

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

# ST. HELENA

St. Helena Residence, CA



# Gallery Lighting Comes Home

Keith Kosiba's lighting design philosophy is to support and reinforce the architect's and owner's shared vision. That said, Kosiba is most interested in lighting that is appreciated.

Architect Jarrod Denton provided the perfect palette for Kosiba in the form of a dramatic melding of Italianate wine country villa with Signum Architecture's signature modernist, light-filled forms. Standing high above the vineyards in Northern California, the St. Helena residence prioritizes art, then architecture; while remaining, always, a welcoming and comfortable home.

"The lighting is being seen and felt in the space but, in general, the fixtures are not," said Kosiba, Principal of Studio Three Twenty One. "You're trying to integrate it to the level where people recognize that the lighting is impactful. It's natural and supporting the space, but it's not always exposed, not in the forefront."

At the St. Helena residence, everywhere you turn, nearly every surface and nook holds a thought-provoking, even challenging work of contemporary art. Denton's architectural design defers to the owners' magnificent collection. "We minimized backgrounds and adapted muted palettes to showcase the art.

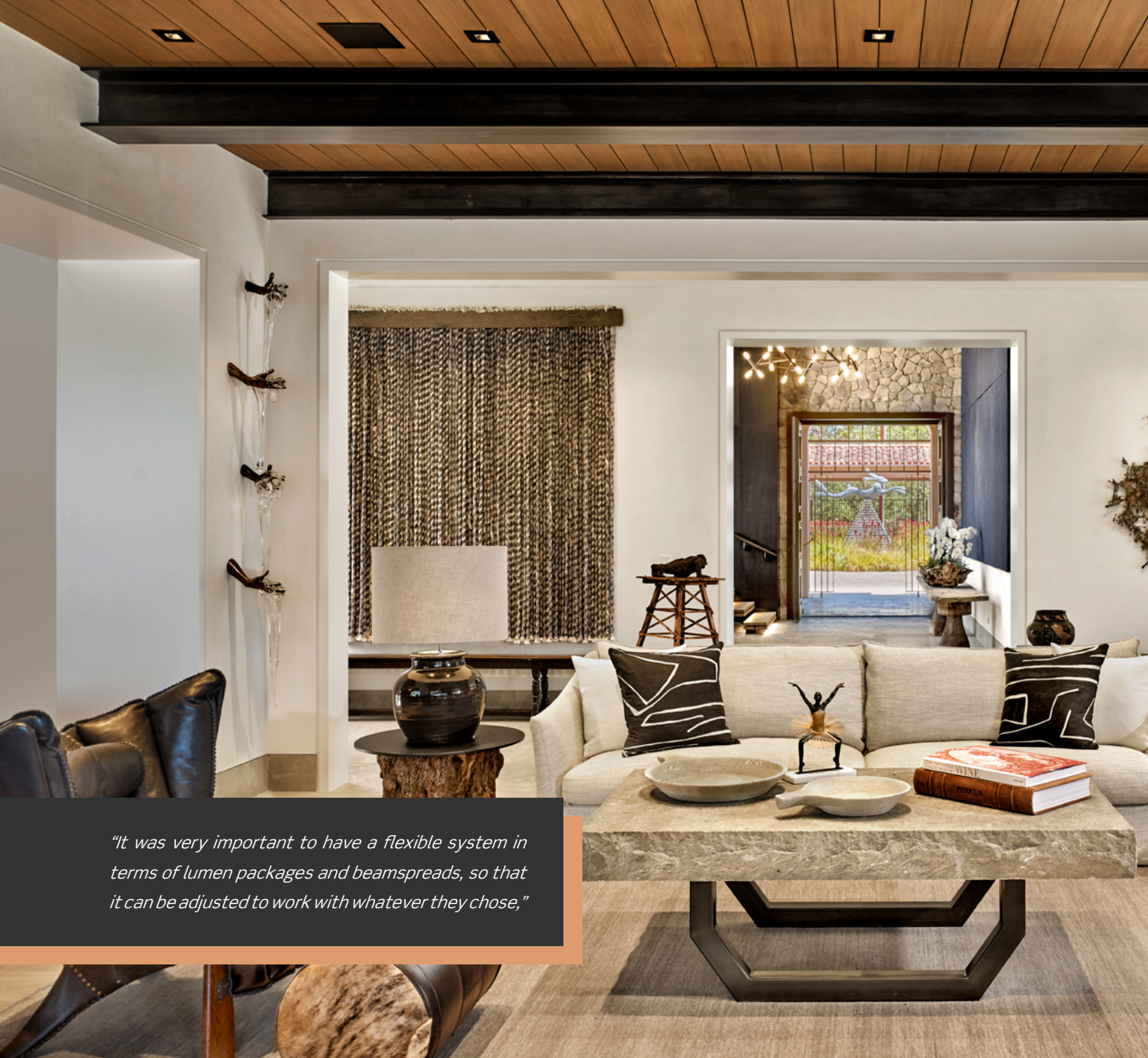




*“We had so many different mounting conditions: wood ceilings, gypsum ceilings, a fabric ceiling in the family room, and then some acoustical plaster treatments in the kitchen. We did trimless mud-in to gypsum. We mounted in wood ceilings where we had them centered on joins. A lot of different finishes and surfaces.”*

