

IMAGE SUMMARY

Project name & location: **Blue Oak Hills, Sonoma County, CA**

Category 1: Design - Residential Garden Design

ASLA, Southern California Chapter, 2016 Quality of Life Design Awards



1. This project employs a deeply sensitive approach to site planning and a bold yet subtle contemporary design language to create a residential landscape that is profoundly of the land. The project carved out modest yet powerful place for people within the greater landscape of oak woodland.



2. Set within a native oak woodland, this project rejuvenated a degraded ecosystem while shaping spaces for the clients to experience the dramatic poetry of the surrounding landscape. The groundwater pool pictured here is one of the minimal yet bold design gestures that brings the larger landscape into the residential landscape.



3. This subtle but bold design celebrates the unique character of the region, including its plant communities, rolling topography, and golden soil. By grading the slope into three terraces for outdoor living, the design carves out a striking place for people within the vast woodland.



4. Shadows of the mature blue oak trees animate the planar surfaces of the house. Water flows through the rammed earth runnel and spills over the end of the wall at the entry steps; the sound and movement of the water invites the visitor to enter.



5. The runnel reflects the oaks beyond and creates a powerful entry threshold. The use of rammed earth celebrates the local stone, creating a warm, earthy color palette that is woven throughout the design, unifying the residential and the native landscapes.



6. The design creates diverse places for outdoor living throughout the day and season; these comfortable spaces invite the clients to experience changing qualities of light, color, warmth or coolness, and sound. This seating area is sunken to provide protection from wind.



7. Soft rectangles of grasses punctuate the pool terrace, bringing the vibrancy and movement of plants into the frame of the hardscape. The minimally graded terraces open over the landscape of rolling hills; the technique of borrowed scenery allows limited interventions to shape dramatic spaces.



8. Simple, elegant geometries at the various terraces frame the wild landscape; these designed elements amplify the unstructured beauty of the surroundings.



9. The slice bench is situated in the perennial garden, creating a place for the clients and their visitors to quietly observe the animation of birds and butterflies and the natural rhythms of the larger landscape. The entry gate can be seen further down the slope.



10. The bocce court and ipe benches are situated on one of the lower terraces. The use of native plants and local stone create strong associations both visually and ecologically between the residential landscape and the rolling woodland hills beyond, connecting the clients with the restorative power of nature.