

THE POOL HOUSE



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SERENITY AT HOME IS A NECESSITY when living in the often overstimulating technology bustle in Silicon Valley. Architect Chad Dewitt of Bay Area firm Hwang Dewitt knew just what it would take to develop an indoor aquatic oasis for his clients who craved a spa-like escape from their busy work lives. Inspired by his wife’s ongoing work travel throughout Asia, Dewitt coupled innovative materials with contemporary European design while maintaining the laid-back style native to Northern California. “We try not to forget the modernist bohemia of 1970s Northern California,” says Dewitt. “All those redwood hot tubs!”

Always considering the long-term environmental effects, the team clad the exterior with a rainscreen system that allows the wood to expand and contract with seasonal change. This process generates increased airflow, forcing the wood to dry quickly and to evade growth of mold and mildew. “We’ve seen these systems firsthand, in buildings from sunny Portugal to rainy England,” says Dewitt. “So it made sense, especially in the shaded side yard.” The slatted, naturally aging cedar evokes the surrounding environment while also serving as a shield from the neighbors.

Wood continues inside with the use of Douglas fir marine plywood, which mimics custom handmade cabinetry but can withstand the humid conditions. This is craftsmanship at its best: Each plywood joint is mitered and hosts inset lighting, all-weather windows, and pocket sliding doors. Skylights were placed strategically above the Swim Spa Endless Pool to capture the northward daylight. “This project began as a design-build proposal to build an addition for an indoor swim-spa and exercise room for a ranch-style house,” says Dewitt. “It’s unexpected, yet luxurious and understated at the same time.” — Lindsey Shook

