

Designed by architect Sean Lockyer, Marc Walters' Indian Canyons home merges with the landscape, in tone, design, materials and textures. The black pool, with barely-there edges, is punctuated with a sculpture by Jun Kaneko.

WITH THE GRAIN

Tasked with designing a cosy home, an architect pairs various woods with off-shutter concrete for a Palm Springs new build that's – figuratively – as hot inside as it is out.

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ARCHITECTURE



THE CONNECTION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT MAKES FOR A CALMING AND SANCTUARY-LIKE HOME, AN AWARD-WINNING EXAMPLE OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN HOMEOWNER, ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER.



THERE ARE MANY architectural 'moments' in homeowner Marc Walters' Palm Springs home where it's nearly impossible to distinguish indoors from out: expansive glass walls so clean they're barely there, abutted by landscaping that feels like an extension of the surrounding desert; unexpected skylights that filter and drape light over the uneven surfaces of off-shutter concrete walls; and materials that cross thresholds and, in doing so, draw one's eye out to the impenetrably black pool and the mountains beyond.

This deep connection with the environment – specifically that of the Indian Canyons neighbourhood – makes for a calming and sanctuary-like home, one that's an award-winning example of a perfect collaboration between homeowner, architect and interior designer.

Project interior designer Sam Cardella had previously worked with Walters on another of his homes and introduced him to the principal architect of Studio AR&D, Sean Lockyer.

One of the earliest decisions the trio easily reached was that the home, to be built on a previously undeveloped plot, should not obstruct the views of Walters' neighbours. This, and the client's desire for a single-storey home in which he could comfortably move into older age, lead Lockyer to design a low-slung house that is a refreshing and contemporary interpretation of Desert Modernism.

ABOVE LEFT The kitchen includes two islands that allow Walters to cook and entertain simultaneously. The Japanese technique of charring then treating wood (shou sugi ban) protects Douglas fir ceilings throughout the home

ABOVE RIGHT A skylight at the home's entrance accentuates textures in the off-shutter concrete walls.

OPPOSITE PAGE Timber and leather add warmth to the open-plan entertainment space, in which a stone table swivels from dining level to coffee table alongside the sofa. The bookcase was custom-designed in teak and hot-rolled steel.



What Walters didn't expect was the extent to which both Cardella and Lockyer would challenge him on choices for the material palette. From the outset, Walters was insistent that off-shutter concrete was not to be used; his concern was that, across such a sprawling home, it may look cold. Lockyer held firm, an avid believer that the aggregate need not be used for structural purposes alone, but that with due diligence to the processes behind its use (everything from selecting textured wooden boards to determining the colour of the concrete), it could become a material of beauty in itself, imbued with raw earthiness and depth. The architect went a step further in his commitment to the material, undertaking to use recycled concrete where possible, thereby reducing the project's carbon emissions.

Much persuasion, and one surprisingly cosy home later, Walters is a convert. Lockyer's use of charred Douglas fir for the ceilings, and teak for the walls and cabinetry, paired with Cardella's finishing touches in warm tones (including rich leathers, patterned rugs, brass detailing and textured surfaces), is the ultimate antidote to any off-shutter concrete apprehensions.

The visual intrigue of Walters' compelling art collection equally warms his home. Seattle-based artist Ko Kirk Yamahira's triptych of partially unwoven red canvases adds colour to a lengthy wall in the open-plan living space. In a generously proportioned guest bedroom, an artwork by Jay Mark Johnson put paid to widespread notions surrounding the proportions of art relative to adjacent furniture. Dotted throughout the home are traditional African pieces, like a Bobo sun mask from Burkina Faso, and sculptures



ARCHITECTURE

THIS PAGE The desirable climate in Palm Springs allowed Lockyer and Cardella to design outdoor lounges. Wooden ceilings in the open-plan entertainment space extend outdoors, providing shelter from the sun and heat.

OPPOSITE PAGE In the entertainment area, Lockyer's use of off-shutter concrete extends along a wall that runs from indoors out. Three partially unwoven red canvases by Ko Kirk Yamahira provide a focal point on the wall.

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ABOVE Teak walls, an African bench, a patterned rug and a painting by Jay Mark Johnson create an intimate atmosphere in the spacious guest bedroom.

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP In the garden, an impenetrably black and mirror-like pool not only reflects the sky, but also a canopied cabana-style lounge.

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM To add interest to and play with volume in the master bathroom, the creative team introduced a sculptural boulder-like form. It draws one's eye out into the garden, as do the granite walls.

including a carved head by JD Perkin on a kitchen island and another by Jun Kaneko in the garden.

Lockyer believes that the pool itself is a work of art. When still, the waters of the black granite-lined pool, with its barely-there edges, act as a mirror, reflecting the house, a canopy that extends from the master bathroom to an outdoor cabana-style lounge, the indigenous plantings, nearby palms and the mountains. Its inky tone nods to a repetition of black throughout the home, from stone countertops in the kitchen, to a wall-mounted sculpture by Joanna Poag at the entrance, to a boulder-like form, that would look as much at home in the garden as it does adding dimension to a bathroom rain shower.

This strong connection to nature, one that – given the home's seamless – becomes experiential both indoors and out, was one of Lockyer's primary objectives. So considered was Studio AR&D's design and material use, that Walters' home feels more like it's emerging from the desert terrain than it does sited within it. From anywhere in the house, it's possible to both see and sense the outdoors. And in a city like Palm Springs, aesthetically rooted in its surroundings, this may just be the ultimate home comfort. ■

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