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FALL 2010

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Home & Garden Design Editor: Carol Blitzer
Art Director: Diane Haas
Writers: Ann Bertelsen, Carol Blitzer,

Laurie Callaway, Kate Daly
Photographers: Barbara Boissevain, Dasja Dolan
Vice President Sales/Marketing: Walter Kupiec
Advertising Sales: Janice Hoogner



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EAST MEETS WEST



Traditional, contemporary merge in bigger, but more energy-efficient home

Focal point of the house, top, is an aluminum and glass-floored bridge that soars above the first floor, with light flowing in through six square windows. Left, the “Japanese bath” incorporates a shower and soaking tub in one wet room. Although located between the kids’ rooms, the whole family uses it.

by Kate Daly /
photos by Barbara Boissevain

When Bill and Kayo Rust first moved to the Blossom Valley neighborhood of Mountain View five years ago, they bought an older two-bedroom, one-bath California rancher, hoping to expand it to meet their growing family needs. Fast forward to now, and they are thrilled to be living in a new four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath, contemporary-looking, two-story house that’s more than three times the size of the old one, yet surprisingly energy efficient.

Bill Rust is a software engineer with Agilent, and Kayo Rust has worked as a financial analyst with Hewlett-Packard. With two young children, they quickly outgrew the old house that was just over 1,000 square feet.

“We heard it was a kit brought here in pieces like the house across the street,” Bill says.

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Custom-built maple cabinets, top, form a half wall that separates the living room from the dining room. Above, the kitchen island is topped with CaesarStone, curved on one side.

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The Rusts originally planned to remodel the 1948 home to add a second story and more light, but as their architect, Howard Post of Portola Valley, explains, “That house had an inadequate foundation and the materials were poor.”

The decision became clear: Start over. Post drew up several schematics, but it wasn’t until after the clients sent him a picture of a place they liked on 17 Mile Drive, that Post felt he could cut loose. He spent all night designing “a more dramatic solution with volumetric interest.”

The end result is what he calls, “a happy marriage of traditional Japanese and contemporary American influences,” that converge in an open floor plan downstairs and a bridge upstairs.

The pale-yellow stucco exterior of the house hints at what’s to come inside. The 588-square-foot attached garage has a distinctive looking door. It’s made of alumi-

num and Colplay glass panels to match the rest of the aluminum windows, all meant to be maintenance-free.

Hardiplank, a manmade material that looks like wood siding, covers part of the gabled entry. The front door is made from stainless steel with a bamboo glass cut out.

Kayo is from Japan, and wanted a foyer that transitioned between the outdoors and indoors. Post says, based “on traditional Japanese house design, the entry had to be at a different level using a different floor material.”

The entry floor is tiled, and the walls are painted lavender. The idea is to stop, take off shoes, then walk up two steps, and go barefoot on the red oak floors in the rest of the house.

The radiant heating system works to keep the floors warm, according to contractor Chris Donatelli of San Jose. He started with Stego Wrap, “a plastic sheet to line the earth and go up the foundation,

leaving a six-inch space of concrete.” For the subfloor, he used a thick plywood, Warmboard, which has grooves set at least seven inches apart to make room for the aluminum tubes that constantly circulate hot water under the hardwood floors.

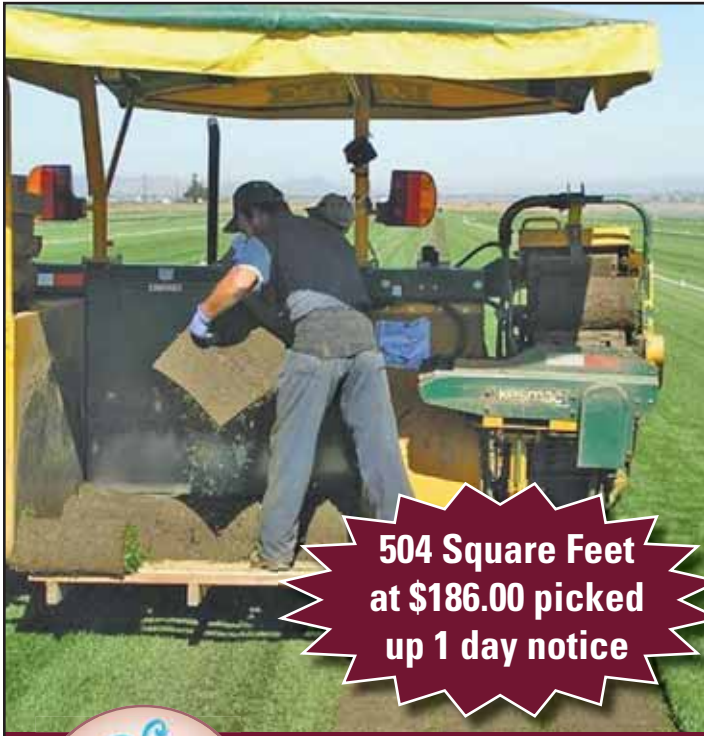
Donatelli says the entire house “is a tightly sealed envelope.” He used spray foam insulation, and installed fans that run all the time as part of a heat-recovery ventilation system.

