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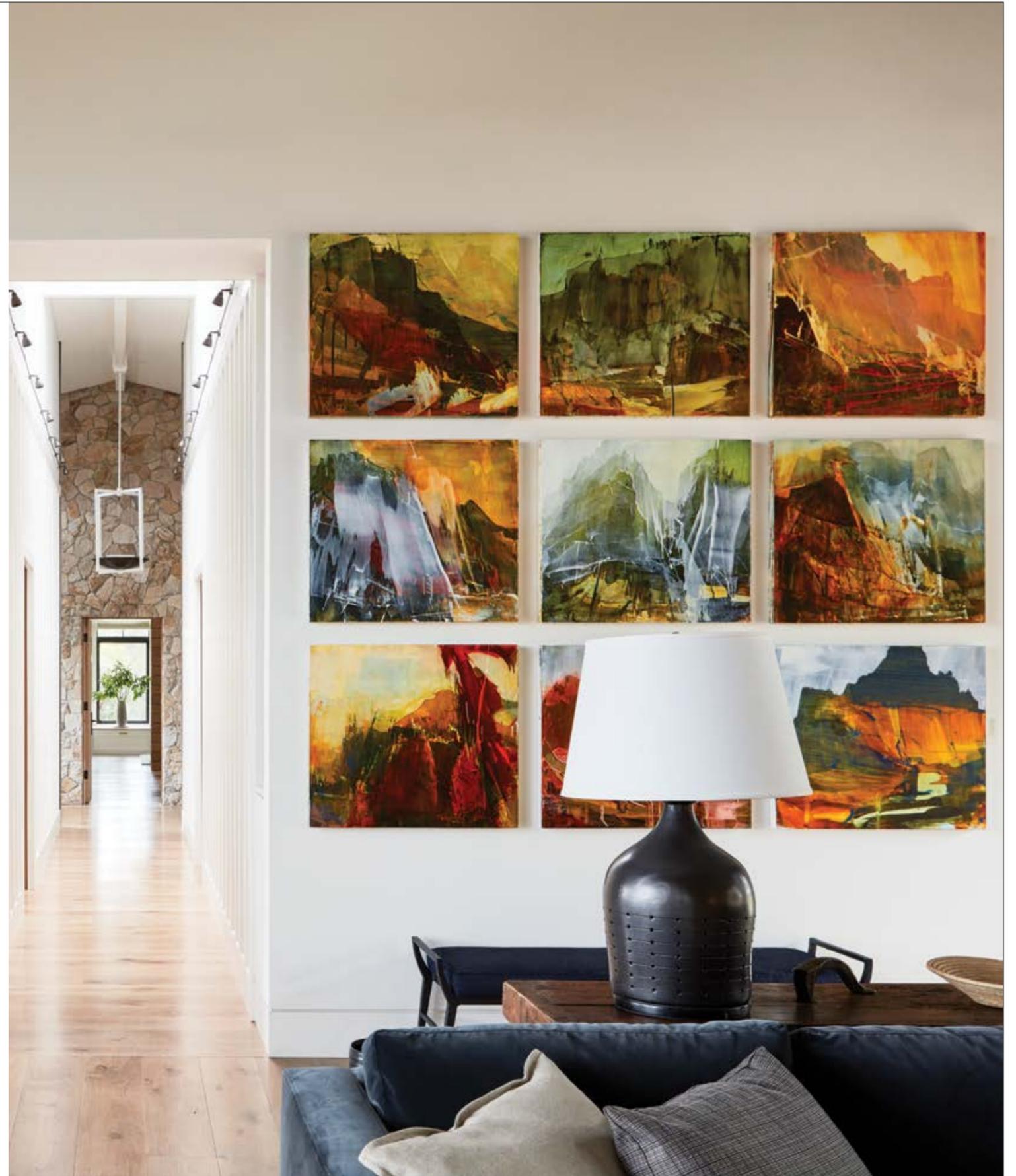
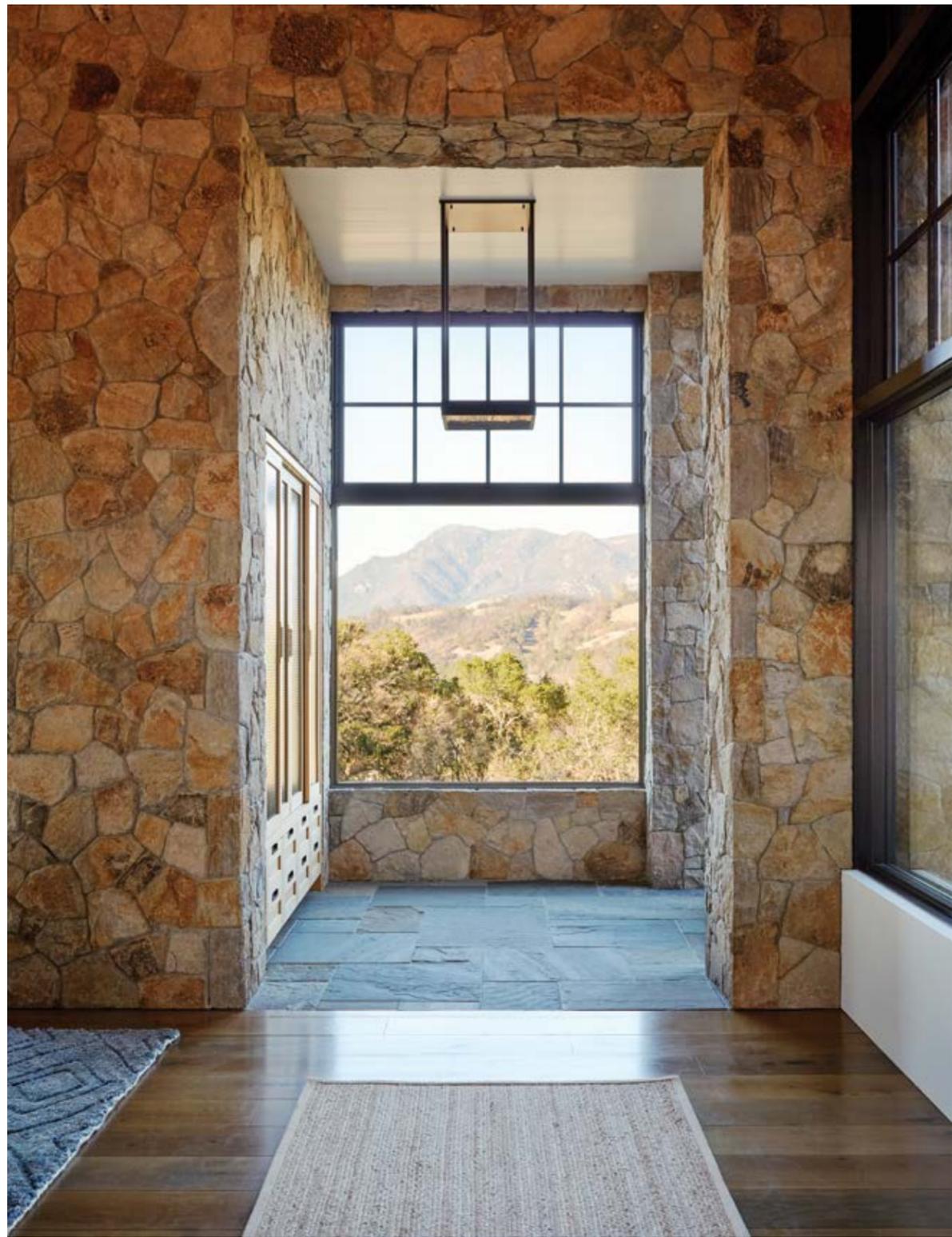
ART IN DESIGN



