

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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## Designing with Color

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Architect Peter Gluck and his son, Thomas, designed this boldly contemporary retreat in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains for a businessman and his family. The residence was decorated by Jorge Rosso Architecture/Interiors; Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects and Planners refined the grounds. For details see Sources.

AN ARRESTING NORTH CAROLINA AERIE BY ARCHITECTURE  
FIRM GLUCK+ RADIATES WARM MODERNIST COOL EVEN AS  
IT HARMONIZES BEAUTIFULLY WITH ITS MOUNTAIN SETTING

TEXT BY MAYER RUS PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT FRANCES PRODUCED BY ELIZABETH SVERBEYEFF BYRON STYLED BY HOWARD CHRISTIAN





**E**very architect commissioned to design a mountain home that's sympathetic to its setting faces the same challenge: how to come to terms with the peak itself—the rock, the elevation, the climate, the slope, the vista. Despite the inevitable urge to triumph over topography by building at the summit, embracing a more modest accommodation can sometimes be a better path to achieving domestic bliss in the clouds.

Consider the extraordinary house conceived by the New York-based architecture firm Gluck+ in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains. Situated well below the highest point on the

property, at the edge of a sunken meadow ringed by trees and close to a precipice with a hundred-mile view to the bright lights of Charlotte, the residence strikes an elegant balance between exposure and protection, between high-altitude splendor and grounded repose. All of which was accomplished while adhering to environmental standards rigorous enough to earn the project a LEED Silver certification.

The client, a business executive familiar with the inventive work of Gluck+ through houses designed for his friends, engaged firm founder Peter Gluck and his son, principal Thomas Gluck, to create a welcoming yet unconventional retreat for three



The house is perched at the edge of a mountain meadow and offers breathtaking, verdant views.



generations of his far-flung family. “He wanted something modern and comfortable, a place that would be truly special,” Peter says. “We came up with a contemporary interpretation of the rocks-and-logs aesthetic in which the complexity and richness of the spaces respond directly to the landscape.”

To minimize the 14,000-square-foot house’s visual impact, they devised it as a series of low, linked volumes arranged side by side along the ridgeline. The main pavilion contains an open living room, dining area, and kitchen on the entrance level, with the master suite, pool, home theater, and gym one floor down. Carving the latter spaces out of the slope below gives

the appearance, from the meadow side, of a single story. Two other quasi-independent structures—which the Glucks call cabins—offer three bedrooms apiece for those times when the client’s entire clan is assembled.

The home’s primary organizing feature, both conceptually and physically, is a stacked-white-oak wall that stretches through the interiors and into the landscape and echoes the dense form and staccato rhythms of massive lumber piles set out to dry—a common sight in a region where logging and furnituremaking have long been mainstays. This spine constitutes one side of an enclosed corridor that connects the guest pavilions to the main building. →





The hall was designed to resemble an outdoor passage, with cyclopean pavers of natural-cleft bluestone, multiple skylights, thickets of ivy planted along portions of the oak wall, and floor-to-ceiling expanses of glass that look onto the meadow.

“We were mesmerized by images of stacked lumber, but translating the idea into a finished product required a great deal of skill,” Thomas explains. To replicate the effect, the Glucks collaborated with regional carpenters, sawmill workers, and framers to fashion a complex formation consisting of thousands of pieces of oak. “We were able to create something of genuine quality that’s tied to the community,” he says.

On the excavated lower level of the house, a zigzagged wall of Appalachian stone delineates the variety of recreation spaces as well as the capacious master bath. Like its oak counterpart upstairs, the rugged stone plane extends outdoors, further underscoring the essential bond between structure and terrain. That desire to bring the dwelling—and the family—closer to nature is also expressed in the Glucks’ eco-conscious design decisions, which secured the residence’s LEED certification. A 15-kilowatt wind turbine, geothermal wells for heating and cooling, green roofs, and extensive solar louvers all conspire to give the vacation home a zero carbon footprint.





The living area is furnished with sectional sofas custom designed by Jorge Rosso and upholstered in a Brunshwig & Fils fabric; the carpet is by Stephanie Odegard Collection. **Opposite, from top:** An indoor pool is situated on the structure's lower level, which is faced in local Appalachian stone. The house's signature element—a stacked-white-oak wall that was inspired by milled wood drying in the sun—lines one side of the entrance hall and extends along the corridor to the guest quarters.

The decor, meanwhile, defers to the formidably imaginative building as well as to the site. “We underfurnished most of the house because the amazing views are the real stars of the show,” says Miami-based interior designer Jorge Rosso. “But we added enough soft touches to serve as a foil to the powerful architecture and make the place feel comfortable.” Mossy greens, earthy neutrals, and deep grays that nod to the surrounding landscape are enlivened by punchy scarlet notes, including the front door. Also providing visual interest are various site-specific works of art, like the group of 150 mixed-media paintings in petri dishes by Klari Reis that are displayed in a hall near the entrance.