“We have eight thermostats in the house so we can balance the temperature in each part,” Bill says.

Overall, the house looks cool, however, with light grey or white walls, lightly stained wooden cabinets, darker stained Douglas fir doors, some fitted with frosted glass and some not. Then there’s the focal point, a 16-foot by 4-foot steel, aluminum and glass-floored bridge that dominates the space above.

In the center of the house, the

continued on page 8



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continued from page 6

ceiling extends all the way up to the roofline. The bridge acts as a see-through hall connecting the master-bedroom suite on one wing to the kids' bedrooms and shared bathroom on the other end. The bridge has wire cables on the sides, which are currently covered with acrylic panels to make the structure more childproof.

Two triple-paned skylights bring in lots of light, as do the six square windows that are mounted above the bridge on the walls facing south and north.

Directly beneath the bridge is a line of custom-built maple cabinets that separate the living room from the family room and provide lots of toy storage. The cabinets form a half wall, and in the middle is a large-screen TV that can be lowered, raised and swiveled by remote control.

That common area spills into the rest of the rooms on the first floor: the kitchen, dining room,

half-bath, laundry room and guest room suite. The kitchen continues the wood theme, with more cabinetry with special pullouts to accommodate bulky items such as a rice cooker and bread maker. Like the counters, the island is topped with an off-white CaesarStone, but it is curved on one side to make the set-up more conversational.

Upstairs, the kids' bathroom is lined with a taupe-colored Fontainebleau limestone in the shower and tub areas, and then a glass door and wall enclose that part to keep the steam inside. In keeping with Japanese tradition, Kayo had a shower put in next to a deep tub because she says, "Before taking a bath we wash ourselves, then use the same water in the soaking tub."

Kayo says she wanted a house that was full of light, "not so ornamental", and easy to clean. Now that the family has lived in this new home for a couple of years, she is happy to report it is simple to

maintain, and "we don't use the lights during the day."

Bill is particularly pleased their monthly PG&E bill came to just \$48. **htg**

Resources:

Architect: Howard Bankston Post, Portola Valley, 650-328-6963

Building contractor: Chris Donatelli, Chris Donatelli Builders, San Jose, 408-287-4886, www.dcbuild.com

Landscape designer: Jim Aguirre, Aguirre & Associates Landscape, Santa Clara, 408-733-1080

Goal of project:

Build an economical family home

Unanticipated issues:

Noise carries in an open floor plan

Year house built:

2007-08

Size of home, lot:

2,850-sq-ft house on 11,200-sq-ft lot

Time to complete:

One year

Budget:

\$325/sq ft

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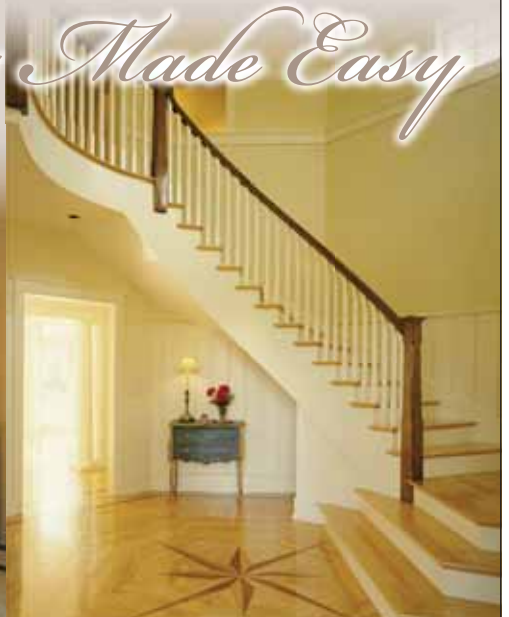
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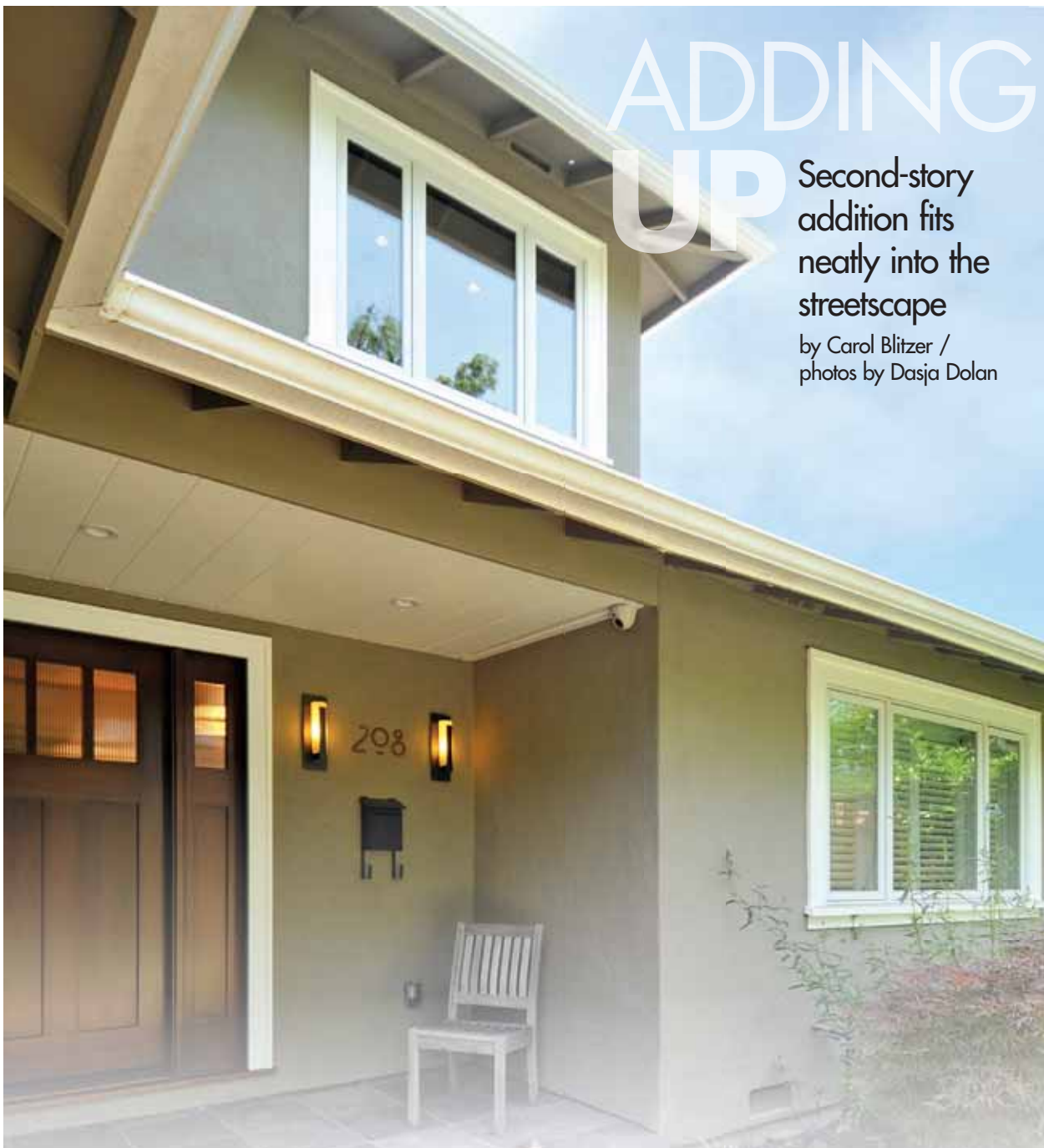
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ADDING UP

Second-story addition fits neatly into the streetscape

by Carol Blitzer /
photos by Dasja Dolan



Laura Rennert and Barry Eisler lived in their 1950s rancher in The Willows in Menlo Park for nearly 10 years before they decided to add a second story. Much had changed since they bought it in 1997: They both worked at home (she's a literary agent; he's an author), they had a daughter and they even had a tiny Chihuahua named Lola.

So when they had an opportunity to move to Tokyo, Japan, for a year, they figured they could have their house completed while they were away, saving themselves a second move.

Just before leaving, they assembled what Rennert calls "our dream team": Robert Mayer, architect; Alyson Collins, designer; and John Merwin, the contractor who had worked on an earlier remodel of their

kitchen.

Mayer scoped out the mainly single-story street and quickly drew up plans for a second-story that wouldn't be too "top-heavy," he says. "Proportion is everything. ... I wanted to avoid the 'tower' effect," he adds, pointing to where the roof cuts under the second-story windows and how the visible walls appear shorter.

