’s hard to choose our favorite spaces, but one thing is for sure: Every place in our home feels well used and fits our family’s needs so well. Our dining spaces bring us together for family meals and hosting friends, whether indoors or out. Our living and family rooms are cozy for watching sports, movies or playing games together. Our offices are appreciated workplaces—and sometimes places to escape—that are an expression of [our] personalities, layered with a sense of calm and peace. The entire home feels like a reflection of our family, where our three growing boys and beloved dog feel completely comfortable in a warm, relaxed and inviting environment.” ◦

Floor-to-ceiling windows characterize the design's foundation.



## HOME DETAILS

**Home Type**  
Single Family

**Location**  
Acherton

**Interior Designer**  
Jennifer Robin Interiors  
[jrobininteriors.com](http://jrobininteriors.com)

**Architect**  
Timothy Chappelle,  
Arcanum Architecture  
[arcanumarchitecture.com](http://arcanumarchitecture.com)

**Builder**  
DJ Balling Construction  
[djballing.com](http://djballing.com)

**Landscape Architect**  
Ground Studio  
Landscape Architecture  
[groundstudio.com](http://groundstudio.com)

## RESOURCES

**Statsky Design**  
Custom coffee table,  
living room  
Dining table, kitchen  
[statskydesign.com](http://statskydesign.com)

**Stark**  
Allo rug, living room  
[starkcarpet.com](http://starkcarpet.com)

**Formations**  
Ottomans, living room  
[formations.com](http://formations.com)

**Gregorius Pineo**  
Oak side table, living room  
[gregoriuspino.com](http://gregoriuspino.com)

**Elan Atelier**  
Custom sofa, table lamp,  
living room  
[elanatelier.com](http://elanatelier.com)

**Ann Sacks**  
Backsplash, kitchen  
[annsacks.com](http://annsacks.com)

**Tom Kirk Lighting**  
Pendants, kitchen  
[tomkirk.com](http://tomkirk.com)

**Berman Rosetti**  
Stools, kitchen  
[bermanrosetti.com](http://bermanrosetti.com)

**Christian Liaigre**  
Chairs, dining room  
[studioliaigre.com](http://studioliaigre.com)

**Tod Von Mertens**  
Table, dining room  
[todvon.com](http://todvon.com)

**Powell and Bonnell**  
Head chairs, dining room  
[powellandbonnell.com](http://powellandbonnell.com)

**McEwen Lighting Studio**  
Light fixture, owner's suite  
[mcewenlighting.com](http://mcewenlighting.com)

**Erden**  
Alpaca rug, owner's suite  
[erdenusa.com](http://erdenusa.com)

**Jeff Martin Joinery**  
Bed, owner's suite  
[jeffmartinjoinery.ca](http://jeffmartinjoinery.ca)