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Edited by Robyn Beaver

## Mountain Cabin

California, USA

WALKER WARNER ARCHITECTS

The clients' love for this beautiful mountainous region began many years before they decided to build a weekend cabin there. Their wish was that the building would be as minimal in size as possible, respecting the land as the pace of life that unfolds there. They asked that the individual floor plans be maximized so that rooms could breathe space and beauty from the surrounding landscape. They envisioned a cabin that would slip into the landscape as if it had always been there, and always would be. This cabin would be passed down through the family from generation to generation.

The architect's goal was to make the cabin as flexible and efficient as possible. Rooms were designed to spill out into the site with 10-foot-wide (3-meter) sets of decks opening to the meadow. Covered living spaces in the cabin were created to provide more expansive spaces for nighttime activities. The bulk of the cabin was reduced by employing built-in throughout, to give rooms ship-like efficiency, and by lowering peak heights to make rooms cozy and intimate. Decks and windows protrude further above the main roof plane where necessary and fill between members of the timber frame to give the cabin a strong sense of connection between indoors and out. As a result, no room feels crowded. Each space has the responsiveness of the immediate and distant views beyond.

The massive pines and firs were specified with close grain to allow the site and cabin to flow into one another, to use environmentally sourced materials, and to give the cabin a sense of permanence. The natural palette was reduced to essentials: wood, steel, and stone. The materials appear both on the interior and the exterior of the cabin, blurring the line between inside and out. Minimal detailing allows the full beauty of the materials to be revealed without the distraction of busy details. A timber frame was an ideal solution to a clean building process and the desire to use reclaimed materials. As originally, stone was salvaged from a quarry that once abandoned a hundred years ago. Concrete that had been spat and then left to weather in the elements was specially installed to appear as natural patina. Artiles were brought in to share their special talents: custom cabinets, flush light fixtures to draw carved from blocks of stone, give the cabin the feeling of a new gem.



- 1 view across park to cabin and meadow
- 2 courtyard
- 3 view through living room deck to granite parking