

A Home With a History



Winemaker Robert Mondavi Jr., and wife Lydia Mondavi’s custom, designer home may be newly built, but there are pieces of history in every room.

By Christine Aebischer

Before they even started planning their second home, Robert Mondavi Jr., and Lydia Mondavi knew they wanted a place in the South to reconnect with Lydia Mondavi’s family heritage. But the Napa Valley residents also wanted to incorporate another one of their passions — wine. Their third requirement was to integrate sustainable living principles, specifically with the hardwood floors. The final product resulted in a custom home that seamlessly combines wine country with lowcountry, as well as the Mondavi Home Collection, a line of hardwood floors made from reclaimed materials with remarkable pasts.

Luxury Meets Legacy

The Mondavis paired with Authentic Reclaimed Flooring to create beautiful floors that have a story behind them. Lydia Mondavi’s favorite, known as Mondavi’s Choice, is produced from reclaimed heart pine salvaged from the Old Crow Distillery, an abandoned bourbon distillery, and then brushed with a natural oil finish. “I love bourbon, it’s one of my favorite drinks,” shares Lydia Mondavi. “We needed kids to be able to come in with sandy feet and have it still look beautiful. Mondavi’s Choice is very low-maintenance. We don’t want to worry about people tiptoeing.”

Beyond the distilleries of Kentucky, the vineyards of Napa Valley proved to be another ideal source of beautiful woods in need of repurposing. Each year a certain number of oak barrels, used to store the wine, come out of commission at Robert Mondavi Winery, and Robert Mondavi Jr., wanted to find another use for such unique wood besides mulch or planters. “These barrels are coming from wood that’s in a province in France ... and is grown from 80 to 120 years to allow for the best possible wood,” explains Robert Mondavi Jr. “To me [the flooring] is the perfect way to repurpose them. It’s a one-of-a-kind, very green, reclaimed product that has a unique signature that you’re not going to find anywhere else.”

Robert Mondavi Jr. hand selects each barrel, which is then milled into flooring, while maintaining the distinctive stains of the wine it once stored. The dark and brooding shades of the Cabernets and the dark, nutty browns and golden blonds of the white wines can be found throughout the Mondavi’s coastal home, reminding them of the vineyards even when they’re almost 3,000 miles away.

Family Treasures

Robert Mondavi Jr. and Lydia Mondavi wanted to create a blend of their families’ histories, so they started with the location. The pair met in Atlanta, Georgia, where Lydia Mondavi’s family dates back five generations. “As Rob would say, he fell in love with me and the South,” says Lydia Mondavi. When she started looking into her family’s

ancestry, Lydia Mondavi found relatives that fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, as well as a World War II marine that was trained at Parris Island, the island the family now overlooks from the deep-water dock of their Beaufort, South Carolina, home.

In addition to the oak wine barrels used in the flooring, the Mondavis incorporated even more of the wine country with wood features crafted from virgin clear heart redwood tanks from the 1940s, which were previously used to store wine and are now found in the home’s wood beams, great room barn door and fireplace mantel. “We wanted the house to have nuances of both of our histories and families,” shares Lydia Mondavi.

The pair also included several family heirlooms in the home, including a farm table in the breakfast nook from Lydia Mondavi’s great-great grandparents. Pieces of art created by Lydia Mondavi’s mother Anita Wilbanks, who was also the interior designer, further enhance the family feel of the home.



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Making New Memories

One of the most important things for the Mondavis when designing their custom home was that it had to be the ultimate entertaining space. “We specifically designed our beach house to be comfy and spacious and to entertain friends and family,” says Lydia Mondavi. One of her pet peeves is an obstructive ventilation hood in the kitchen, so she worked with Reu Architects to create a smaller and quieter version that wouldn’t inhibit the aesthetic or the conversation. “[Rob] loves to cook; he wants to be in the kitchen cooking and to be with the guests,” explains Lydia Mondavi. “The kitchen, great room and dining area are all one space — with the open floor plan, we’re able to be together.”

One of the Mondavi’s favorite features of the home is one that runs behind the scenes, but provides them with incredible peace of mind. They first decided to install a generator to keep their wine collection from spoiling in any temperature fluctuations that could occur from the frequent power outages of the South. Now, they can’t imagine not having it and are also planning on installing one in their Napa home. “When the power goes out and you’re down the hall from your three-year-old son, you realize how important a generator is,” says Robert Mondavi Jr. **U+H**



Trex outdoor decking was used not only on the home’s decks, but also on the dock, walkways and steps leading down to the beach to keep the surfaces from overheating.



One of Lydia Mondavi’s favorite rooms, the master bedroom features Mondavi’s Choice flooring and views of Spanish moss and the Atlantic Ocean.



The Mondavis incorporated as many windows and screened porches as possible to take full advantage of the stunning water views.