

House of Glass



Contemporary house is designed with the outdoors in mind

By Carolyn Comeau
Portrait by Tim Robison

The ancient Roman architect

Vitruvius asserted that in order for a structure to be excellent, it needed to be three things: *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas* — solid, useful, and beautiful. Rob Carlton and Chad Harding, of Carlton Architecture+Construction, are set to realize these goals in a new project in Jackson County’s Balsam Mountain Preserve community.

The future home is a carefully conceived ode to natural beauty. The clients, passionate equestrians who own trail horses and Arabian show horses, chose the 4,400-acre community for its easement-protected, unspoiled landscape, as well as its abundant riding trails and equestrian center.

“We presented a design concept that blends a mountain sensibility with

on the boards



Architects Chad Harding and Rob Carlton of Carlton Architecture.

contemporary simplicity,” says Carlton. He adds that other ideas percolated too, including a green roof concept that served a dual purpose — it’s energy efficient and introduces a modernist feel.”

The process included “an amazing merger of different types of ideas,” says

Harding. The owner concurs, “We’ve worked with Rob and Chad, our excellent interior designer, Traci Kearns, and the community itself, which has guidelines as well. It’s also been fun.”

Carlton and Harding started their analysis with a look at the site’s unique

attributes. “It had terrific long range views to the west and north,” notes Carlton, while Harding points to its primary constraint: the ridge that runs down the center of the lot. “It shaped how we thought about building placement and how we analyze the approach to the house, especially with regard to the site’s close proximity to the road. We shaped a gentler drive to create a meandering sense of procession. We want the owners to feel how the home interacts with the land.”

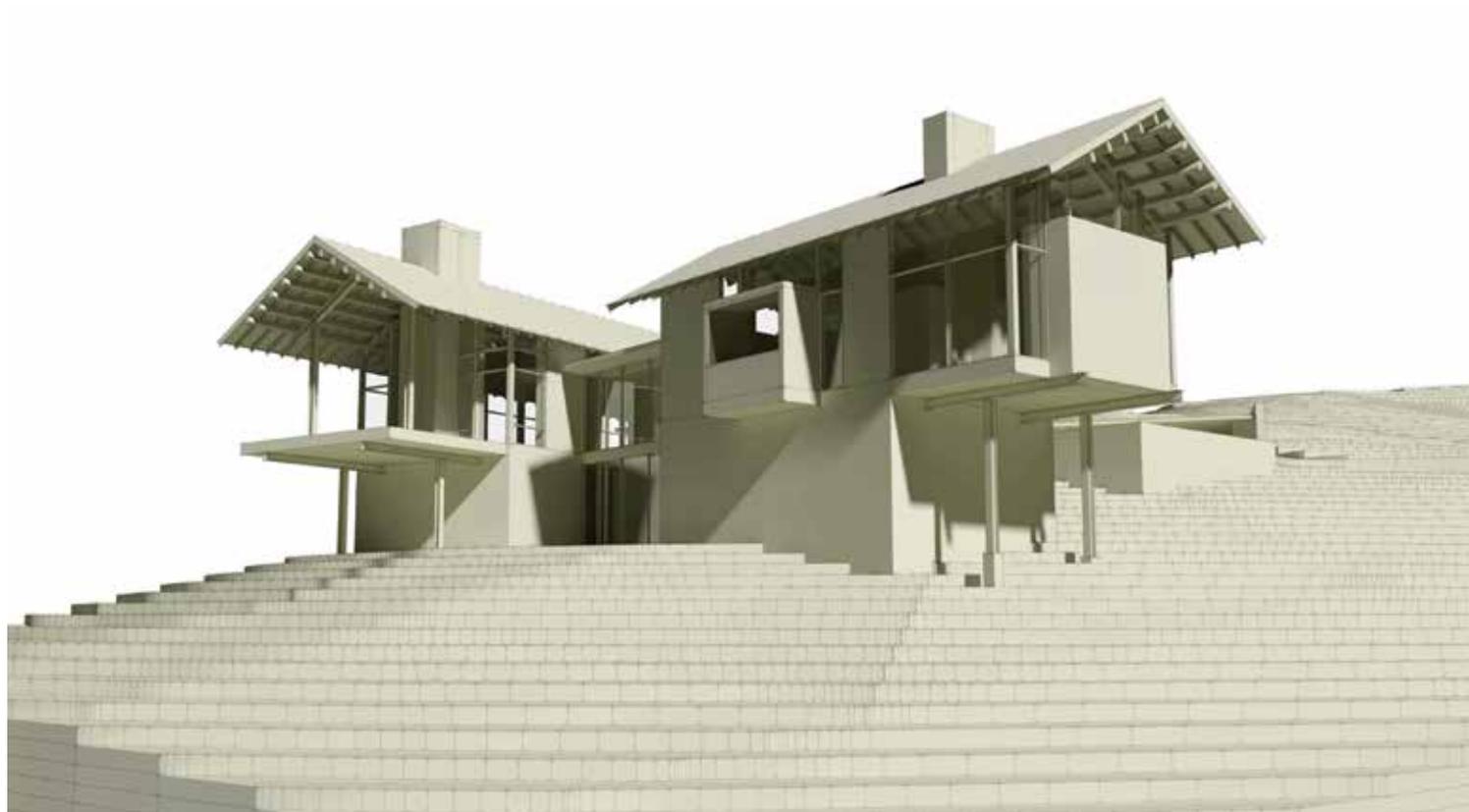
The renderings reveal an open plan with floor-to-ceiling windows, giving the interior a sense of lightness and transparency, and making the transition between indoors and out almost seamless. “Our house is not typical,” says the owner. “We basically have glass walls — we wanted to minimize the amount of wood that frames the windows so as not to interrupt those views. My goal is to remember we’re in the mountains, to honor that. Rob and Chad did an excellent job of incorporating our desire to use glass expanses to bring the outside in, while not turning the home into a fishbowl-like space.”

And, she reports, the architects incorporated several other clever features like the kitchen bump out and floating walls for art. “We have so much glass and I didn’t want our house to turn into ‘black walls’ at night. They’ve ensured that at every turn, visitors will encounter the unexpected.”

“There’s a deceptive amount of craft involved with the design. I think of it as a unique type of warm, handcrafted modernism,” says Carlton.

The owner describes their search for the right balance of “open” in their floor plan, noting that the kitchen is not separate so much as slightly isolated. “I didn’t want

“...there’s a deceptive amount of craft involved with the design. I think of it as a unique type of warm, handcrafted modernism.”



the fact that I’m cooking to interrupt what’s going on in the next room.”

Another important consideration was the delineation of public and private spheres. The homeowners, visitors, and pets will contribute to a busy-ness that necessitates a mudroom. However, the architects also acknowledged the proportions needed to work for a couple. The solution? “We created a breakdown in scale and volume,” Harding says. “It’s a four bedroom home, but has a

smaller feel because the great room and master suite are on the main level, while the extra bedrooms are below; overall, though, it reads ‘one level living.’”

Carlton reflects on the architects’ sense of duty throughout their design process. “We’re bound to protect the project’s integrity, and do that by following our design guidelines and preserving the client’s dream. We’ve tried to integrate our design into the surrounding landscape so the home

doesn’t overtake it.”

The client praises the intense experience of working with this design team on their new house, “We’ve discovered so much about the project and ourselves with Rob and Chad’s help. I’ve no doubt this home will be more than worth the wait.” ■

Visit www.carltonarchitecture.com or call 828-274 7554 to learn more about Carlton Architecture+Construction.