

IDEA HOUSES

How to Design a Boldly Innovative Home

Sunset's Silicon Valley Idea House disrupts the classic Craftsman.

Written by **Chantal Lamers**

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Craftsman Cool

Innovation is synonymous with Silicon Valley, so when it came to building *Sunset's* Idea House in the land of startups, we knew the home had to

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case, it also meant disrupting the classic Craftsman design with an update that's fit for modern living. To help bring that vision to life, builder Mark De Mattei dreamed up an open floor plan that draws on natural light and maximizes indoor-outdoor living spaces. Designer Lauren Nelson, along with team members Hana Mattingly and Evgenia Merson, used a sleek approach to walls and trim with monochromatic paint choices—and also drew on the Golden State's casual ethos to assemble a minimal collection of Scandinavian furnishings and accessories. The result: a 2018 Idea House that captures Silicon Valley's pioneering spark as well as *Sunset's* signature Western spirit. **Idea House Team: Builder, *De Mattei Construction*; Interior Design, *Lauren Nelson Design*; Landscape, *Tamura Landscapes* and *Sycamore Design*; Charity Partner, *Stroke Awareness Foundation*.**



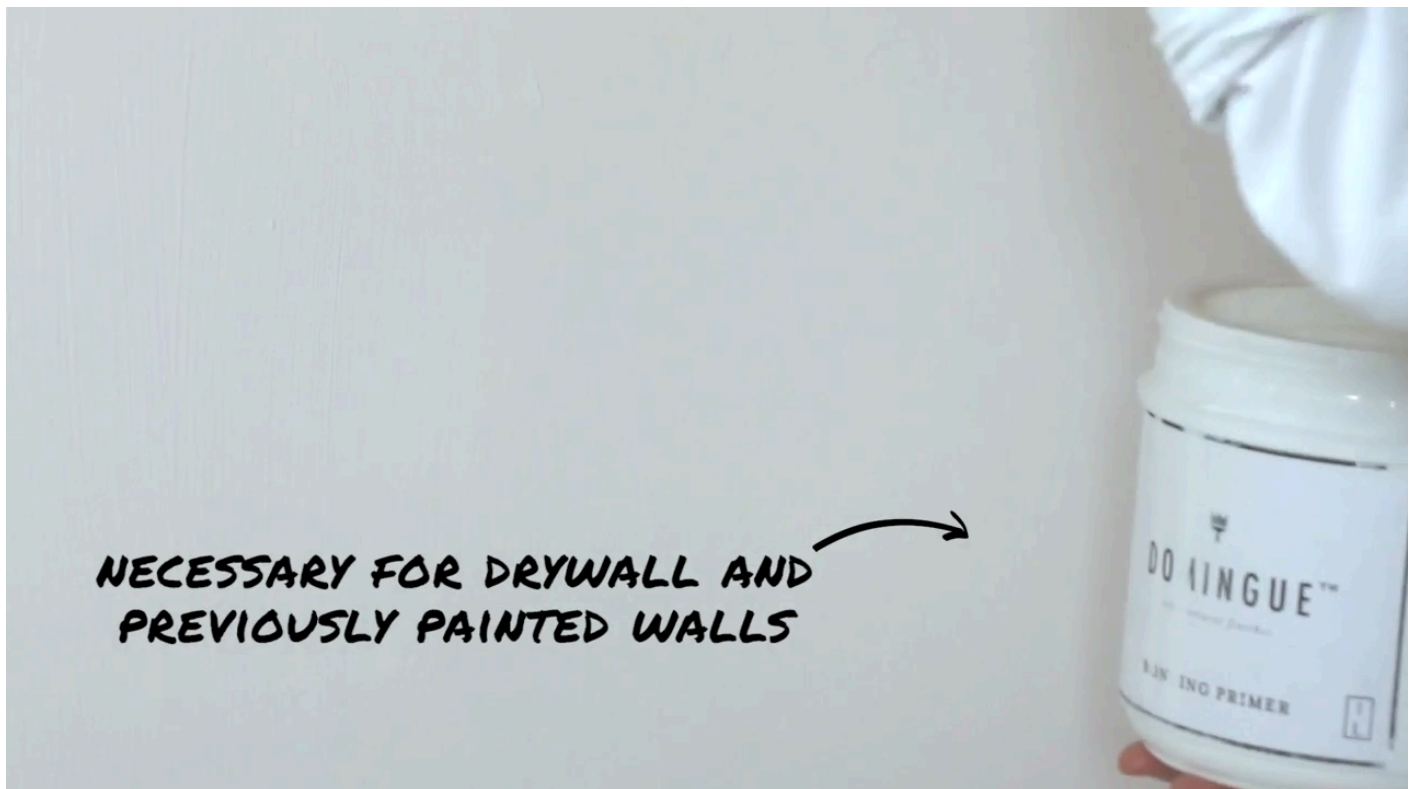
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Exterior

