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Outdoor Living

SLEEK HOMES, STYLISH SPACES

+

COOL POOLS AND
SIZZLING GRILLS!



MIN EDITORIAL
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AWARDS 2013



A photograph of a modern, minimalist house at night. The house has a white facade and a large, open-plan interior visible through a large glass door. The interior is warmly lit, showing a living area with a sofa and a dining table. In the foreground, there is a swimming pool with a wooden deck and a stone border. The sky is dark blue, and the overall atmosphere is sophisticated and contemporary.

TWO'S COMPANY

A LEADING ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER
DUO CREATE SPECTACULAR RESULTS IN A
CONTEMPORARY OCEAN HOME IN CALIFORNIA

words by **Maryann Hammers**

PHOTOGRAPH BY TOBY PONNAY



Living On The Ledge
Perched on a bluff in Laguna Beach, Calif., the breathtaking Rockledge is designed by architect Horst Noppenberger and his wife, the designer Alanna Noppenberger.





Horst and Arianna Noppenberger like to tell the story of the moment they met. The year was 1990, and Horst, a young architect, had recently opened a studio in Laguna Beach, Calif., hanging his shingle with but a single client. That client decided to host a beach party to thank the workers involved in building the new home.

Arianna, having just graduated from the Istituto Europeo di Design in Milan, Italy, was touring California with her roommate. She happened to be in Laguna Beach, and through a friend of a friend, got invited to the party. Horst offered to show her around the construction site.

At the outset, the two shared a keen interest in contemporary design and a passion for minimalist, modern architecture. They would have had a lot to talk about – except she couldn't speak English, and he didn't speak Italian.

No matter. "We ended up just sitting on the beach, watching the sun go down, and feeling a connection grow between us," says Horst. Within a couple of years, they were married.

Once Horst and Arianna bonded their personal lives, it made sense to partner professionally, too. Arianna immediately joined her husband's business, Horst Architects, where she perfected her English. She began building a portfolio of her own clients and branched out on her own in 2002, launching Aria Design, specializing in high-end interiors.

The couple's complementary careers and aesthetics continued to dovetail and intersect, and they still work together on various projects – he as a cutting-edge architect known for his modernist buildings, she as a highly regarded interior designer with contemporary European flair.

"We both are passionate about modernism, but Arianna is more

practical and grounded, whereas I'm more intuitive," says Horst. "She understands architecture and thinks like an architect, so she looks at the big picture, but she specializes in the decorative aspects of design, whereas I'm more of a minimalist.

"Materials, colors and textures are her realm while I do the conceptualizing. That way, we avoid having two different egos going in two different directions, which we often see happening between architects and designers."

Horst says he has always been drawn to the "timelessness, stillness and visual lightness" of modernist architecture. "Modernism resonates with Southern California's climate by breaking down walls and barriers and integrating inside with out," he says. He achieves this integration with techniques such as organizing internal spaces around outdoor courtyards, extending floors from inside to out, using large expanses of glass, and installing door systems that bi-fold or pocket.

The result? "Buildings that sit comfortably in their natural landscapes without dominating them," he says. "A simple, uncomplicated space works at the most fundamental level, without the architectural gymnastics," he adds, describing his over-arching design ethos as one of "simplicity and restraint."

Arianna's Italian upbringing and classical European education influence everything from color palettes to her instinctive understanding of forms, shapes and proportions. "The roots of the past are always within me, but I have broken free from the old traditions," she says. "In Milan, they provoked us to create new designs, not to repeat history."

And so she wholeheartedly embraces what she calls "easy California living" and incorporates the outdoor lifestyle in her designs. "People here are so casual," she says. "They walk in and out of their homes with coffee mugs, barefoot, munching on sandwiches. People here live outdoors with pools and hot tubs, and in the evening they sit by beautiful fire pits."

Her aim, she says, is to ensure that her work "does justice to California's amazing climate, natural light, beautiful sun and gorgeous beaches."

One of Horst and Arianna's latest joint projects, Rockledge, incorporates the contemporary vision and integration of indoor/outdoor spaces for which the Noppenbergers are known.

This eye-catching residence, which sits atop a rocky bluff in Laguna Beach overlooking the Pacific Ocean, was originally built 25 years ago, and was due for a major remodel. The new Denver-based owners wanted a relaxed family beach house where they could enjoy the views, the sunshine, and time with family and friends.

Coincidentally, Rockledge also represents Horst

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— ROCKLEDGE ARCHITECT HORST NOPPENBERGER

nostalgically coming full circle, as the oceanfront home was originally designed by his first mentor, the renowned modernist architect Fred Briggs. "After graduating from architect school, I worked for Fred for six years and Rockledge was one of my first projects," Horst says.

His goal on the Rockledge remodel was to "respect the architecture of the home, stripped down to its honest essentials." Part of the challenge, he adds, was to understand what was extraneous and could be removed, such as the heavy rectangular columns at the entrance.

"We wanted the entry experience to be one of lightness rather than heavy columns," he says. "And we got rid of a lot of stucco which we replaced with natural stone and wood to bring warmth to the contemporary architecture."

Color and material blend interior and exterior spaces. Limestone floors in the family room extend out to the deck. Movable screens with slatted vertical shutters add privacy while filtering bright sunlight, and walkways and interconnected courtyards are planted with native California succulents.

"We alternate large areas of transparency with solid stone walls that become pockets for slider windows," Horst says. "The main idea was to bring in a greater connection between the home and its coastal setting with the natural forces of sun, wind and time."

"We also opened up rooms to take advantage of every inch of ocean view," adds Arianna. "Every room has the presence of the ocean. You don't know if you are in or out, everything is open. There are no boundaries."

She described what she calls "outdoor living rooms," where the owners can relax on a sectional sofa facing the ocean on two sides, sunbathe by a cool blue pool, or sit and chat by a long linear fire pit that lights up the terrace. "It's beautiful at night under the moon with the background of crashing waves," she adds. "It's a magical space." horst-architects.com and ariades.com ◻

Inside Out: Rockledge's indoor and outdoor living spaces flow seamlessly, offering what Arianna Noppenberger calls "easy California living."

Design Duo: Horst and Arianna Noppenberger bring complementary design aesthetics to the clean and contemporary lines of Rockledge.

