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THE NEW VINTAGE

BY MIKHAEL ROMAIN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MILLMAN

Taylor Lombardo Architects and interior designer Martha Angus combined clean-lined spaces with handcrafted furnishings for a family home in St. Helena and Silver Oak Cellars in Oakville.



Kary Duncan discovered the concrete-topped table and handmade dinnerware at The Gardener; she then had ceramicist Lisa Neimeth make plates to synchronize with the shades of orange and green in the St. Helena home.



When David Duncan's real estate agent called to say he'd found the perfect house in St. Helena, David dropped what he was doing and got on a plane. It was May 2002, and David and his wife, Kary, were moving their family of four (including a 3-year-old son and 18-month-old daughter) from Colorado to California. David would be taking over as president of Silver Oak Cellars—a family business since 1972—in less than three months, and having already looked at nearly 60 homes from Calistoga to Napa, he was ready to act quickly. The next morning, all it took was a few steps through the front door to confirm his agent's appraisal. "I called Kary and said, 'I found the house we're going to live in,'" says David. "I hadn't even gone upstairs or into the master bedroom, but I saw the view and the backyard and I knew this would be a great spot to raise our kids." Within three hours, the Duncans made an offer that was accepted.

Though they loved the location and the sprawling backyard, the country-cottage style of the house—stucco walls and mismatched wood floors—wasn't a fit for their contemporary aesthetic. "We lean toward a more modern, clean-lined style. But we wanted to keep the house's Wine Country vernacular, so we went for a happy medium of contemporary country," says Kary. By the time they moved into their newly remodeled



For the family room, Angus found a vintage Knoll bench upholstered in green Hermès leather, which sits beneath a painting passed down from David's stepmother. A rustic table and Eames plywood chairs make up the kids' craft corner.



home nine months later, the family had expanded with the arrival of a new baby.

The Duncans were no strangers to renovation. Having met as undergrads at Notre Dame, they moved around the country for graduate school (Kary is a physician and David has a business degree), remodeling houses from Denver to New Haven. This time around, the couple contacted interior designer Thomas Bartlett—who introduced them to Maurice Lombardo of San Francisco’s Taylor Lombardo Architects. “They wanted something their family could grow into—a casual family atmosphere, nothing too formal, just a place where they could entertain,” says Lombardo.

The Duncans’ laid-back aesthetic is communicated right from the front door. Concrete floors lead to the living area, where Lombardo brought natural light to the center of the house by popping up the roofline with a shed dormer and adding tall windows in the stairwell. A greater connection to the backyard—which features a garden, pool, trampoline and swing set—was created with new French doors at the back of the house. On the patio, a covered dining area with a wood-burning pizza oven and a long table is perfectly suited for dinner parties and birthday celebrations. “Maybe it’s the Colorado part of me, but I love the openness of our house,” says David, who grew up in Denver. “The backyard is my favorite.”

Though the remodel was completed quickly, the haste of the move and David’s new position left little time for redecorating. The family’s furniture, transferred from their former home, was in need of an update, so Kary met with interior designer Martha Angus. “Kary is definitely the tastemaker in the family; I came in to help her find some



FOR TAYLOR LOMBARDO'S
8 WINE COUNTRY FAVORITES:
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ABOVE: Marble countertops in the U-shaped kitchen exemplify the Duncans’ contemporary country aesthetic. LEFT: Angus had a custom dining room table made to match the 1970s Michael Taylor chairs. BELOW: French doors off the living room lead to the patio.



Kary, who likes abstract paintings and sculptures, discovered the artwork above the fireplace at a gallery in Palm Springs. She found the sculpture on the table, which she calls "The Three Amigos," in Mexico.





“We lean toward a more modern, clean-lined style, but we wanted to keep the house’s Wine Country vernacular.”

unique pieces,” says Angus, who tracked down a set of 1970s Michael Taylor Klismos dining chairs and had a custom rectangular farmhouse table made to match. The Duncans collaborated with Angus on the furnishings in most of the rooms, but art selection was Kary’s territory. The artwork throughout the home is a mix of work by Napa artists and photography collected from the couple’s travels. “I have an affinity for sculpture and abstract figures,” says Kary, who found the painting in the entryway at an artists’ warehouse in Paris.