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exposed rafters, eaves, and shingles—are present but unified with dark paint, tonal trim, and Belgard's Moduline Slab Pavers in Rio. A cedar wood garage and slender posts add back traditional warmth. The small front yard, planted with the Sunset Western Garden Collection, takes its inspiration from NorCal meadows.

- Pavers; [belgard.com](https://www.belgard.com). Decking, Vintage Collection in Weathered Teak; [azek.com](https://www.azek.com). Paint, Temptation 1609 and Stormy Sky 1616; [benjaminmoore.com](https://www.benjaminmoore.com).



How to Paint a Wall with Limewash

Add richness, depth, and dimension to a room with this limewash wall paint technique.

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Living Room

A slab of black stone with graphic veining elongates the fireplace and sets off Samsung's The Frame TV. To soften the look, Nelson chose a subtler grouping of furnishings and accessories in muted leather, linen, and wool. "Finding balance is the key to a successful room," she says. "Your eye wants to move around."

- *Paint in Balboa Mist OC-27; [benjaminmoore.com](https://www.benjaminmoore.com).*

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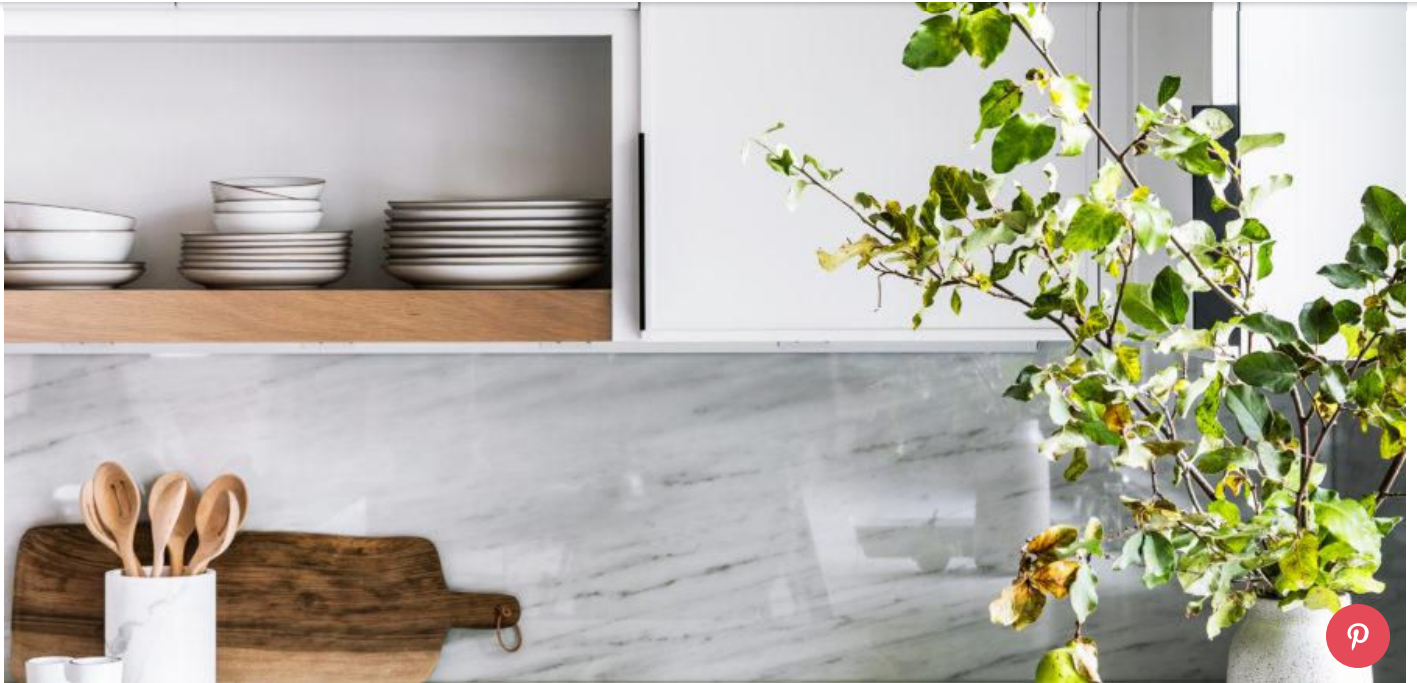
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Parlor

