



Residential Design

# Country chic living

When moving to Texas to be closer to family, a couple desired their new home to combine contemporary style with its natural habitat, including the use of regional limestone

by Jennifer Richinelli



Regional limestone links the interior design of a recently built home in the Cordillera Ranch subdivision in Boerne TX, to its outdoor exterior and natural surroundings.

Photos by ©dror baldinger



Various architectural elements throughout the 7,200-square-foot living space, including several floor-to-ceiling fireplaces, feature Sisterdale limestone – conjuring a rustic yet elegant ambience.

With dramatic views of the Texas Hill Country as a backdrop, the design of a new private residence set on a 10-acre site in the Cordillera Ranch subdivision in Boerne TX, was influenced by its natural setting from the initial planning phase. The home was built by a couple who was originally from Portland, OR, and recently purchased a house in La Quinta, CA. The homeowners turned to Craig McMahon Architects to assist them in realizing their vision of a new California-inspired Texas Hill Country ranch home.

The expansive property offers unobstructed views to the west and is nestled above a small canyon. The homeowners moved to Texas to be closer to their grown children and grandchildren, and saw a recently completed residential project of the architectural firm that is located just north of Cordillera Ranch. They were impressed with the home design so much that they sought out the architect for their new residence.

## THE DESIGN

A meandering pathway drive leads to the transparent main entry — revealing the main courtyard beyond, which was designed by Austin, TX-based Ten Eyck Landscape Architects. Finding the best areas of the site toward the rear of the property and close to a deep ravine, the home's design looked to create a hidden experience — one that unfolds as guests drive along the driveway to find the home tucked into the hillside.

The courtyard frames the wings of the home, permitting for mile-long views to the Texas Hill Country to the west. The two-bedroom guest wing — connected to the entry — includes a family room and private office. Moreover, the primary living area



The kitchen has more of a contemporary vibe with walls clad in white subway tiles complemented by a beautiful stone countertop made of Taj Mahal quartzite.

## Elemental, unique, timeless Jura Limestone, Shell Limestone and Sandstone

engages the main courtyard with its sweeping main patio. The private side of the home allows for the library/master suite — complete with a bridge to the three-sided glass enclosed master wing.

In addition to the 7,200-square-foot main home, a 1,100-square-foot guest house includes two bedrooms/baths for guests and is directly adjacent to the barn, housing the utility/working elements of the site. Linear limestone that was chosen for the exterior walls complements smooth troweled stucco, pewter-colored metal siding and stained wood eaves — all pulling from the German influences of construction of the previous century. The modern twist of 10 tall floor-to-ceiling glass doors and windows blend the inside and outside of the home design. According to Craig McMahon Architects, the modern aesthetic and feel of the home required a great deal of discussion with the community's Home Owners Association to illustrate how the blended Hill Country and contemporary look would marry within the subdivision.

### THE STONE

Sisterdale limestone, supplied by I-10 Building Materials in San Antonio, TX, was selected for the residential design. "Learning from Lake/Flato while I was there, the historical German designed and constructed homes involved solid limestone block walls (no lumber—all stone) and locally quarried," explained architect Craig McMahon, AIA. "The exterior/interior stone look has a particular history here, so we have emulated that look and feel into conventional construction systems by building stone inside and out. This look, with large transparent windows, allows for a seamless connection from inside to out — offering a striking blend of old and new.



Photo: www.rehfeld.fotografie.de

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The house blends modern touches with country charm to create a California-inspired Texan ranch.

"Sisterdale limestone is used on most of our houses," McMahon went on to say. "The natural stone was cut into a more modern look — rather than an ashlar pattern — to a more linear one where the edges are sawn cut to create linear/horizontal bands of stone. This line of stone tracks level around the entire home from outside to inside. It took quite a lot of careful attention from the stone mason to insure that the joint lines tracked. As we have worked with a particular stone mason on many of our projects, we were able to continue with Israel Espinosa, an amazing craftsman, for this project."

The architect pointed out that the natural stone flows into the house at specific areas such as the entry, main living space and the bridge to the master suite. "This look typically happens at the areas of large glass openings so you can see the outside blending into the interior," he explained.

On average, the pieces of Sisterdale limestone measure 12 x 24 inches. Saw-cut ends match the stone mortar for the vertical joints between the horizontal bands and there is a slight drystack on the horizontal joint lines.

Several mock-ups of the stone pattern were constructed on site. "The owners were very particular to the look and consistency of stone, and the more consistent limestone pieces were selected," said McMahon.

Once established on the site, the full design team, including Ten Eyck Landscape Architects insured the home and grounds connected and allowed for unique design that engaged the natural site elements such as reconnecting the wet season watersheds leading from the top of the property to the ravine below, gently winding under the master wing bridge walkway and continuing down around the cantilevered master bedroom itself.



The private side of the home allows for the library/master suite — complete with a bridge to the three-sided glass enclosed master wing.



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Linear limestone that was chosen for the exterior walls complements smooth troweled stucco, pewter colored metal siding and stained wood eaves — all pulling from the German influences of construction of the previous century.

“Like many Hill Country homes, the site itself sits on a huge limestone shelf that required rock saws to cut into the soil,” said McMahon. “We have images of 3-foot-deep, 12-inch solid limestone cuts into the site to create the foundation area. We work hard to keep a residence such as this ‘grounded’ so that the foundation is as tight as it can be to grade. Where the topography requires a raised slab, we drop the stone footing down to grade and carry

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Perched over a ravine on a 10-acre site, the ranch offers sweeping views of the Texas Hill Country.



On average, the limestone pieces measure 12 x 24 inches.

the stone down below the finished floor to emulate this grounded home look and feel. Tracking the horizontal lines on the stone around the entire project, which is a sloping site, took a great deal of effort by the construction team."

In total, the main home/structure was completed in about a year, while it required approximately two more months to finish the landscaping. □

### **Private Residence Boerne, TX**

*Contractor:* Johnny Canavan Custom Homes, Comfort, TX

*Architect:* Craig McMahon Architects, San Antonio, TX

*Interior Designers:* Kathleen DiPaolo and Denise McGaha

*Landscape Design:* Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, Austin, TX

*Stone Mason:* Israel Espinosa

*Stone Supplier:* I-10 Building Materials, San Antonio, TX