

CASA TRE CORTILE

the pinnacle of
hill country modern

Winn Wittman AIA
Winn Wittman Architecture
Photography: ©Paul Bardagjy

3 bedrooms | 3.5 bathrooms | conditioned square footage: 3,565 | porches: 644 square feet | wood decks: 508 square feet

The Casa Tre Cortile means “House of Three Courtyards”. The three courtyards consist of Water, Fire, and Garden. The homesite is located on a hilltop ridge on a 50 acre ranch in the Texas Hill Country. The client’s request was that the home would not be visible from any nearby roads, so it was sited just below the ridge line.

This home is net-zero energy and entirely self sufficient, per the client’s request. In collaboration with the architect and builder, the client designed and oversaw the build for solar power and rainwater collection. All necessary electricity is supplied by a solar array located 100 yards from the home,

and situated so that it is not visible from the homesite. The necessary line extension for grid power was also buried to avoid any disturbance to the hilltop views. All potable water is collected off of the roof and stored in a large cistern. Large glass walls were selected so as to maximize the views to the North/East while the West side of the home is solid and beamed slightly into the hillside. The home is hooked up to the electric grid and a well for emergencies.

One enters into the home through a tall entry tower with clerestory windows. The metal ceiling in the entry features a light fixture the architect found in his travels to San Miguel de Allende,

Mexico and shipped back.

The architect was remote-working during the Summer of 2015 in San Miguel De Allende, Mexico while designing the home. He lived in a courtyard home with a small plunge pool. This pool was the inspiration for the small pool courtyard. The client’s request: that the pool appears as a water element and not a swimming pool. The dark bottom and narrow stone pool deck combined with a negative edge complete the look of the Water courtyard. Tom Crome of Quality Custom Pool executed the architect’s design. The living room opens up to the Water courtyard on one side and a covered patio on the other side.



Another request of the client was to minimize the need for any railings on the back patios and courtyards. The terrain was terraced in the back of the home so as to meet codes but not require any railings. Board-formed concrete walls complete the terraced effect and link the home to the landscape.

Gardens were very important and the client brought in Liz Klein of Design my Yard. Primarily native, but also some unusual species of plants, and hardscape were used. The front courtyard, which faces West and was one of the most arid parts of the home received a lush compliment of drought-resistant plants. The Eastern slope was restored to native grasses of more than 10 varieties.

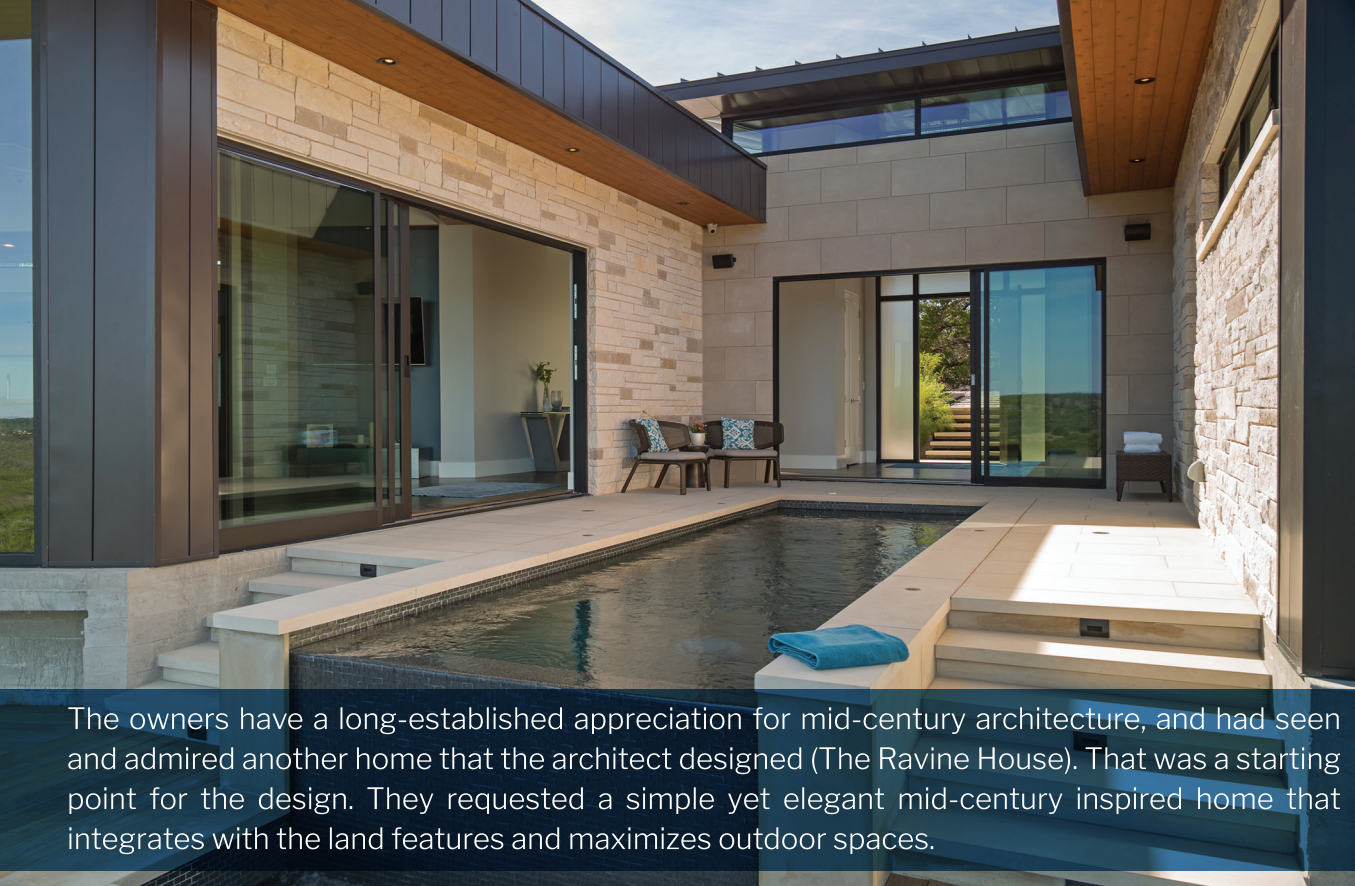
There is another small courtyard which separates the office from the main house, and the architect calls this space the Fire courtyard, since the terrace beyond the courtyard will contain a fire pit. The owners are still looking for the perfect fountain and fire pit for this area.

The floors are made from sustainable post oak, which was harvested locally.

Each room of the home has a slightly different view and the home is over 200 feet long.

Because the roof harvests potable water, some research had to be done on achieving a surface that would provide healthy water. An engineering consultant was brought in by the architect and various roof materials were analyzed for their safety. In the end Evergard TPO was selected as a safe material for collecting the potable water, which is stored in a 30,000 gallon galvanized metal tank. Q





The owners have a long-established appreciation for mid-century architecture, and had seen and admired another home that the architect designed (The Ravine House). That was a starting point for the design. They requested a simple yet elegant mid-century inspired home that integrates with the land features and maximizes outdoor spaces.