Nelson custom-designed an angled platform sofa for the parlor, prioritizing “furniture as art versus furniture as function.” A minimal brass table and nubby-wool mid century chairs play to the room’s small scale. A trio of black aluminum-framed folding doors makes for a seamless flow to the front porch.

- Custom folding doors; lacantindoors.com.

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Kitchen

Here, the concept is simplicity—even the statement counter-to-ceiling stone swoons in a subdued way. Custom cabinets in a split finish of white and oak surround a stone-topped island lit by a series of pendants. “We wanted the upper cabinetry to feel light and airy, and the lowers to have warmth and texture,” says Nelson. For a spin on Shaker cabinetry, the team designed door faces with delicate panels. The matte-black hardware ties into the Samsung Chef Collection smart-kitchen appliances.

- *Hudson Valley Walker 8 1/4-in.-wide old bronze mini wall pendants; lampsplus.com.*

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Kitchen Dining

To work a good-sized dining table into the room, Nelson designed a built-in banquette (to the right of the table), which saved a good two feet of space. The table is topped with excess stone from the adjoining living-room fireplace and paired with a custom ash base and wood wishbone chairs from Carl Hansen & Søn.

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Outdoor Dining

A covered patio with a cedar-lined ceiling and skylights maximizes the entertaining potential around a Terrain table and Serena & Lily chairs. The game-changer: a set of LaCantina Doors that slide open to the living room. Interior oak flooring transitions to decking coupled with a contemporary cable rail. Florals by Marigold. Solar Powered "Fresh Air" skylights; veluxusa.com.

- Custom sliding doors; lacantindoors.com. Decking, Vintage Collection in Weathered Teak; azek.com.

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Containers

Potted flowers, herbs, foliage, and other favorites from *Sunset's* plant line ensure that the garden is always within reach. Shade-tolerant varieties are sited beneath structures, while heat-loving specimens sit happily in full sun.

- *Plants; [sunsetwesterngardencollection.com](https://www.sunset.com/sunsetwesterngardencollection.com).*

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Lighting

Think of this as one-touch light control with a host of preset options for cooking, entertaining, or relaxing.

- *Room Director; noonhome.com.*

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Second-Floor Bath

Inspired by the intricate tile traditionally found in Craftsman bathrooms, Nelson worked with San Francisco's Fireclay Tile to create a custom color scheme of blues, greens, and grays. "This hand-painted surface just begs to be touched and also adds a low-key graphic quality to a small space," says Nelson.

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Second-Floor Bedroom

At once timeless and fresh, this petite space serves to highlight California artisans. A hand-carved bed by Jacob May is dressed with Rough Linen's Orkney Duvet Cover in dusk alongside a set of abstracts by Karina Bania.

