

# LUXE

THE SAN DIEGO HOME REDEFINED™







## LEVEL HEADED

WRITTEN BY **IRENE LACHER**

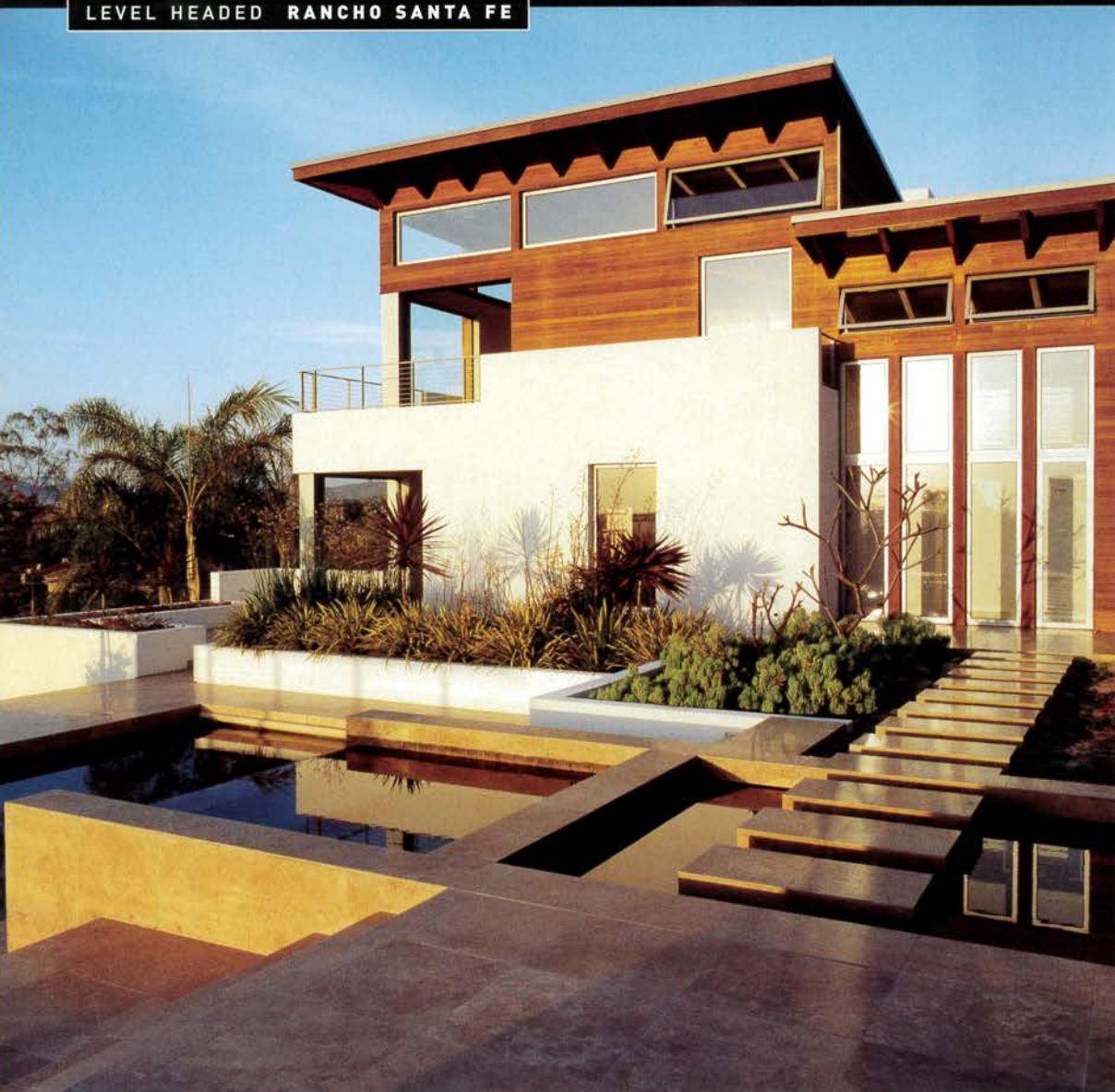
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **UNDINE PRÖHL**

EVER SINCE REBECCA GREMORE AND HER LATE HUSBAND MOVED TO SAN DIEGO IN 1986, THEY DREAMED OF LIVING IN RANCHO SANTA FE. She lost him in 1993, but the dream lingered, and five years later she bought a two-acre plot with stunning views of the countryside. Gremore had never liked the gray, foggy mornings of the busy coastal communities. Here the climate was mild, and cool breezes swept the hills virtually every afternoon.