The layers of light we designed supported that and allowed flexibility,” said Denton. “It’s a residence first and an art gallery close behind.” To reconcile these differences, Denton and Kosiba chose Intense Lighting’s MX Family of recessed accent lights for their consistency and beautiful 90+ CRI light quality. MX maximizes flexibility with precise optics and limitless options in terms of apertures, outputs, beamspreads, trims, and optical media. “We had so many different mounting conditions: wood ceilings, gypsum ceilings, a fabric ceiling in the family room, and then some acoustical

plaster treatments in the kitchen. We did trimless mud-in to gypsum. We mounted in wood ceilings where we had them centered on joins. A lot of different finishes and surfaces.” Both Denton and Kosiba favored the look of MX square-aperture accent lights, particularly pinhole squares. Lines of the clean, orthogonal fixtures are in keeping with the wood ceiling of the living room and the sloped square coffers of the kitchen ceiling. In addition, square apertures provide consistency across sight lines as one space opens onto another.



*"It was very important to have a flexible system in terms of lumen packages and beamsreads, so that it can be adjusted to work with whatever they chose,"*

The tones of the living room are relatively muted, opening onto the outdoor dining area with its spectacular wine-country views. The wood ceiling brings warmth and the orthogonal pattern of square pinspots vividly models the grand piano, sculptures, and seating; with dimmable lighting for conversation, lounging, or reading. Dark trims match the trusswork.

Spaces where round trims make more sense include the slightly vaulted ceiling in the tasting room, which is home to a circular sculpture group, and the soaring family room ceiling with its bold circular truss that supports a shallow pyramidal ceiling. Carefully aimed MX round accents –installed in the incline of the fabric-

covered ceiling – were chosen for their lumen packages, sufficient to light seating and gaming areas below.

In the climate-controlled wine storage room space is tight. A recessed MX multiple frontlights the walls and wine displays, and provides feature lighting for specific wine selections on display. "One aperture gives you multiple aiming opportunities," said Kosiba. "It gave us the almost-retail flexibility we needed here." In the master bedroom and bath, the architectural-looking square apertures set off luxe furnishings, including a tub carved from a single piece of Carrara marble. The orthogonal, glass shape of the steam shower is served by a square-aperture MX with a wet-location lens.



## Best Accent in a **Leading Role**



“The lighting layout primarily revolved around artwork. There are probably about 50 art pieces mounted in the interior. Most were identified in advance, and then some changed at the end. “It was very important to have a flexible system in terms of lumen packages and beamspreads, so that it can be adjusted to work with whatever they chose,” Kosiba said. Denton received detailed information on furnishings and their locations from interior architects Charlotte Dunagan and Thomas Diverio of Dunagan Diverio Design Group, as well as placements for the owners’ art collection.

The MX adjustable accents play one part in Kosiba’s multi-layered lighting solution. But it is the lead role: revealing, modeling,

and emphasizing each work in this gallery-home. “For example, adjustable art lighting in the hallways is consistent along every wall, covering all the positions. Every wall was reinforced with plywood behind the drywall, so they could mount art anywhere – much like in a gallery,” Kosiba said. Highly directional lighting brings out the depth of pieces and helps ensure sufficient light to give a complete perception of the space.



*“They said frequently that they didn’t want to be moving from pool of light to pool of light. They were looking for lighting that was more congruous and had more continuity with the space.”*

Spread lenses and softening lenses are employed liberally for lighting large-area artworks and wallwashing; hex-cell louvers in certain locations block glare. The owners belong to an older demographic that demands more careful and plentiful lighting. “MX adjustables are able to accommodate two [media], so you can shape the beam and louver where you’re worried about cutoff.”

In the owners’ previous residence, a gallery-friendly lighting scheme was overly contrasting and therefore not resident-friendly. “The owners knew from their own experience that a lighting scheme that worked well in a boutique or a gallery just wasn’t comfortable in a home. “They said frequently that they didn’t want to be moving from pool of light to pool of light. They were looking for lighting that was more congruous and had more continuity with the space.” It required a careful balance between providing plenty of positions to light artwork while having a clean ceiling that doesn’t look commercial or like “swiss cheese.”

But with all these different demands on the MX Family, Kosiba achieved good uniformity in light quality and aesthetics. The sole concession to track lighting (which is, of course, the mainstay of most galleries) is in the soaring, wood-ceilinged entryway. Dual rows of MX trackheads, mounted on canopies and carefully aimed, wash the double-height, dark-colored artwork that dominates the





space. Here we see how various shapes, sizes, and reflectances of the collection can impact how light functions in each space, and how lighting the artwork on vertical surfaces effectively can make spaces feel brighter.

Linear lighting plays a supporting role in the layered solutions, articulating some architectural elements and, with the MX downlights, bolstering the often-sculptural decorative lighting chosen by the interior designers. The Creston lighting controls system was chosen for its owner-friendly interface, and virtually the entire house is carefully zoned and programmed for entertaining.

All the MX fixtures are controlled with 0–10V dimming down to 1%. Kosiba explained that only a few manufacturers could have possibly met the demands of this project and its budget. “I dealt with Intense directly via my regional, who is local. And when we had issues, big ones and small ones, they helped us resolve them. That’s huge that you get that high level of collaboration with a manufacturer. On a project this size, over this many years... You’re collaborating with them during design and then 3 years later you’re collaborating with them to solve problems during installation. A company that you can have that level of dialogue with, and continuity of support – it’s so helpful.”



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