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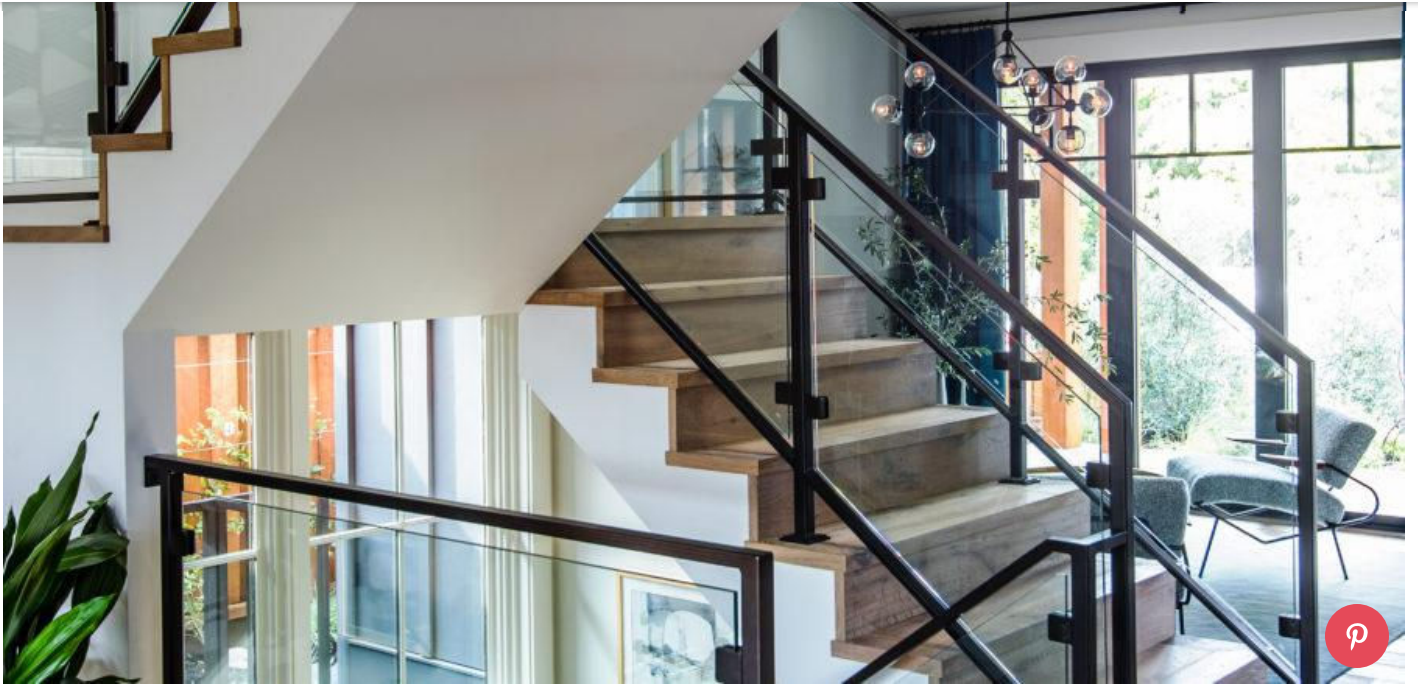


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Study

To optimize the office space, Nelson and her team designed a built-in desk flanked by storage cabinets. The wood features are softened by custom cushions and raw-cotton throw pillows, while the dark walls are balanced by hand-drawn wallpaper in a delicate motif. "The linework reminds me of someone sitting at the desk doodling, so it felt appropriate for a study," says Nelson.

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Staircase

“There’s a middle ground between traditional and contemporary,” says Nelson of the home’s showcase feature, noting that the steel railing and glass panels allow light to pass throughout. Wide-planked wood floors add texture against the more modern steel-and-glass staircase.

- *Del Mar hardwood flooring; [lamaisonnicolas.com](https://www.lamaisonnicolas.com).*

