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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / RODERICK WYLLIE, SURFACEDESIGN INC.



# AMONG FRIENDS

IN NAPA VALLEY, A DESIGN TEAM TRANSFORMS A MODERN FARMHOUSE INTO A PLACE WHERE MEMORIES ARE MADE.

WRITTEN BY JENNIFER SERGENT / PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MILLMAN



**T**here's a deep connection you make while spending an entire weekend with your best friends—and their spouses and children—that you can't achieve during a mere afternoon barbecue. With that mindset, a Bay Area couple decided to build a Napa Valley retreat for solidifying friendships and making memories. "It's a place they can share with others," says designer Penny Shawback, who previously worked with the owners (parents of two young girls) on several other projects. To achieve this relationship-building goal, Shawback assembled a top-notch design team that included members of her own family as well as father-and-son architects Stan Field and Jess Field.

Shawback's son and business partner, Damon Savoia, helped the clients find the land, which had good karma from the start. As the wife says, "It's surrounded by trees that have been here for hundreds of years, and when you set foot on the property, you instantly feel grounded and relaxed." Yet at first, the built environment was not as remarkable. The only structure on the property was an old barn that, while beyond repair, was filled with inspiration. It was the muse for a new barn built for guests and entertaining, and that aesthetic continued to the main home, which was created as a modern version of a traditional farmhouse. "The design was born out of extending the heritage of the site," says Jess Field who, with his father, designed the compound within one of the valley's oldest zinfandel vineyards. "It's hard to talk about the house without talking about the land. We worked rigorously to eliminate boundaries and make the buildings feel like they are part of the place."

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OF HEART.”

—PENNY SHAWBACK

The Fields coordinated with landscape architect Roderick Wylie and his team so the home's enclosed breezeways and strategically placed windows would perfectly frame the landscape. "There was a lot of thought given to how close we could get the buildings to the vineyards, and how they would open up to the landscape. We wanted the residents to feel like they are sitting in the vineyards, even when they are sitting inside," says Wylie, who also designed an infinity pool and the surrounding terraces. The water anchors the main patio and, since it captures images of the surrounding mountains on its surface, it is a reflecting pool as well as a place for recreation.

Building the house and barn required a small army of craftspeople. "It is some of the most amazing carpentry I've ever seen, and I've been doing this for 30-plus years. It's flawless," says general contractor Paul Niles, whose firm collaborated with Spearhead Inc. in British Columbia to mill all the structural beams and columns.

Meanwhile, for the color palette, Shawback looked to the wife's personal style to select materials and finishes for the house and barn. "She prefers blues, grays and shades of lavender," explains the designer, who worked with the entire team to make sure those hues flow inside and out—from the wood siding to the kitchen cabinetry; from the stone terrace to the concrete floors; and from the flower beds to the furnishings.

Shawback also enlisted top artisans to fabricate the furniture, such as the master bed and the barn's huge central dining table. Savoia and his wife, Julie, who is also a designer, collaborated with Will Kavish and Nicole Cornell in Brooklyn to create a cascading light fixture in the barn, which is meant to echo the nighttime constellations that glow over the valley. The team also designed pendants over the dining table in the main house with the help of San Francisco artist Windy Chien, who tied and draped the knotted rope that anchors the blown-glass globes. "My favorite homes are the ones where everyone involved has such talent," Shawback notes.

After three weeks of installing the decor, the designers hosted a Champagne-lunch reveal for the clients, collaborators and their families. "It's a nice way to celebrate turning a house over to the owners—and it's very emotional. There are happy tears!" Shawback says. The residence came together just in time for the couple to launch their own party a day later, hosting dozens of friends and family members for the Fourth of July holiday. The memories made that weekend include poolside lounging, shared meals and nighttime dance parties in the barn. As the wife says, "There were so many moments when I was seeing our vision become a reality." ■

In a Napa Valley compound by designer Penny Shawback and architects Jess Field and Stan Field, a metal-and-blown-glass chandelier in the barn is a key element. Created by Longhouse, a lighting company cofounded by Damon Savola, the large piece took three days to install. Tribes Interiors of Idaho used reclaimed, whitewashed timber to fabricate the table and benches. The artwork is by Nicole Challabornet through Gall Severn Gallery in Ketchikan, Idaho.



In the living room, a painting by Michael van Ofen echoes the horse motif portrayed in the barn. A Moroccan wool-and-jute rug by Stark grounds the space along with twin Verellen sofas dressed in a Dedar Milano wool velvet. The coffee table is a section of a cottonwood tree trunk on steel legs, fabricated by Tribes Interiors. The tall candlesticks are from Hudson Grace.





Custom pendants by Longhouse—in collaboration with artist Windy Chien—hang over a dining table designed by Shawback and fabricated by Jon Ede of Chajo. The benches and chairs are by Verellen. In the kitchen, cabinetry by Phoenix Woodworks surrounds an Ann Sacks tile backsplash. The precast-concrete countertops are by Concreteworks.







**Above:** Glass breezeways separating the home's wings diminish the barrier between inside and out. "You get the experience of walking through the vineyards to get between spaces," Jess Field says. The steel-framed doors and windows are by Jada.

**Left:** The architects designed the house to have uninterrupted views from a lowering, centuries-old valley oak, across some of the region's oldest zinfandel vineyards and out to the barn and mountain ridge beyond.



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—JESS FIELD



**This page:** "The conversation between the native and the agricultural is something we got really excited about and wanted to exaggerate," says landscape architect Roderick Wylie of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century olive tree he planted at the vineyard's edge. The table is from Artefact Design & Salvage, and the stools were fabricated by Noah Elias.

**Opposite:** A wide, welcoming porch overlooks the sweeping front yard. A custom finish by Jitner Painting covers the home's siding.

Ann Sacks tile lines the master bathroom, whose shower area opens to the vineyards. The Knotty Bubbles pendant by Lindsey Adelman hangs over the soaking tub; the fittings are all by Waterworks. The custom white-oak flooring is by First, Last & Always.





Timber beams fabricated by Spearhead, Inc. in British Columbia crown the master bedroom, where Shawback designed the bed made by Tribes Interiors with reclaimed barnwood and upholstered with a Great Plains fabric. The lamps are from The Home Index, and the painting is by Lisa Bartleson.





An infinity pool, designed by Wylie and built by Blue Revolution, reflects the vineyard-lined path toward the barn. The stone terrace contains rows of fragrant thyme, and Wylie chose flowering border perennials that reflect the interior color palette. Shawback designed the chaise lounges through Noah Elias.