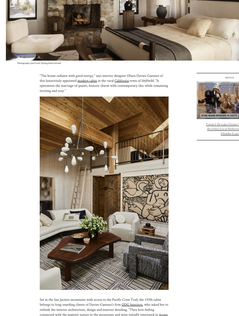
HOME TOURS

Mountain High: This Stunning Modern Cabin Is the Peak of Chic

Interior designer Ohara Davies-Cartaino enfolds Nevada rural charm with contemporary style in a diverse California lair hide

By Dylan Kidd
January 26, 2022



Photographs courtesy Tessa Neustadt

"The house radiates with good energy," says interior designer Ohara Davies-Cartaino of the luxuriously appointed [modern cabin](#) in the rural [Carlotta](#) town of Idyllwild. "It epitomizes the marriage of opulent, historic charm with contemporary chic while remaining inviting and cozy."

Set in the San Jacinto mountains with access to the Pacific Crest Trail, the 1920s cabin belongs to long-standing clients of Davies-Cartaino, [Erik Swanson](#), who asked her to rethink the interior architecture, design and exterior detailing. "They love birding, photography and hiking and wanted a space that would serve as a basecamp for [home](#) or Fall as it becomes," recalls the designer. "But, after visiting Idyllwild, they fell in love with its laid-back, unpretentious charm."

A TALE OF TWO TRAVELLERS
BONUS

The clients wanted to add to the footprint of the original home, which was taken down to the studs, with new original fireplaces and wood flooring being preserved. To this base, Davies-Cartaino added a mixture of natural materials, such as stone, wood and leather, to the modern cabin. "All the surfaces had a basic depth," she adds. To this intervention, layering materials was crucial. "The walls and ceilings are all clad in various types and finishes of wood to create movement, in addition to the reclaimed wood floors. Patterned and sheer tile has been used in some shower surrounds to a prominence.

A TALE OF TWO TRAVELLERS
BONUS

When it came to creating the downstairs, the nook set recessive, narrative-like expanses. "I wanted to roll out cheery tones in the curation and sought to use antiques and vintage pieces wherever applicable," explains Davies-Cartaino, who sourced many of the items in Europe. "I toured the home as I would my own, when pieces that have history and patina."

According to the designer, [kitchens](#) are a central part of the decor, highlighting the communal aspect. "The lighting pendants, in sculptural and artful, address a more layer of interest to each space," she explains. "We relied on dramatic/decorative lighting as our primary source of light. At night, the cabin is affused with candle-lit spaces and soft shades of light, highlighting with low-visual awareness, like the owl, the outside."

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Davies-Cartaino's favourite space is the poolside like dining room, which has garden views and a fireplace. "The dining table is a custom piece that I designed, and the chairs are a midcentury that nonetheless," she says. "You feel as if you are dining in an old castaway."

The simple form and perfectly imperfect patina of an antique French table — "used and loved for generations" — grounds the space, while a 1960s French painting by an unknown artist provides a touch of whimsy. "I love the mix of the rustic and the refined," she explains. "It's the dynamic full of colour and serendipity." Davies-Cartaino recalls, "A table visual annotation to the otherwise cultivated and serene space."

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In the living room, a painting by Jessica Warren is the star. Its nude creating drama within the context of the rest of the room. "From the project's onset, we knew this piece would be a focal point in the home," she adds. "The texture is quite remarkable and unexpected." Much like the skilful balance of life and art in the Davies-Cartaino has achieved.

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