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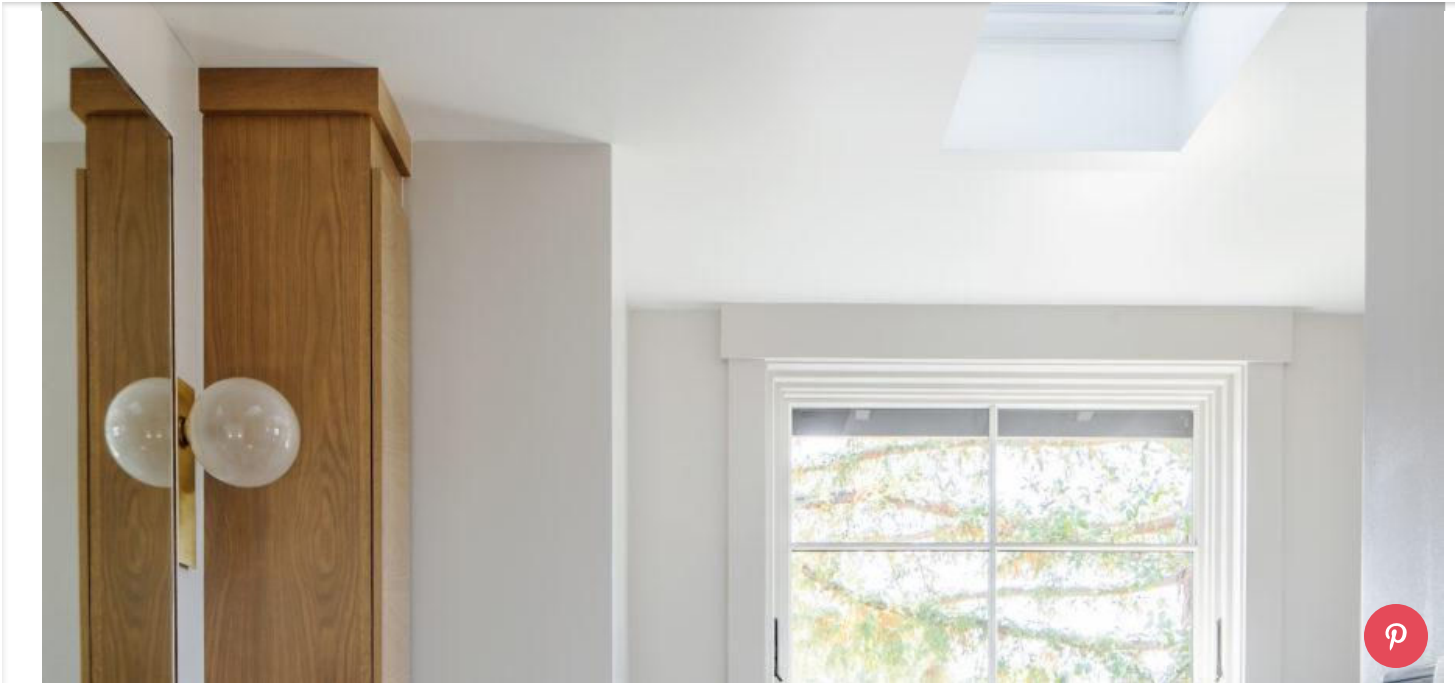


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Master Bathroom

This tranquil retreat gleams its edge from the creative mix of limestone, appearing in slab form and in a herringbone pattern across the floor, and in place of traditional baseboards. "Limestone is the unsung hero of natural stones," says Nelson. "It's affordable, understated, and beautiful." An expansive oak vanity is treated to brass and hand-blown glass fixtures.

- *Hudson Valley Hinsdale sconces; [lampsplus.com](https://www.lampsplus.com).*



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Skylights

Side-by-side skylights do more than illuminate the master bathroom. A connected system monitors local weather, while a sensor measures humidity and CO2 levels inside the home. When the house needs a refresh, the skylight opens; users can also automate blinds to control the level of sun.

- *Solar Powered "Fresh Air" Skylights with Smart Home Automation by Velux Active; [veluxusa.com](https://www.veluxusa.com).*

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Master Bedroom

“This room is for the modern romantic,” says Nelson, noting that the deep blue wall and soft green ceiling hues were repeated, respectively, from the exterior façade and the front door. “Moody walls provide the drama, while textures from the linens and headboard add romance.” The custom, wall-to-wall upholstered headboard brings depth and dimension to the room, with a narrow ledge to serve as a display area. An oversize mirror from Croft House, strategically facing the windows, bounces light into the bedroom.

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Light Wells

This isn't your average basement: De Mattei designed 9-foot-high ceilings and multiple light wells throughout. A set of bifold doors opens to this indoor-outdoor nook featuring board-pressed concrete, a tillandsia wall sculpture by Living Green Design, and a black powder-coated-steel spiral staircase leading up to the backyard.

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Media Room

To lend cozy sensibility, the design team broke the room up into two distinct yet cohesive sitting areas: one nestled front and center by the fireplace, the other opening up to the bar. A pair of identical Cisco Brothers sofas is separated by a slim console from Room & Board.

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Media-Room Bar

The striking countertop and backsplash were design details that De Mattei and Nelson landed on to elevate the wet bar. “We fell head over heels for this lilac marble stone but kept it masculine with dark cabinets and black faucets and light fixtures,” says Nelson.

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Guest Bathroom

Staying the masculine course, Nelson went dark in the guest bathroom. The glazed black floor and deep blue shower-wall tiles by Clé Tile are solids, yet they convey texture thanks to their handmade surfaces. To keep the look seamless, Nelson matched the vanity with the wall color.



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Guest Bedroom

“We wanted elements that evoke comfort,” says Nelson. The wrapped upholstered bed is low and floating, making the room feel larger; the rug and textiles keep things light and bright. A wall hanging by Michele Quan and nightstands from West Elm round out the decor.

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