On the hunt for an architect, she set out to examine a friend's newly remodeled home. Along the way, she spotted a beautiful footbridge and took note of it. Her friend's remodel had been designed by architect Taal Safdie, and when the homeowner opened a magazine to show Gremore more of Safdie's work, "Lo and

<b>ARCHITECTS</b> Taal Safdie and Ricardo Rabines		
<b>INTERIOR DESIGNER</b> Robert Wright	<b>HOME BUILDER</b> Terrence Wardell	
<b>BEDROOMS</b> 6	<b>BATHROOMS</b> 7	<b>SQUARE FEET</b> 10,500



**STEP SHOW**

Large stepping stones inside the reflecting pool connect the private terrace—which wraps around the bedrooms—to the patio outside the family room.

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behold, there was the footbridge,” Gremore says. She later visited other homes Safdie had worked on. “When I stood in those properties, I felt a sense of belonging and peacefulness,” she says. “It did something to me on a very deep level.”

Sensitive to how buildings mesh with their built and natural environments, Safdie and her husband and partner, Ricardo Rabines, of San Diego-based Safdie Rabines Architects, favor warm woods, huge windows, and in an apparent contradiction, rooms that are open enough to flow into each other, yet still form intimate spaces. Gremore needed a family-friendly home for her three daughters—and







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eventually, as it turned out, a new husband. "We're not real formal people," she says. "The living spaces are very open, which suits our lifestyle, and yet there's a rec room downstairs where the kids can be noisy." They also needed an abundance of outdoor space.

Safdie and Rabines designed a sprawling, 10,500-square-foot home with numerous public rooms that hug the hill it sits on. Every room is on a different level than the one it abuts, each separated by a few steps. "We wanted them to feel like they were sitting at the top of the hill and stepping down to follow the contours of the land," Safdie says.

#### STYLE SELECTION

This organically shaped, limited-edition chair is one part function and one part art. *Curve Chair*, \$5,000; [elizabethpaigesmith.com](http://elizabethpaigesmith.com)







#### PRIVATE SCREENING

The dining room table was custom designed by Bast/Wright. A mica panel rises up from the buffet to create visual privacy between the kitchen and dining room.

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The terracing also prevents the home from turning into a cavernous space that dwarfs its occupants. "The house feels transparent and airy because the rooms aren't divided by walls. They're defined by different floor elevations and ceiling heights, and they feel like different spaces."

Liberal use of cedar, both on the ceilings and exterior, where it's complemented by cream-colored stucco, further connects the house to its sylvan environment. Interior designer Robert Wright, of Bast/Wright Interiors in San Diego, took his cue from the home's clean lines and light hues in





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designing numerous storage built-ins, as well as custom furniture in earth tones to accompany contemporary pieces selected from high-end manufacturers like Knoll and Ligne Roset. "The interior architecture is very powerful, very front and center," he says. "The furnishings couldn't compete with that, so we chose to complement it with pieces that are low, horizontal, subdued and very linear, just like the house."

But there were bumps along the road. The house took six years to complete, in part due to timeline issues with the original contractor. In early 2005, Terrence Wardell of Solana Beach-based Wardell

#### STYLE SELECTION

Inspired by '60s-era steel-hulled ships, this bench takes on a modern twist with its tapered edges and fluid shape. *First Sight Bench*, price available upon request; [geigerintl.com](http://geigerintl.com)







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Builders, Inc., took over, and the family was able to move in less than two years later. "It's a highly technical house, very architectural," says Bill Robersshaw, Wardell's jobsite superintendent on the project. "Everything had to be very precise."

It pleases Gremore that her home is unlike more typical Rancho Santa Fe residences. "Here, you come into the foyer, and you don't experience how huge the space is. You look at the lines and the view. There have been nights here when the moon has lit up the clouds that are rather low, and you feel like you're floating in them." **L**

#### IN SECLUSION

A terrace off the master bedroom is largely hidden from the rest of the house, and serves as a private spot from which the homeowners can enjoy the view.