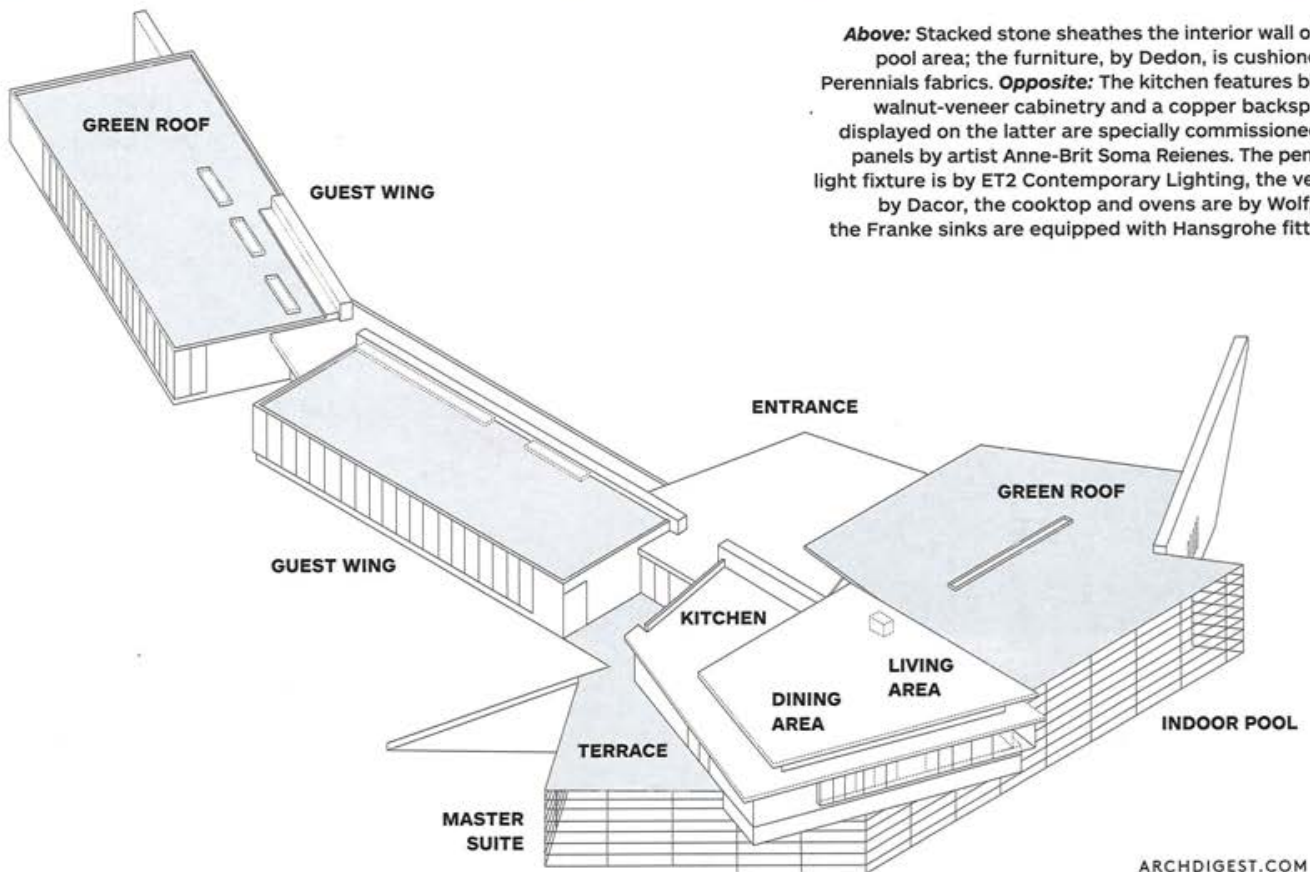
For the Glucks, the success of the North Carolina project lies in the purposeful, and intensely meaningful, rapprochement between nature and architecture. Eye-catching details such as a cantilevered window seat that appears to hover against the glass walls of the great room—a “structural tour de force,” according to Peter—heighten the exhilaration that can be found in mountain living, while sensitive planning allowed the architects to preserve the beauty of the existing meadow.

“That was our goal—to optimize this incredible site for different experiences and different groupings of visitors,” Thomas says. “The key was to embrace the mountain rather than fight it.” □









**Above:** Stacked stone sheathes the interior wall of the pool area; the furniture, by Dedon, is cushioned in Perennials fabrics. **Opposite:** The kitchen features black-walnut-veneer cabinetry and a copper backsplash; displayed on the latter are specially commissioned tile panels by artist Anne-Brit Soma Reienes. The pendant light fixture is by ET2 Contemporary Lighting, the vent is by Dacor, the cooktop and ovens are by Wolf, and the Franke sinks are equipped with Hansgrohe fittings.



THE HOUSE, SAYS PETER GLUCK, IS  
"A CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION  
OF THE ROCKS-AND-LOGS AESTHETIC."



**Above:** The master bedroom contains a Frank Gehry Wiggle chair and ottoman for Vitra. **Opposite:** Local stone gives the master bath a rugged ambience; the glass-enclosed shower has a Dornbracht showerhead.



