

# A Tranquil-Yet-Dramatic Lake Tahoe Home

This mountain retreat feels completely open to nature with endless mountain and valley views

By Irene Rawlings



Photos by Gibeon Photography

The homeowners had a clear vision—a sculptural and serene home that would be a peaceful retreat as well as a hub for entertaining. They visualized a series of integrated indoor-outdoor spaces for socializing and quiet spots for alone time. They also wanted a single-story home so they would feel more closely connected to nature and to the wildlife.

“We hit the jackpot,” they say about their 2-acre lot in Martis Camp, a private Lake Tahoe community with private ski access to Northstar California Resort and an acclaimed Tom Fazio golf course. “One of the ‘flatter’ lots was available ... at a higher elevation and backing up to national forest land, giving us a 2,200-acre backyard.”

After they secured the lot, they looked for an architect and a designer who would understand their vision for a clean and simple but design-forward home.

Brendan Riley of Truckee, California-based **Ryan Group** was selected as the lead architect for the 5,300-square-foot home, which features a living room with wrap-around terraces and two master suites. Two 15-foot pocket doors on each side of the living room (dubbed the “semi-great room” by the homeowners) completely open the room to huge views over the Martis Valley and the Carson Range in the distance. “The home spreads itself horizontally in the spirit of the quintessentially western ranch house,” Riley says.



The spacious dining room shares a distinctive double-sided fireplace with the living room and opens onto a covered lounge-grill area. Overhead heating and an outdoor fireplace make it an all-season space.

One of the more remarkable features of the home is the western red cedar ceiling—clear finished inside and with overhangs that continue outside. “We mimicked a series of shed roofs ... also part and parcel of the western vernacular ... to create a sense of motion in the roofline as seen from the outside, and the experience of interconnected volume from the inside,” Riley says.

The homeowners' color choices were inspired by watching a coyote running in the woods—sunshine glinting off its lustrous fur coat. They began referring to their “coyote palette” and the name stuck. “Layers of gray, brown, rust and different shades of white,” says Sarah Jones, owner of Truckee- and Montana-based [Sarah Jones Interior Design](#). “The colors of the interior were also influenced by the surrounding landscape—granite, tree trunks and the earth.” Starting with this, Jones layered fabrics and materials for texture and punctuated the neutrals with bold pops of vibrant vermilion throughout the house.

Because the public rooms are all interconnected, a consistency of materials, lighting fixtures and colors was essential. Even the wood in the kitchen was stained a shade of gray. “Creating a gray stain on wood and making it look nice is quite challenging,” says Jones. It took several tries to get the flooring, cabinets and trim the right color, she adds.

The homeowners had fun with the home's more whimsical elements. “As we move through our home, we are amused and delighted by ‘mini-treats,’” they say, referring to artwork like the Fish Ladder. Lahonton trout, native to Lake Tahoe, playfully climb up from the mudroom to the main-floor rooms. Hand-blown mercury glass wall sculptures hang in the master bedroom. “The room has windows on three sides, so the silver shines in the sunlight,” say the homeowners.

When asked about their favorite room the homeowners agree on their enjoyment of their outdoor spaces, relaying this story: At dusk on the evening they moved in, as they were enjoying a glass of wine by the fire pit, they were visited by some serious wildlife. A mother black bear and her cubs came out of the national forest, looked around and lumbered back into the timber. “Well ... we wanted to be close to wildlife,” they say, smiling.



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The living room, dining room and kitchen all flow into each other. A centrally located fireplace offers a 280-degree sit-on hearth. Large windows (with hidden roller shades) bring the outdoors in. Western red cedar ceilings run throughout the home.



In the kitchen, a custom-forged steel range hood runs horizontally, as does the grain in all the woodwork. "We enjoyed incorporating elements that reinforce our home's horizontality," say the homeowners.



An **OCHRE** chandelier hangs above the large onyx stone bowl on the smartly scaled dining table.



In the sitting room, a vermilion throw adds a pop of color and a cupboard conceals a Murphy bed.





In the stairway, fish swimming upstream provide a whimsical touch.



The home's master suite has forest views.



Travertine slabs surrounding the bathtub run horizontally. One of the challenges was getting the prominently veined travertine to line up correctly.