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Wine Country Living

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VINEYARDS AND HOMES OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
AND THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST



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Wine Country Living presents more than thirty new and recent projects that represent the vanguard of architects creating innovative spaces for living in the winemaking regions of Northern California and the Pacific Northwest. Here is a portrait of the most forward-looking spaces for vineyard living, all perfectly suited to twenty-first-century lifestyles.

This collection of houses and wineries spans the wine-making regions of Napa and Sonoma counties, Carmel, Oregon, Washington state, and British Columbia, making it the ultimate tour of vineyard living in breathtaking locales. Across the region, architects are creating innovative houses for country living, reimagining ways to engage the dramatic landscapes that play host to North America's best vineyards.

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TELESIS 2.0

OWNERS: Anonymous

ARCHITECTS: Jack Hillmer (original structure);
Katherine Lambert, MAP Architects

If you did not grow up in California you might look at this house, Telesis 2.0, and think of it as a quintessentially modern, West Coast summer house of the 1950s: the sleek entrance, the parking area just under wide-branched leafy oaks, a swimming pool in the center of a red concrete patio, and a nearby 54-paneled floor-to-ceiling wall of glass nearly enclosing the patio. The roof is folded and delicate—reassuringly asymmetrical, imaginative, necessary—and held aloft with a redwood-posted clerestory running the length of the front half of the house. It is pure California design.

Modernist architecture emerged throughout the forests and valleys of the Napa region during the 1950s at a pace barely noticed in its own time. California buzzed and burst with creativity, with the modernist urge finding expression in well-designed and solidly built weekend getaways. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of projects were taking shape on seemingly every one-acre parcel, at the end of every dirt road that turned off a country road and progressed up or down through the trees. These hidden treasures often were designed by young architects for young families. Over time they became rentals but then were virtually forgotten, falling into disrepair. Architecture critic Alan Hess writes passionately about the delayed and late discovery of the work of those fine California

RIGHT: This light and airy house is a testament to the spirit of optimism and exuberance that mirrored its moment in California history.





architects whose work went unknown or unrecognized for three or four decades or more. The best examples of these architectural treasures of the era of mid-century design, their best work, eventually began being “discovered” or “uncovered,” one at a time.

Telesis 2.0 is one of those rare discoveries. Designed by Jack Hillmer in 1953, the house epitomizes sleek through the use of his preferred materials: stainless steel, glass, concrete, and old-growth redwood, which he employed within his small oeuvre of only ten finished buildings. The residence is as light and airy as it is a testament to the spirit of optimism and exuberance that mirrored that moment of California’s collective history.

When Katherine Lambert and Christiane Robbins, partners in MAP Architects, considered the purchase of the house in 2011,

the costs of restoration were a factor. The partners were aware of the historical importance of Hillmer’s work. It was only after a consultation with a wood restoration expert who had experience working on the restoration of a Hillmer residence that Lambert and Robbins felt confident enough to begin the project. Lambert and Robbins considered every detail, large and small, and decided that the challenges involved would be worth it in the end. The team then set out to create a more livable space in the house; reinforce the structure; restore the unfinished, old-growth, clear-heart redwood; spend \$15,000 to glaze and adapt the glass for the reduction of heat loss; and reconfigure the landscape design and pool with irrigation systems. MAP Architects conserved the original footprint while redesigning and expanding the entry,

OPPOSITE: The residence is constructed of only four materials: unfinished old-growth clear-heart redwood, Basalite blocks and pavers, floor-to-ceiling glass panels, and stainless steel.

RIGHT: A quiet hollow and duck pond.

BELOW: The front entry is under an undulating folded-plate copper roof. Clerestory windows flow above the entrance side of the perimeter walls.





kitchen, and bath spaces and revitalizing the interior circulation to align more closely with twenty-first-century sensibilities.

During the evolution of this classic Hillmer design, the partners were aiming for landmark status with the town of Napa. The architects worked closely with Napa officials to ensure that the significant, detailed design decisions and evolutionary steps they took would not only bring the Jack Hillmer house into the twenty-first century but also get it recognized as a cultural landmark, the first post-WWII residence to be honored as such.

LEFT: The interior is based upon an integrated, expansive counter-clockwise plan spiraling outward from a central tower anchored by a custom-designed, Rumford-style fireplace.

BELOW: The single-level structure features a custom black-concrete floor.





ABOVE: The spiral floor plan moves through the leisure area, around the central fireplace.

OPPOSITE: A leisure reading spot in the quiet stretch of the spiral.

