

Home & Garden

Next-wave design

Surf Ranch's cool aesthetic is a nod to Kelly Slater's big-wave lifestyle.

By CHANTAL LAMERS • Photographs by BECCA TILLEY





BOARD-ROOM EXTERIOR

To unite the ranch house with the new corrugated metal structure, painted black, Clasen repurposed leftover reclaimed wood into planter boxes.



FIN RACKS

A collection of found surf fins from Hawaii was curated by body-surfer Mark Cunningham.

SHADED SHOWERS

The board room has indoor lockers and a tidy row of al-fresco showers located behind the ranch house.



CLUBHOUSE

The original 1950s ranch house was reimagined as a modern surf club, with a reclaimed wood façade and folding doors connecting to a viewing deck. Clasen corralled the scattered-about guitars and amps into this room, adding a turntable and records found at local antiques stores. Guests (including Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder) can watch the wave basin live on the plywood-framed flat screen and hold impromptu jam sessions here.



California's agricultural epicenter is just about the last place you'd expect to find the world's most elite surfers. But 11-time world champion Kelly Slater has flipped the small town of Lemoore in California's Kings County—best known for producing crops such as grapes and almonds—into the most unexpected destination for one of the West's most iconic sports.

Surf Ranch, started by Slater and owned by the World Surf League, is a 20-acre engineered surf town of sorts, and includes a massive, sustainably powered wave basin. "The wave is the world's longest rippable, open-barrel man-made wave," says Amy Denman, WSL communications manager. "It is truly extraordinary and something that needs to be seen to be believed. The system can generate various waves, from beginner waves to high-performance waves."

It was also vital to Slater and the WSL that

the Ranch embrace a sustainable ethos that extended from construction to day-to-day operations, including clean and renewable energy, waste management, water conservation, and carbon offsetting, says Denman. For example, it was built with sustainable materials, including the crushed-shell roadways and paving stones made from upcycled foam dust—a waste product of surfboard manufacturing—in partnership with Firewire Surfboards. And single-use plastics? You won't find any here.

Those tenets also translated to the design of the communal areas, a collection of airy lounges and wave-viewing spaces that reflect both surfing's rich roots and the adjacent farming community.

To layer on the finishing touches the team tapped Raili Clasen (railicadesign.com), an Orange County interior designer known for both

her affection for ranch homes and her surf-industry credentials (she pioneered sales for Quiksilver's female surf brand Roxy). "When those gates opened on my first visit, my jaw dropped," she says. Clasen reimagined a classic surf town in a pared-down palette with understated earthy tones in sustainable fabrics and materials that allow the guests to provide the color. "It isn't just the design or the architecture, it's the vibe," she explains. "A campfire going, the waves cranking, and surfers walking around in wetsuits with huge smiles on their faces."





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DISPLAY WALL

Clasen refreshed the traditional gallery-wall formula by mixing framed surf photography with an antique Central Valley topography map and an autographed surfboard. For a pop of texture, she wove in vintage Hawaiian sun hats handmade from coconut fronds.

BOARD TOUR

Above a row of surfboard racks, the white shiplap walls feature hand-painted, hand-stitched flags by Slightly Choppy. Each is a country in the World Surf League’s Championship Tour.

BOARD ROOM

“We really had to think about the valley’s harsh weather conditions when designing the space,” said Clasen. The winning formula? Leather and found rugs along with recycled army-tent canvas chairs by Stephen Kenn and vintage safari chairs from 1stdibs.



Wave Experience

Fourteen acres are devoted to a horizontal lagoon that’s paired with a 100-plus-ton hydrofoil placed along a track that spits out idyllic, on-demand waves. The cutting-edge, solar-powered system is unlike anything in the world, capable of churning out more than 50 different swells with the “push of a button.”



GO THERE Surf Ranch is open to the public Sep. 20–21 for the Freshwater Pro, part of the WSL Championship Tour. The Grom Zone will host kid-friendly activities, and swimming will be available at Perkins Lake. The Raconteurs will headline after the competition. wslfreshwaterpro.com