

PHOENIX H&G

HOME AND GARDEN





TOP OF THE WORLD

A vacation home
in New Mexico takes
advantage of its
mountain surroundings.


BY BEN IKENSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY WENDY MCEAHERN

NESTLED INTO a slope in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the second home of Charles "Fish" Greenfield and his husband, Thom Maciula, is located just a few miles north of downtown Santa Fe, New Mexico, near the world-renowned Santa Fe Opera House.

The couple, who hail from Dallas, Texas, had also been considering homes in New Orleans, Louisiana, but ultimately, "we were more drawn to the high desert for the air, the blue sky, and the amazing hiking opportunities," says Fish.

With the recent completion of their 3,200-square-foot, three-bedroom home, they have plenty of that now. In fact, the views from their new place appear more like the kind only attained by an arduous and very steep hike. "The house is up so high, it almost feels like you can touch the mountains from the deck facing all this beauty," says Thom.

A showcase of sleek lines and neutral tones that highlights some of the owners' modern art collection, the classic contemporary



A floor-to-ceiling pocketing glass wall opens the home's great room to a large patio with picture-perfect valley views of Santa Fe's Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The open flow makes the house extremely adaptable for guests and entertaining, while low-profile furnishings in soft hues and crisp white walls allow the interiors to shine without distracting from the scenery.



"This project has the best views of any house we have ever worked on."

—PAUL ROCHFORD, interior designer



home in the Monte Sereno subdivision is set against a backdrop of extraordinary panoramic vistas. Facing east, the home is flooded with soft light in the morning; at sunset, it is bathed in the dramatic play of colors along with the surrounding mountains, awash in sublime hues of gold, coral, pink, crimson and magenta.

"Obviously, the clients wanted to ensure that the house would capitalize on the amazing scenery," says custom homebuilder Kurt Faust, who has been serving the Santa Fe community for 26 years.

One of the initial challenges, says Faust, was working on such a steep lot, which required initial excavation to create a flat pad as well as the construction of two heavy-duty hand-cut stone retaining walls on either side of the pad against the slope. Once this was accomplished, Faust and his team were able to build a very well-insulated and energy-efficient structure that would accommodate the clients' desire for a modern open floor plan with plenty of natural light and enough wall space to showcase their art pieces.

OPPOSITE A large steel-framed pivot entry door flanked by oversized glass sidelights provides guests with a view through the great room to the breathtaking views of the mountains beyond. Vigas and wooden beams bring a touch of rustic New Mexico to the modern home. **ABOVE** In the sitting room, iconic pieces, such as a Noguchi coffee table and an Arne Jacobsen egg chair, mix effortlessly with more traditional furnishings, such as a simple gray sofa. The white walls offer a clean palette for the many pieces of art showcased throughout the house.

"The mistake with a place like this would be to overdo it with interior design features."

—MICHAEL VIOLANTE, interior designer



The kitchen is a study in contemporary minimalism. Builder Kurt Faust added rift oak cabinetry for a warm, natural feel that maintains the clean-lined aesthetics. A Carrara marble waterfall-edge island—the same stone is also found on the backsplash—complements the black soapstone countertops without weighing down the room. The large dining table that seats eight is made from walnut sourced from five continents.





To make the interiors of their commanding perch as breathtaking as the views, Fish and Thom turned to interior designers Michael Violante and Paul Rochford after seeing their work in a local magazine. “Michael and Paul have this wonderful ability to mix casual and contemporary very seamlessly,” says Fish.

For their part, Violante and Rochford, who are both also avid modern art enthusiasts, were “very excited to curate the clients’ art collection in a way that it had never been configured before,” says Rochford. “It gave us all a fresh view of the art, and it became apparent where we needed to add to it.”

“The art definitely gave us a color direction, and we referred to it in the fabrics, furniture and rugs we brought in,” adds Violante.

In keeping with the understated contemporary vibe, the interior designers selected a very pure white for all the walls, which helps accentuate the artwork without distracting the eye from the views. “We really felt that a minimalist kind of approach was in keeping with the home and served as a working, respectful interaction with the magnificence of the surroundings,” explains Rochford.

The furnishings are sleek and modernistic. Some are classic icons, such as the Noguchi table and Arne Jacobsen chair in the sitting room; others were custom made, like the distinctive night tables in the master bedroom, among other pieces throughout the home.

For the most part, though, “we worked with what they brought and introduced other elements that we knew had common denominators that would tie it all together,” says Rochford. “For example, we took design cues for many rooms from the rugs, which helped determine textures and fabrics and color schemes throughout those rooms.” All of the rugs were locally sourced.

OPPOSITE The bathroom features the same marble counters and rift oak cabinets as seen in the kitchen, creating a unifying feel throughout the home. A stand-alone tub is framed by large picture windows that overlook the mountains, reflected in the mirror, for a relaxing vacationlike bathing experience. **ABOVE** The minimalist lines and neutral hues of the home’s exterior allow its breathtaking mountain setting to take center stage. As guests approach the large glass entry doors, they’re greeted with views through the house to the valleys and hillsides in the distance.





Many of the wood finishes that Faust included, such as the rift oak kitchen cabinetry, bring a warm, natural and inviting feel into the home without detracting from the clean, contemporary aesthetics. Outside, handcrafted vigas and portales instill local flavor to the structure, and rooftop solar panels harvest energy from the abundant sunshine.

One of the standout features is the enormous window wall that fosters connectivity between the great room and a large patio that stretches into the stunning panorama, where the earth appears to simply drop away.

"Truth be told," says Violante, "this was such a great project because the home really speaks for itself. Every room has an incredible view. The mistake with a place like this would be to overdo it with interior design features. Our job with this home was simply to complement what is already there."

For the homeowners, their mountaintop retreat is a place to get away from the stresses of their everyday jobs and lives. And waking up to the never-ending views of the New Mexico landscape provides the sense of peace and relaxation they were seeking.

Says Fish, "It really feels like we're perched on top of the world." □



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE

Minimalist furnishings, built-in storage and plush custom linens in bright white combine to create a master bedroom that is serene and comfortable. A small stairway leads to the rest of the home, further emphasizing the room's privacy and escapism vibe. The lines of the books in the painting above the bed are reflected in the striped area rug.

