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CUT FROM THE EARTH

A HARMONIOUS JUXTAPOSITION OF STEEL AND STONE REVEALS A HOME THAT SEEMS TO EMERGE FROM THE LANDSCAPE

BY EMMA JANZEN

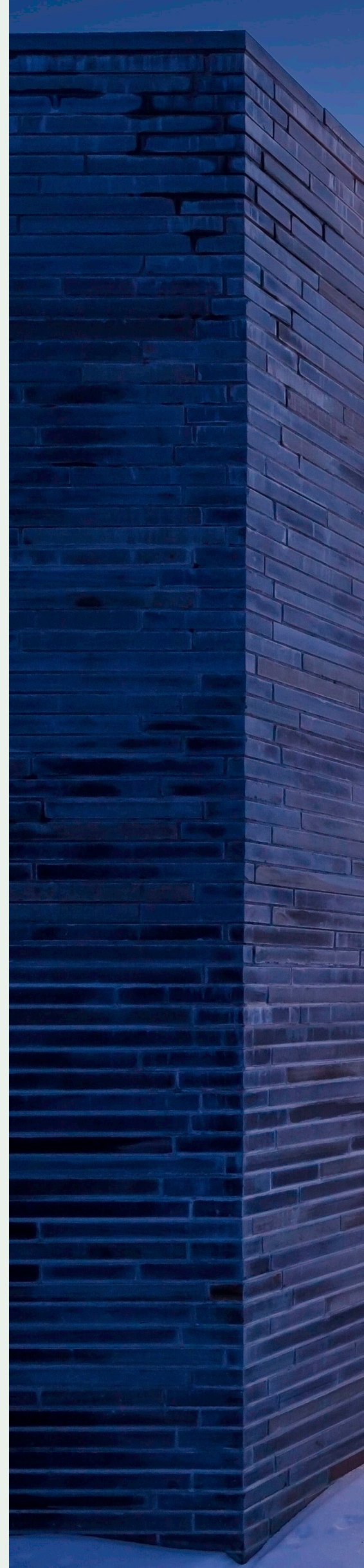
Architect William Reue harnessed elements of nature and striking industrial drama to design “A House in the Woods,” a single-family home located at the base of the Shawangunk Mountains in Ulster County, New York. “The design for ‘A House in the Woods’ was grounded in the owner’s desire to build an artful home that responded to her values of order, beauty, and environmental stewardship,” Reue says. Yearning for a quiet haven away from the city, Reue’s client arrived at their first meeting armed with poetry books, music, magazine clippings, and ideas sketched out on napkins as sources of inspiration.

Situated on a densely forested 8.5-acre lot, the site combines two geometrically opposing façades to create an ongoing conversation with the surrounding landscape. The focal point of the exterior space, a stunning auburn-colored Cor-Ten steel wall, is “heroic yet pragmatically justified in that it operates as a spine that organizes the interior spaces of the house into a series of cinematic portals to the landscape,” Reue explains. “The wall is certainly a bold gesture with a tremendous presence in the building’s immediate context—but curiously, it has a way of heightening one’s perception of the nature around the house. For instance, the slight bend in the wall amplifies the sound of the nearby stream running parallel to the house, creating an incredibly welcoming and intimate entry court.”

For the shell of the house, Reue and

his client hand-selected the stratified bluestone that would compose the exterior walls as a team. Although the quarry workers thought that their selection of slabs with glaring radial saw marks on the edges was curious, Reue says that they “discussed many times how we wanted the main volume of house to appear stitched into the landscape, and, using this strategy, we could literally make the house appear as if it had been cut from the earth.”

Interior components—including super-efficient quadruple-pane windows, SIP wall construction, a high-efficiency mechanical system, a direct-exchange geothermal system, a rain-harvesting system, and dozens of other elements—helped the building achieve LEED Silver certification, ensuring that the home has a small environmental footprint. And yet, tastefully, it does so while visually fitting the landscape as well. **wz**



FEATURED COMPANY
WILLIAM REUE
ARCHITECTURE

LOCATION
ULSTER COUNTY,
NEW YORK

PROJECT TYPE
RESIDENCE

PROJECT NAME
A HOUSE IN THE
WOODS

The curve in this Cor-Ten steel wall bounces the sounds of a nearby stream into the front entryway, creating a soothing first impression.

RESIDENCES

NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

These interior spaces are designed minimally to appeal to the client's values of order, beauty, and environmental stewardship.





Efficient quadruple-paned windows were part of the building's overall sustainable material choices that helped lead to a LEED Silver certification.



Bluestone slabs were selected for the exterior of the home, to make it appear as though the building emerges right from the landscape (above).