

AD

summer  
bliss

dreamy  
beach houses  
in cabo,  
east hampton,  
santa cruz  
+  
martha's vineyard

international  
sensation  
J BALVIN finds  
his rhythm  
in colombia



SPECIAL the AD100 at home  
top creatives reflect on a changing world



PLANEFURNITURE LOUNGE  
CHAIRS SIT ON A DECK  
OVERLOOKING MONTEREY  
BAY. CERAMIC STOOLS  
BY SUNJA PARK FOR  
COMMUNE. LANDSCAPE  
DESIGN BY GROUND STUDIO.  
R.J.L. CONSTRUCTION WAS  
THE BUILDER. FOR DETAILS  
SEE RESOURCES.

# POINT BREAK

Feldman Architecture and  
Commune Design collaborate on a  
soulful Santa Cruz beach house  
for a family with surfing in their blood

TEXT BY **MAYER RUS** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON**







ABOVE THE BOARD ROOM OPENS ONTO AN INTERIOR COURTYARD. BELOW THE KITCHEN, WHICH EXTENDS OUT TO THE DECK FOR ALFRESCO COOKING, HAS A WOLF RANGE, VOLA FIXTURES, SOAPSTONE COUNTERS, AND BDDW STOOLS.



# At the heart of this tale

about a serene, sophisticated family getaway in Santa Cruz, California, there's a tree. Actually, a kind of tree—the Monterey cypress, a species native to the state's central and northern coast. First, and most obviously, there's the lovely specimen that presides over the home's clifftop site, hovering above a stretch of world-class surf breaks and scenic beaches. And then there are the various cypresses that were marshaled into service by Feldman Architecture and AD100 firm Commune Design to construct the exterior and interior of the house. The story of how that wood was handled—from the way it was harvested to the myriad details of its fabrication—speaks to a profound reverence, shared by the homeowners and designers alike, for the rare beauty of the California landscape and its spiritual resonance.

"Monterey cypress is about as local and native as it gets. In terms of materiality and vibe, the wood set the tone for the entire project," says Jonathan Feldman, founder of the San Francisco-based architecture firm commissioned to create a weekend retreat for a Silicon Valley couple with two young daughters and long-standing ties to Santa Cruz, where the husband was raised and learned to surf. "The idea was to design something understated yet strong and refined, something that felt authentically of the land," Feldman continues.

To that end, the cypress timbers were salvaged from naturally fallen trees by renowned California wood whisperer Evan Shively of Arborica, who collaborated closely with Feldman, his fellow partner in charge Christopher Kurrle, and Commune principal Roman Alonso. "Evan had a vision for using the wood holistically, from the really rough stuff to the really polished stuff, so we tried to minimize waste in every way possible. It became a very elaborate exercise in analytics, which dictated the module of the exterior and the size of the slats we used," Kurrle explains. "Evan is truly a poet of wood," he adds emphatically.

The honey-hued cypress utilized on the exterior was left untreated, allowing it to silver over time, while the color of the clear-coated interior wood will continue to intensify and warm as the years pass. "Respect for natural materials and finishes is a through line of this project," Alonso notes. "There are soapstone counters, brass fixtures, and copper elements that will all change in appearance, especially in the salt air. They underscore the fact that this is living architecture, design with a soul, and it will grow and evolve."

Conceptually, the overarching conceit adopted by the design team was, in Alonso's words, "a professor who surfs—something free-spirited yet intellectual, casual but fully considered." Following that brief, a surf hut, outfitted with board storage and a wet bar for entertaining, balances the garage volume along the residence's street-facing frontage. An interior courtyard separates those twin structures from the main house, which has guest quarters, a family room, and an open sweep of living, dining, and kitchen spaces looking out to the ocean on the first floor, with the master suite and children's bedroom perched like a crow's nest on the level above.

"There's a sense of decompression when you walk onto the property. You can feel your blood pressure drop. That's followed by a swell of inspiration—to surf, make music, cook, and generally commune with nature—when you move through the courtyard, into the house, and out onto the deck overlooking the water," says the distaff homeowner.

**THE AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY** of the interior appointments—happy hippie meets craft connoisseur—falls squarely within Commune's sweet spot. The mix orchestrated by Alonso and his team encompasses signature pieces by established California masters on the order of Sam Maloof, Arthur Espenet Carpenter, Stan Bitters, and Greta Magnusson Grossman, set alongside works by a younger generation of West Coast talents, including Tanya Aguiñiga, Doug McCollough, and Estudio Persona. For a dash of continental élan, that Cali-centric roster is accented with soigné additions such as Gerrit Rietveld Utrecht chairs sheathed in Hermès wool, Josef Frank textiles, and lighting by Paavo Tynell and Ignazio Gardella.

Like the furnishings, the art program, assembled with the help of adviser and curator Allison Harding, exudes fresh, cool California vibes, with a particular emphasis on female artists as well as work influenced by 1960s and '70s West Coast skate and surf culture. One of the highlights of the collection is a textile piece by Kira Dominguez Hultgren, hanging above the bed in the master suite, which incorporates fragments of the dress that the wife was wearing when she first met her future spouse and the shirt her husband wore at their wedding.

But beyond any piece of art or pedigreed object, the true spirit of the house resides in the Monterey cypress that lines its walls, floors, and cabinetry. "It feels like we're living inside a fine piece of furniture, crafted by artisans at the top of their field. I love to lie on the couch and just let my eye trace all the details," the husband raves. His wife has the final word: "We don't think about the house as a place. It's an experience. It's peace. It feeds our souls." ▀



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THE LIVING ROOM IS OUTFITTED WITH GERRIT RIETVELD CHAIRS BY CASSINA COVERED IN HERMÈS WOOL, A VINCENT VAN DUYSSEN SOFA FOR ARFLEX, A CUSTOM ALMA ALLEN COCKTAIL TABLE, A VINTAGE PAAVO TYNELL FLOOR LAMP, AND A TANYA AGUINIGA BRASS FIRE SCREEN.





LEFT A NICHE IN THE ENTRY FOYER IS LINED IN A JOSEF FRANK FABRIC FOR SVENSKT TENN. ABOVE VIEW OF MONTEREY BAY. CHAISE LONGUES BY CONCRETEWORKS. BELOW THE INTERIOR COURTYARD FEATURES A CUSTOM TILE FIREPLACE BY STAN BITTERS, AN OUTDOOR SOFA BY TEN10, AND LOUNGE CHAIRS BY GARZA MARFA.



ABOVE A TEXTILE SCULPTURE BY KIRA DOMINGUEZ HULTGREN HANGS IN THE MASTER BEDROOM. KALEIDOSCOPE RUG BY COMMUNE FOR CHRISTOPHER FARR. LEFT A GUEST BATH IS SHEATHED IN COMMUNE TILE; FIXTURES BY VOLA.



KIRA DOMINGUEZ HULTGREN