

Paradise FOUND

A MODERN HOME NEAR SOUTHERN OREGON'S ROGUE VALLEY EXPLORES THE POTENTIAL FOR INDOOR/OUTDOOR LIVING.

By **EMILY ZAHNISER**

Landscape Architect:
**LAURIE SAGER
& ASSOCIATES**

Architect:
**CARLOS DELGADO
ARCHITECT**

Builder:
**CONSCIOUS
DESIGN BUILD**

Photographer:
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HARLA SETTLEMIER and her family fell in love with Southern Oregon and all it had to offer nearly a decade ago. Oregon's wild paradise had everything: a hiking and biking network set in a world-class wine region; a theater scene featuring global talent; the Britt music festival; and a great food culture. The family purchased some land bordering the Rogue Valley, and when it came time for Settlemier to retire from her job at Nike, she made plans for a dream retirement home made possible by year-round gorgeous weather.

"The lifestyle and climate here are the biggest draws," Settlemier says.

Generally, homeowners embarking on a custom home project start with the building and its layout. The Settlemiers wanted the opposite, a home experience that flowed from the outdoors into the interior spaces and back out again. It's no wonder why: The Settlemier property encompasses a generous hilltop with panoramic views of vineyards, pastures and neighboring farms — a site with astounding potential for what has come to be known in lifestyle parlance as indoor/outdoor living. Working with landscape architect Laurie Sager-Thornton of Laurie Sager & Associates and architect Carlos Delgado, they developed a holistic plan for land and home.



Plein Air Living

CREATING A HOME in harmony with an environment takes time and a team vision. The professionals behind this home and its extended outdoor-living spaces designed it to embrace the expansiveness of the topography while creating privacy and intimacy for residents. The flow of landscaping, exterior living areas and buildings on the property was designed to feel organic and intuitive — rising as a complement to, rather than an imposition on, the original topography.

"Our design work is essential to designing great homes that coexist with the natural environment," says Sager-Thornton.

Southern Oregon's particular climate shaped the process. Sager-Thornton orients outdoor "rooms" like the covered eating patio strategically to avoid wind, adding built-in and ambient heating sources to extend the outdoor-living season. Expansive views are artfully framed by tucking less appealing elements, like parked vehicles, out of sight.

Here, the homeowners can experience the best of the natural and built landscape when relaxing indoors — or out. Sager-Thornton and Delgado worked in collaboration on full site design, including exterior landscaping, hardscapes, outbuildings and the main house. Construction began with the swimming pool and bonus living spaces, including pool house and guest abode. The location of the pool takes advantage of southern light,



with a pool house offering the convenience of a nearby kitchen and party room to gather. The guest house is adjacent to these amenities but is thoughtfully oriented in a manner to provide privacy for visitors.

“The structures on the land frame almost a little village,” says Delgado. “The family understood that a master plan for the whole site would take patience and perseverance but would ultimately pay off in a harmonious relationship between the house, the exteriors and the 360-degree views.”

Green Lifestyle

SUSTAINABILITY WAS ON everyone’s minds during the project. Integrating high-performance building practices such as radiant floor heating, solar power and locally sourced materials for home

and garden saves on resources up front and helps with long-term energy and maintenance costs. The home incorporates rooftop solar panels, rainwater catchment for the garden, passive solar overhangs on the house, radiant floor heat, and a garden with herbs, fruits and plants to attract birds, bees and butterflies.

As a rule, Sager-Thornton gives priority to plants that are low maintenance and hardy in Southern Oregon. To preserve the native oaks on the land, additional landscaping near them would also need to be drought-tolerant to avoid inadvertently putting the trees at risk of being overwatered, Sager-Thornton says.

For this project, Sager-Thornton used Mediterranean plants and ornamental grasses that thrive in heat and drought. For a wide-open property like the Settlemiers’, deer-resistant foliage keeps unsightly barrier fencing to a minimum. Even concrete hardscapes were chosen to work in harmony with the color of the surrounding environment while being hardy to temperature swings.



Inside Out

ARCHITECT CARLOS DELGADO designed the house to fully open up into an indoor/outdoor experience, with the home representing the most “tropical” the architect has designed in Southern Oregon to date. Many clients invest in dramatic, bifolding doors and then end up not using them as much as they expect to, Delgado says, but in this case, the client truly wanted to create a genuinely open and outdoor feel. The result was a home that goes beyond what is commonly referred to as an “outdoor room.”

“The opportunities to create seamless transitions between outside and inside kept revealing themselves,” Delgado says. “We simply took advantage of them.”

With the home complete, the family can’t help but want to share the results. Settlemier has plans to rework the barn with another visitor suite and has begun development on an experiential lavender farm to host events and workshops as part of the family’s long-term retirement plan.

“There is nothing I would change about our home,” says Settlemier. “It’s been a dream come true.” 🏡