In 2006, the Duncans were finally settled in their St. Helena home when a phone call one fateful February morning launched yet another renovation story. David describes the events that preceded the fire that burned down the Oakville winery as “the perfect storm”: It was a windy morning, and a Dumpster filled with cold fireplace ashes and wet grass clippings began to smolder, fueled by piles of empty cardboard boxes. “When an 80-year-old dry-wood building catches on fire, it burns fast,” says David, whose father, Ray, bought the dilapidated dairy farm in 1972, rebuilding the winery facilities in 1981 but keeping the original barn. “It was a really difficult day. The Oakville winery is the heart and soul of Silver Oak.



ABOVE: Chai, the Duncans’ miniature Schnauzer, naps on the sunny window seat in the master bedroom. LEFT: Interior designer Laura Rombauer created the kids’ office from extra attic space. BELOW: Concrete floors in the entrance lead to the living room and sunlight streams in through the new windows in the stairwell.





“Our main design parameter was that the new space pay tribute to the old Silver Oak.”

It’s where we’ve always been and where we plan to stay.”

After the initial devastation of the fire cleared, the Duncans discovered the silver lining—they could rebuild the facility with the knowledge culled from 35 years of winemaking. “Our main design parameter was that the new space pay tribute to the old Silver Oak,” says David. Though they considered submissions from other firms, the Duncans needed a design team they could trust, so they again hired Taylor Lombardo Architects and Martha Angus. “We weren’t trying to make a grand departure from the old winery,” says David. “We are proud of who we are.”

Efficiency was the first order of business for architect Tom Taylor. The winery’s original layout had been cobbled together: The hospitality building was connected to the old dairy barn, which was used for barrel storage, and the wine-production facilities were adjacent under a pavilion. Additionally, the buildings were on a floodplain, and had flooded three times in 35 years. “Reorganizing the site allowed us to have more open space and orient each space toward the views,” says Taylor, who raised the winery five feet above the floodplain and moved an iconic water tower 12 feet to a central location. An important element for the redesign was connecting the hospitality building—which houses the tasting room, history gallery and conference rooms—with the production facility. The two are now connected by a west-facing courtyard. “We wanted the design to reiterate that this is a working winery,

The Duncans wanted to retain the essence of the original Oakville winery while adding modern amenities. The hospitality building features hand-quarried limestone reclaimed from an 1893 flour mill and 1,464 solar panels that provide clean energy.





Exposed steel and glass walls in the refrigerated wine-storage room bring a modern feel to the tasting room. Two stained glass windows were salvaged from the original winery and two more were made, by the same Napa Valley artist, for the new space.



grounded in the earth,” says David. “It’s about agriculture.”

The materials used throughout reflect the winery’s connection to its history as well as its future. The hospitality building’s timber-frame roof and hand-quarried limestone walls, reclaimed from a flour mill in Kansas, articulate a timeless look. Inside, exposed steel along the stairway and glass walls in the conference room bring a modern feel. In the production building, galvanized metal panels along the walls and ceiling and dark-tinted concrete floors give the space an elegant industrial look. Built with a 50-year plan in mind, the spaces in the 65,712-square-foot winery allow plenty of room for future expansion.

Angus came to the project in the later stages, again teaming up with Kary to find unique furniture for the space. In the waiting area, four Le Corbusier club chairs upholstered in paprika-colored leather are arranged with side tables fashioned from old





ABOVE: The glass-box conference room and the waiting area appear to be floating one floor above the tasting room. RIGHT: In the 1970s, Silver Oak Cellars was one of the first wineries to use American oak wood for its barrels instead of the standard French oak—it's now a hallmark of the brand. OPPOSITE: The bar in the tasting room is made of oak reclaimed from an 1820 barn; artist Boris Khechoyan carved the Silver Oak logo that hangs behind the bar.



docks, while a 17th-century Spanish sacristy chest serves as a sideboard. “David said he wanted pure and honest design, nothing too trendy. He essentially said, ‘Give me design that will last 30 years,’” says Angus. “It was a tall order. I tried to think back about what’s been acceptable over the last 30 years and what will remain good looking and timeless going forward, and that’s how we approached the project.”

Angus commissioned sculptor Harry Siter to build both the round coffee tables and the wood conference tables upstairs in the hospitality building. The glass-walled space is a representation of the Duncans’ design edict throughout both their home and the winery—a clean-lined blend of modern materials with handcrafted furnishings and an emphasis on open and inviting spaces. “The home and winery have wide open spaces and lots of natural light,” says David. “It’s not anything fancy or over the top. It’s what we’re comfortable with.” ■