



ROBERT BAUMANN

SONOMA MEETS SPAIN

ARCHITECT **ROBERT BAUMANN** completely reprograms the layout of a residence and infuses it with Spanish architectural elements on a site rich with oak trees and a vineyard overlooking the wine country town of Sonoma, California. The result is a well-integrated house with modern comforts that appears to have graced the property for years. Text by Vanessa Kogevinas | Photography by David Wakely

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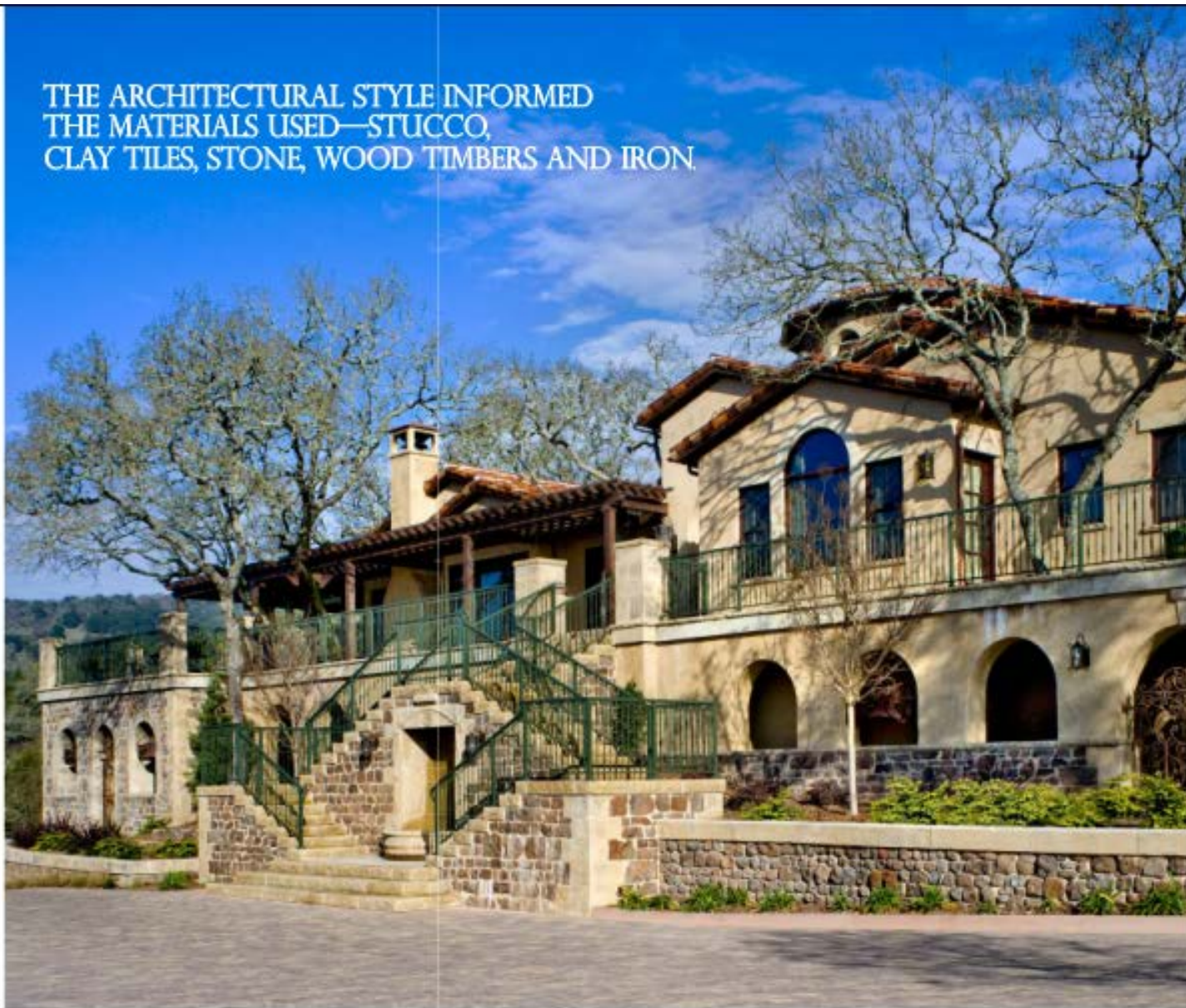


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he architecture of Southern Spain and the Andalusia region perfectly complement the Northern California landscape," says architect **Robert Baumann**, "and the clients have an affinity for it so that was our starting point." The chosen aesthetic informed the materials used—namely stucco, clay tiles, stone, wood timbers and iron, which are used with care to balance each other and veritably recreate an architectural style. "We produced a little compound—a main house, a guest house, a wood working shop, a gardening shed and a utility shed—that looks like it could have been there for the past few hundred years, yet has the conveniences and comforts of modern life," says Baumann. To take full advantage of the location the main residence boasts extensive and multiple terraces and an infinity pool allows for unobstructed views of Sonoma below. "I really like how all the buildings work together," says the architect.

The entrance to the house is a tall stone rotunda with a beamed peak—accessed by an impressive split staircase leading up from the drive—off of which a brick barrel vaulted hallway with skylights leads to a living room, dining room and kitchen. "We were looking for casual, formal living, nothing over the top," notes the resident, "Something that we could feel comfortable in and that blended in with the architectural style of the house."

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To achieve the complementary, livable interiors that the clients desired they brought on interior designers Caterina Spies-Reece of Glen Ellen, California, to do the living spaces and Barbara Johnson of Sonoma to do the kitchen and work on finishes. "It was a very large and synergistic group that came together to create a residence that the owners could feel proud of," says Spies-Reece. Adds Johnson, "We balanced out each other's strengths and weaknesses."

In order to bring informed authenticity to the interiors they sourced and blended one-of-a-kind pieces—like a custom chandelier and a Mahogany console in the living room. Fabrics with botanical prints such as Robert Allen on the living room sofa and Thibaut chosen for bedroom draperies, references the outdoors and offers a casual, natural elegance.

The clients shared the architect's desire and commitment to taking the project in a green direction using existing, natural and easily accessible materials wherever possible. Integrating a new building, yet exhibiting a timelessness is not an easy feat. However, in Sonoma, that was achieved thanks to a commitment by a huge team that deftly blended architecture, interior design, landscaping, craftsmanship and modern comforts—with a significant contribution to sustainability.




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