

VEGAS



ART OF THE CITY

EMERGING STARS
PUBLIC TREASURES
DESERT MONOLITHS

SIZZLING SUMMER FASHION

*A NEW ERA FOR
THE STRIP'S
WILD-CHILD HOTEL*

PLUS
ARETHA FRANKLIN
PETE WENTZ
BRIAN WILSON



With the push of a button, floor-to-ceiling drapes swing around to darken the space and a movie screen silently descends from the ceiling. RIGHT: The home's design dissolves the barrier between being inside and outside.



Vegas Modern

THE NEWEST SUSTAINABLE DESIGNS IN LAS VEGAS DEPART DRAMATICALLY FROM THE CITY'S VERNACULAR STYLE. BY T.R. WITCHER

As Tyler Jones, a cofounder and owner of Blue Heron Design Build, leads a tour through the stunning 5,800-square-foot model home at his company's Sky Terrace development, perched atop a hill in Henderson, it's not so much the views of the city that captivate. It's the way the interior and exterior spaces meld—the way you can stand inside a casita, look outside to a courtyard,

past the courtyard into the kitchen, past the kitchen to an outdoor patio, and beyond that to the city and mountains on the horizon.

Blue Heron prides itself on just these sorts of layered designs, in which generous courtyards and patios and acres of glass doors and windows help dissolve the barrier between being inside the home and outside it. Add the company's modernist

touch, its emphasis on clean vertical and horizontal lines and serene earth tones, and its commitment to sustainability and you have the core of what Jones calls "Vegas modern." It's a style and sensibility that speak both to the city's playful, loungeable glamour and to the intense heat and dryness of the Mojave Desert. "It's what we believe is the vernacular style for Las Vegas," Jones says,

and it's light years beyond the ersatz Mediterranean—meets—Southern California look associated with construction in the valley.

The Sky Terrace model is the National Association of Home Builders' New American Home for 2015. From its huge open-floor living room/dining room/kitchen to its airy second-story loft, the interior is a wealth of flexible spaces flooded with natural light. A TV room comes complete with a translucent onyx bar, a slick battery of high-end audiovisual gear, and a glass door to the courtyard—and at the touch of a button it transforms into a home theater.

Despite all the bells and whistles, Blue Heron's new flagship home consumes zero net energy, thanks in part to a passive solar approach to design that's surprisingly low-tech. Trellises and overhangs keep sunlight off the glass on the home's southern side, minimizing heat gain. There are no windows facing west—yet the interplay between indoor and outdoor keeps you from noticing. A small pool in the courtyard, sandwiched between three

indoor spaces, helps generate cooling cross-ventilation.

The home also has a sophisticated building envelope: The entire structure, including the attic and the roof, is insulated. A UV system on the roof reflects sunlight, and the doors and windows—and there are a lot of them—all use dual-pane low-E high-performance glass. A 15-kilowatt solar-panel array on the roof provides enough electricity to run the whole house, a tankless water heater supplies hot water only on demand, and the home's drywall removes dangerous volatile organic compounds from the air. You can even monitor the building's energy performance (or oversee the security, or turn on the lights, or play a movie on one of 27 flat screens) on your iPad.

Jones promises that Blue Heron is planning smaller homes at more affordable prices (the base cost of the smaller Sky Terrace home is \$629,990). But for a firm committed to high-end design, don't expect any compromises. As Jones puts it, "There's no shortcut to really great design." blueheronhomes.com **V**