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Entertaining design

A cool place to meet in the desert heat

By Rob Heselbarth, editor

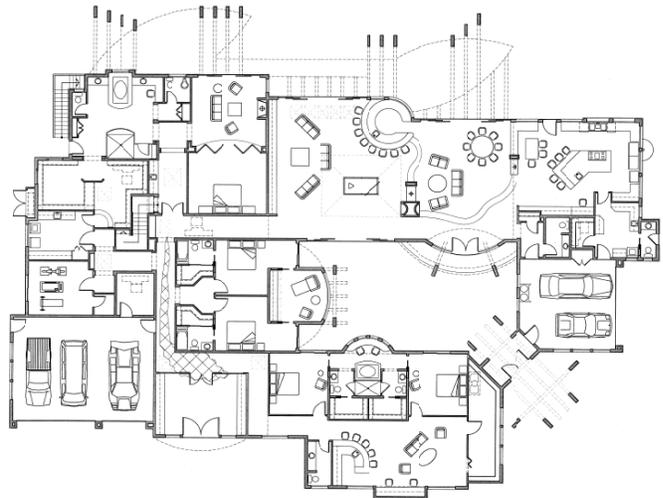
The opportunity to design a home that includes views of the Las Vegas Strip is rare. Such a view is stunning enough to drive the overall design for a house, but architects must be careful not to violate rules that ensure that one neighbor's attempt to capture that view doesn't infringe upon another's. Architects and builders must also be aware that inevitably, as with any spectacular view, rooms on at least one side of the house will miss out.

The piers that earned this house the nickname, "The house with legs," serve several purposes. They support the house and many outdoor living elements, add architectural interest, protect homeowners from errant golf balls, and their spacing preserves the view of the Las Vegas strip



When faced with this situation, Quinn Boesenecker, president, Pinnacle Architectural Studio in Las Vegas, realized that to provide a beautiful view for the rooms not facing the strip, he would create a view where one didn't exist. The result is a gorgeous outdoor oasis that springs up from the center of the house.

The home's footprint wraps around the outdoor space. "From overhead, it looks like a big C," Boesenecker says. "We privatized the courtyard completely and closed it off with a private entrance. So when you're in there, it's completely private. Every room in the house without a strip view looks into this courtyard."



PINNACLE ARCHITECTURAL STUDIO

Las Vegas
lvpas.com

COMPANY STATS

Residential new construction: 80%
Single-family homes: 90%
Homes designed/built annually: 15

PROJECT SPECS

Location: Las Vegas
Size: 8,596 sq. ft.
Cost: \$3.1 million

KITCHEN

Sinks: Kohler Co.
Faucets: Grohe
Range: Viking Range
Exhaust hood: Viking Range
Ovens: Wolf Appliance
Refrigerators: Sub-Zero Inc.
Microwave: Panasonic Corp.
Dishwashers: Asko Appliances

BATH

Tubs: Kohler Co.
Toilets: Toto USA
Sinks: Kohler Co.
Sink faucets: Grohe

HOME TECHNOLOGY

Lighting control: Lutron
Security: Eagle Sentry

EXTERIOR

Windows: Panda/Fleetwood
HVAC: Carrier Corp.

INTERIOR

Central vacuum: Beam

Photos: Eric Jamison, Studio J Inc., studiojinc.com

The many curves seen indoors in the ceiling, furniture and elsewhere soften the interior of this house and provide contrast to the hard edges and lines of the home's exterior. The varying depths of the ceiling treatments help define spaces as well as add elements of visual interest.





The outdoor living space includes huge cushioned sitting areas, and is designed to encourage large groups to gather. Elements like the surfboard-shaped ceiling above the sitting area are supported by the piers that serve both structural and decorative purposes.

Boesenecker brought the hallways to the back side, or the exterior side, of the house to allow the interior walls of certain rooms to face the courtyard. All rooms that face the courtyard have access to the central outdoor living space.

One of the goals for the outdoor living space was to create

large hang-out areas, he says. "We created big seats where a large crowd of people could hang out. The house is set up for entertaining. People can hang out in the courtyard, but some of the main rooms have big pocket doors so the inside/outside transition is seamless," he adds.