SET IN STONE

ARCHITECTURE: AMY ALPER
INTERIOR DESIGN: JENNIFER ROBIN INTERIORS
TEXT: ERIKA HEET
PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN MERKL







When the massive wildfires swept through Napa Valley in October 2017, the homeowners of a Calistoga house whose construction was nearly completed could only wait and watch as the flames spread to their property and destroyed their outbuildings one by one. On their return, they were shocked and saddened to discover that all of the neighboring houses had been lost. But theirs was spared. While fire safety wasn't necessarily a driving force behind the home's plan, by Sonoma-based architect Amy Alper, its materials certainly may have helped save it. Meandering walls of stone that already existed on the property helped inform the new house's main materials: Napa stone, cedar and a standing-seam metal roof. "The clients were interested in an ensemble of forms and materials that would work together with existing site elements, including the bluestone patio, pool, outdoor fireplace and terraces," Alper says. For the interior design, Jennifer Macdonald of Jennifer Robin Interiors riffed on the wine country's rolling mountain views and what she calls the "strong, stunning and grand" house. "My goal with the interiors was to bring you back to earth, to humanize the experience in scale and texture so to transform the residence into an inviting home," Macdonald says.

For the clients—Calistoga wine makers, community volunteers and empty nesters—Macdonald introduced a rich textural materiality to match their California tastes. In the dining room, a soda blasted wall incorporates inset white oak bar cabinetry, while mirrored tiles from Ann Sacks reflect the views. "As a designer I never want to distract from the views," Macdonald says. "With the evolving seasons so apparent on this property, the palette was primarily organic and muted with blue tones pulled from the hills at dusk." Those tones emerge in the Donghia velvet and Bernhardt bench in the great room, which encompasses two complementary zones—one for socializing and relaxing by the fire, and the other a media room—and in the leaves of a guest bedroom's wall mural by Area Environments. The mural, Macdonald says, "grounds the high ceilings and creates an inviting experience that plays homage to the surrounding landscape." The Urban Electric bedside pendants "also aid in bringing comfort to the scale and intimacy to the sleeping space."

About those views: The great room and master bathroom take advantage via nearly floor-to-ceiling windows and deep overhangs as frames; in the latter, a concrete Native Trails tub and elegant Waterworks fixtures complete the picture. "Ensuring a connection to the views was key during the design process, and the best views were toward the corners of many of the primary spaces," notes Alper. "The architecture responded by marrying a modern sensibility—airy corner windows—with rustic materials." Inside, Macdonald layered texture throughout with linen, velvet, metal, jute, rustic woods, concrete and rattan, and "infused soul into the great room" with antique pieces and artwork by James Lavadour. But, Macdonald says, "Ideally one notices the views first and then slowly discovers the surprises and thoughtfulness of the interiors." The melding of these design philosophies has resulted in a house that reflects and pays homage to nature, and exists as a beacon of the recovery and rebirth of the surrounding landscape. ■ Amy Alper, alperarchitect.com; Jennifer Robin Interiors, jrobininteriors.com

