

residential
architect

hanley wood

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10
residential architect
design awards

robert swatt's little
boxes on a hillside win
project of the year

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custom / 3,000 square feet or less grand

mod cott, burnet, texas

mell lawrence architects

austin, texas

The jury loved the way this Texas guesthouse and weekend retreat juxtaposes rough-edged elements and polished precision. “It has heart,” said one judge. “It’s quirky—that’s what I like about it.”

Architect Mell Lawrence, FAIA, took cues from the craggy surrounding landscape. “The trees have a textural quality, and the ground is rocky, with a lot of limestone outcroppings,” he says.



Corrugated metal siding and storage doors made from raw juniper branches relate to this rugged aspect, while the interior wood detailing and standing seam metal roofs add refinement. The local vernacular played into these contrasting material choices as well. “In the older rural areas around the South and Texas, people

mixed a lot of smooth boards and rough wood,” Lawrence notes.

The blufftop site’s view down onto the lake below helped dictate the home’s orientation and glass-filled southern façade. A south-facing overhang covered with solar panels wards off the harsh sun, while generating enough energy to power the 1,400-square-foot cottage. And a rainwater collection system and xeriscaping provide additional resource-conserving measures. While not technically off the grid, the house is self-sufficient, just as Lawrence intended. “The clients wanted it to not relate to the main house,” he says. “They wanted it to feel like another world.”—*m.d.*

Juniper branches and standing seam metal clad the back of the house, while big glass doors and an overhang of solar panels dominate the front. At night, a central light fixture casts shadow lines around the loft-like interiors.





In keeping with the project's simple, elemental aesthetic, a halved steel pipe forms a gutter connecting the roof to the rainwater tank. Interior fir detailing adds a warm elegance to the space.

principal in charge: Mell Lawrence, FAIA, Mell Lawrence Architects; **project architects:** François Lévy, Scott Smith, AIA, Mell Lawrence Architects; **general contractor:** Shawn Solsbery, Classic Constructors, Marble Falls, Texas; **structural engineer:** Jeffrey L. Smith, P.E., Smith Structural Engineers, Austin, Texas; **project size:** 1,400 square feet; **site size:** 10 acres; **construction cost:** Withheld; **photography:** Mell Lawrence. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for products and additional images.