Impossible to miss are the



Bartenders stand in the sunken bar area to avoid blocking views of the Las Vegas strip beyond the house. Lower ceiling levels above the bar create an intimate atmosphere.

This house is set up for entertaining

large piers projecting up from the ground, then inward toward the house and over the outdoor living space, which spawned the home's nickname, "The house with legs." The piers serve dual purposes: aesthetics and support, with only a few of the piers playing an actual supporting role.

Other benefits of the piers include protection from errant

golf balls from the neighboring golf course, and a less obstructed view of the strip, says Kenny Kuykendall, president, Intrepid Development in Las Vegas, who built the house. In addition, other outdoor structural and decorative elements are cantilevered off those piers.

Desert contemporary

Hard lines give this house an undeniably contemporary look. A desert feel was created using travertine stone and mountain colors to create a home that blends into its surroundings. Hard lines are softened in the



The entire home envelops the outdoor living space, creating a totally private center courtyard where homeowners can entertain outdoors. Pictured here is one of the inviting, cushioned spaces designed to encourage people to gather in groups.

interior spaces where curves dominate the décor.

Curves define the multidepth ceiling treatments that create a sense of movement and graceful flow through the home. Above the sunken bar, a lower ceiling creates an intimate mood where the bartender stands at a lower level to avoid blocking the views, Boesenecker says.

A stained concrete floor graces the great room, while bamboo flooring adds a sense of nature in other areas.

Kuykendall believes the home truly shines when the sun goes down. "It's a night house," he declares. "At night it turns into a very warm house with all the interesting lighting and use of ceiling treatments. Certain elements do not really stand out until the evening, from the stained concrete floors, the backlit onyx niches and fireplace elements to the radius sliding window. The home has a very open, well-lit and comfortable feel."

Restrictive code requirements created challenges to meet. One such restriction is on the height of any home in the neighborhood, which is limited to 25 ft. with a 3-ft. difference in elevation from the front to rear of the house. The home steps down with the land and comes within an inch of the 25-ft. limit.

Although the lot was zoned for a single-level house, a second-story private study provides an even better view of the Las Vegas strip than the views from ground level. The design/build team followed the letter of the code that calls for no second-story *living* space, which the

study is not. "A hidden stairway accessible only from the master suite provides access from inside the home. And a spiral staircase outside takes people to the deck outside the study," Boesenecker says. An added concern was the neighbor next door watching closely to ensure construction didn't obscure the future view of any home built on his property.

Two of a kind

A home like this doesn't materialize without a close working relationship between designer and builder. Success is virtually assured when both understand



The great room features bamboo flooring, plenty of curved lines as in the rest of the interior, and a higher ceiling to open up the space.

each other as well as Boesenecker and Kuykendall do. Their styles mesh well; both believe in counseling clients and keeping communication flowing.

"We try to tell the owners why we're doing something. We don't bully them," Boesenecker says. "We say, 'Here's why we recommend this,' and then let them make the decision. And usually clients understand that we're educated and have a good reason for what we say, so to be overridden is pretty rare. They come to us for a reason."

*You're just as much
a counselor as a
builder or designer*

"You're just as much a counselor as a builder or designer," Kuykendall adds. "And I always like to tell clients

the pros and cons of what they want to do. And if what they want is way out there, I approach it like this: If it's a great idea, let's go with it. If not, then a builder like me with a design eye can evaluate if the purpose of a specific design element is going to be counterproductive and negatively impact the general functionality of living in the house, and also if it negatively affects the price and budget.

"A lot of builders don't care if something in the plans breaks the architectural flow of a room, like a column for example. They just

drywall around it. I hate that," Kuykendall says. "The last thing I want is for some design element to look like an error because no one took time to figure out if there's a better way to do something. Many builders say, 'Forget about it, I'm building it per plan.' A few times I've called Quinn so we can take a look together and understand the purpose of a design element. That way we can come up with a better solution, and ultimately a better home." ▀