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HILL COUNTRY MODERN RANCH HOUSE, CENTRAL TEXAS

TEAM

- Chris Davenport, AIA - Principal Architect, J Christopher Architecture
- Builder - Carl Layne/Dean Blaine, Voltaire, LLC
- Structural Engineer - Brian Johnson, Backbeat Structural Design
- Interior Designer - Bradley Alford, G Bradley Alford Designs
- Lighting Design - Deborah Frankhouser, Four Point Lighting Design
- Photographer: Chase Daniel

PROJECT SPECS

- New Construction on Rough Site
- LOCATION: Texas Hill Country
- BEDROOMS: 4
- BATHS: 4 1/2
- SQUARE FOOTAGE: 8,251
- 1,700 acre ranch in central Texas hill country (full of limestone/bedrock)
- Project size: 8,251 square feet (new construction)
- Total construction cost: \$7.3 million





PROJECT OVERVIEW

Hidden away on a large acreage near Horseshoe Bay, TX, this ranch home floats atop a rocky cliff overlooking rushing creek waters below. Porch dwellers dangle over the cliff edge on cantilevered decks extending as much as 15 feet. Also visible from the deck side perch, a large lap pool appears to cut through the guest wing. A long rectilinear basin, it gracefully connects the entry court to the rear terrace.

While the owner desired the simplistic lines and layout of a modern aesthetic, they also wanted to make sure the home felt warm, intimate, and inviting. Several strategies were employed to accomplish this goal. Thoughtfully proportioned cozy spaces offset larger rooms such as the living area. Natural native materials warm most of the walls. A multitude of windows keep spaces bright, welcoming, and connected to the surrounding landscape. Exterior wood beams and stone penetrate the glass facades to become part of the interior rooms. The result is a soothing light filled space that feels joined to the place where it resides.

Another unique feature of the ranch is the ample master retreat. Accessed via a narrow glass lined bridge, it occupies a dedicated wing of the home away from the bustle of company and entertaining. Exceeding normal amenities this fully realized master wing contains a private office, exercise room, indoor/outdoor shower, coffee bar, and private terrace. It can be a home within a home should the owner desire.

Not to be overlooked, functionality was also critical to the project's success. A detached lodge building and series of "offloading" rooms provide spaces where returning hunters and fisherman can unpack, clean, and share stories of the day. These spaces are both social and utilitarian. So is the home as a whole. It is intentionally informal, designed for close family and friends. There is no "front door". Just a meandering path of covered walkways leading to a compelling destination.



BUILDING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- A challenge with any Texas site is solar heat gain.
- Large overhangs, deep porches, and careful placement of windows assured that superheated late day western sun would not make its way to the interior.
- Large, covered porches provide shaded outdoor rooms that would otherwise be rendered unusable.
- Finally ranch projects often offer utility challenges. Thankfully, the site had electricity due to the existing home, but water was trucked in or well supplied.
- To mitigate an increasing need the home was designed to hide large rainwater collection tanks under its main floor foundation, making use of the leftover space from elevating the slab.
- The capacity holds enough water to withstand a Texas summer drought, which come all too often.



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SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Materials and assemblies were selected to be durable and require little maintenance (ie: Louisiana Cypress for wood siding)
- Veneer stone was sourced on site and milled for the home
- Rainscreen details allow the exterior to breath out unwanted moisture
- A roof-based rainwater collection system with 3 large tanks holding over 100,000 gallons
- Rainwater is treated on site and used for both potable and not potable needs
- Exterior mechanicals are in a shaded crawlspace improving efficiency and providing easy access
- Concrete walled crawlspaces received a “rat” slab to keep free of invasive bugs and animals
- Spray foam and poly iso insulation keep the interior airtight and efficient
- Large roof overhangs coupled with deliberate window placement mitigate heat gain
- Abundant daylighting via clerestory and floor to ceiling windows
- Lighting protection system on roof to safeguard electrical components
- Concrete bunker for weathering Texas tornados and storms
- Base of home is entirely steel and concrete with poured concrete floors at the main level
- Water drinking turf limited to a small area in the front court with
- Most of the property’s landscaping left in its natural state
- New plantings are Texas native and drought resistant



FINAL PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



- Simplistic lines and layout of a modern aesthetic that felt warm, intimate, and inviting.
- The home is intentionally informal, designed for close family and friends.
- There is no “front door”. Just a meandering path of covered walkways leading to a compelling destination.
- Not to be overlooked, functionality was also critical to the project’s success.
- A detached lodge building and series of “offloading” rooms provide spaces where returning hunters and fisherman can unpack, clean, and share stories of the day. These spaces are both social and utilitarian.
- Thoughtfully proportioned cozy spaces offset larger rooms such as the living area.
- Natural native materials warm most of the walls.
- Exterior wood beams and stone penetrate the glass facades to become part of the interior rooms. The result is a soothing light filled space that feels joined to the place where it resides.
- A multitude of windows keep spaces bright, welcoming, and connected to the surrounding landscape.
- Unique ample master retreat -- accessed via a narrow glass lined bridge, it occupies a dedicated wing of the home away from the bustle of company and entertaining containing a private office, exercise room, indoor/outdoor shower, coffee bar, and private terrace.
- The home floats atop a rocky cliff overlooking rushing creek waters below.
- Porch dwellers dangle over the cliff edge on cantilevered decks extending as much as 15 feet.
- Also visible from the deck side perch, a large lap pool appears to cut through the guest wing.
- A long rectilinear basin gracefully connects the entry court to the rear terrace.

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