"My gut said it wouldn't be easy," says Mayer, who sits on the Planning Commission and Architectural Review Committee for the City of Santa Clara. His gut was right, as both the city and neighbors challenged the couple's plan to build up.

The original house was built on county land, covering 39.3 percent of the lot. A later Menlo Park ordinance amendment limited the footprint to 35 percent,

or 40 percent if any addition was single-story. The couple needed to apply for a variance, even though they weren't covering any more of the lot.

Mayer even completed a sun study to assure a neighbor that the house would not cast a long shadow on nearby property.

"I design a house as if I live next door. It's about the community, the neighborhood," Mayer says.

"Everyone ultimately came on board, even before the variance hearing," Rennert says.

Wowed by the first set of plans, the family set off for Tokyo, doing much of their communicating via e-mail, faxed digital images and a few visits home for face-to-face meetings during the year.

The idea was to work around the updated kitchen and downstairs bathrooms, which involved adding plywood to the back of the kitchen wall for seismic safety.

Downstairs changes include a replacement of the old brick Colonial fireplace with a contemporary Craftsman version, backed in slate and glass, as well as new doors and lighting. New baseboards and crown moldings, the same detailing as on the exterior, run throughout the house.

"We couldn't raise the ceiling, so we ran the

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Architect Robert Mayer designed the second story, left, to avoid a top-heavy look. Right, a contemporary Craftsman version replaced the old brick Colonial fireplace. Below, focal point of the master bathroom is a free-standing deep Zuma tub, which stands in front of a stacked-stone wall.





Window sills in the master bedroom are 5 feet tall, assuring privacy for the homeowners and neighbors.



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molding along the top. It gave the illusion of height,” Rennert says.

“I like uncluttered, clean and simple. Let the lines speak for themselves,” she says, adding that they’re influenced by Craftsman, Arts and Crafts and Asian design.

Today the ceramic-floored entryway features shoe storage and a bench, a nod to their year in Japan, as they ask visitors to remove shoes.

Turn the corner and one continues up the stairs, with mahogany railing and a shallow top-lit niche for future art.

Rennert’s favorite room in the house is the new master bathroom, with a free-standing, deep Zuma tub in front of a stacked-stone wall, heated floor, double square sinks and a separate shower. The tub controls are built into the wall — what Mayer calls “high design.”

“I do a ton of reading in my bathtub,” she says.

Because Rennert and Eisler work at different hours, it was impor-

tant to them to have the bathroom and closet soundproofed from the bedroom. The large walk-in closet separates bathroom and bedroom.

To ensure privacy — both for themselves and their neighbors — window sills in the bedroom are 5 feet tall.

Eisler’s office faces the street, overlooking a huge liquidambar tree, creating a comfortable writing space for his future spy novels. (His latest, “Inside Out,” was published in June 2010.)

Although they chose not to get their remodel green-certified, the couple did incorporate many “green” aspects: low VOC paint, a tankless water heater, no bad glues in the plywood. They considered solar panels on the roof but found them inefficient, given the siting of the house.

“The greenest thing they did is not tear the house down,” Mayer says.

Most important to the couple, though, was fitting into the neigh-

borhood. “We wanted it to look like it was always there,” Rennert says. **h+g**

Resources:

Architect: Robert Mayer, Santa Clara, 408-564-5943

Building contractor: John Merwin, Dimensional Construction, 650-261-1917

Interior designer: Alyson Collins, Spaces That Fit, 831-336-4452, www.spacesthatfit.com

Goal of project:

Add master bedroom suite and office in second story

Unexpected problems:

Needed a variance

Year house built:

1951

Size of home, lot:

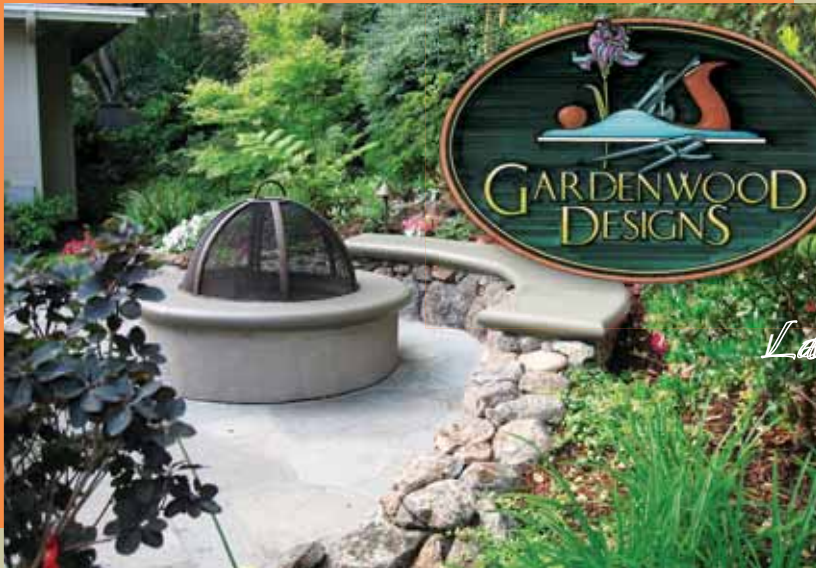
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Time to complete:

Planning: about 11 months
Construction: 4-5 months

Budget:

\$360,000 for core project; another \$40,000-50,000 for extras



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A RECIPE FOR GREEN LIVING

FUTURISTIC DESIGN REUSES MANY ORIGINAL MATERIALS

by Ann Bertelsen / photos by Dasja Dolan



From far left: Redwood beams from the old dining room now form a staircase in a loft bedroom; a “concertina” swing back door opens off the kitchen area to a huge, split-level deck; the front porch ceiling slants upward and out to let in light; the kitchen floor is made of reclaimed wood that matches the wide, random-plank floor in the living room.



Knowing what you want and how to get it takes much of the guesswork out of remodeling — especially if you work with the right design team. Clint Smith and Elizabeth Arndorfer did just that when they converted a 1940s ranch-style house in Barron Park into a contemporary home that’s a recipe for “green” living.

When they purchased the house six years ago, they knew it was a temporary fix for their growing family, but wanted time to analyze their needs and work within their budget to get what they wanted — and then some.

But it wasn’t exactly smooth sailing.

“We knew that we wanted an architect with a strong ‘eco’ bent,” Arndorfer says. She and her husband chose a San Francisco firm whose work had been featured in a national magazine. The project architect, David Waldorf, presented them with a highly imaginative, cutting-edge design that they loved.

But it wasn’t a typical add-on with its dramatically soaring roofline and innovative features. Moreover, the contractor hadn’t had a lot of experience in “green” design, so it was a learning curve for everyone.

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Architect David Waldorf designed a pitched cantilevered roof (seen from the back) and an indoor-outdoor environment, often re-using original or reclaimed materials. **On the cover:** Most of the action takes place at the back of this Barron Park home, with its futuristic, soaring roofline. Photo by Dasja Dolan.

In the bathrooms, tile floors and counter tops look like grained wood. Counters were finished with stair-tread tiles with bullnose edges.



The cork floor in the family room, in bright red, mottled brown and black, appears like a meandering river.

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The couple has two girls, aged 8 and 10, and a 5-year-old son. Their goal was to break open the boxy house and create an indoor-outdoor environment, re-using original or reclaimed materials where possible.

“Initially, we were just going to expand the house in the back, adding a new master suite and a family room and home office that could double as a guest room,” Arndorfer says. “But our architect convinced us that we’d be sorry if we didn’t also remodel the front,” she says, pointing to the new front porch with its built-in seating and colorful planter boxes.

The 1,063-square-foot addition involves a new mas-

ter suite on one side of the back of the house, a family room, home office/guest bathroom on the other side, and an updated kitchen in between. Seen from the rear garden, it has a futuristic look — a pitched cantilevered roof that offers shade in summer, while its photovoltaic panels capture the sun and generate electricity.

Large concertina doors off the dining room and a sliding barn door in the family room create natural circulation throughout the house, as do banks of clerestory windows, avoiding the need for air conditioning. The massive barn door that slides from an exterior metal frame, came from a farm in Fairfax.

While most of the action takes place at the back of the house — the living room and original bedrooms retain the same footprints — the entire residence now assumes a new drama without appearing disjointed.

“That’s because we reused as many of the original materials as possible, so the old and new has a natural flow,” Arndorfer says. The couple loved the beautifully milled redwood ceiling in their living room and wanted to replicate the look in their remodel. But the cost of installing new saw-cut redwood was prohibitive. Instead, their architect found new uses for the redwood beams and ceiling ripped from the old dining room. He also devised an ingenious solution to match the living room ceiling.

Arndorfer affectionately calls it her “chicken wire”

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ceiling. "We took sheets of expanded steel mesh and pre-rusted it," architect Waldorf says. That involved spraying it with vinegar and dipping it into salt water to intensify the rusting process. "It became a family affair; we all went out to the beach and soaked the mesh in seawater," Arndorfer says.

The rusted mesh was then applied over plywood, stained to match the adjoining redwood ceiling. It results in an interesting play of light between the two materials.

Redwood beams from the old dining room were reused for window and door trims and for a loft staircase in a bedroom. Old floor planks were used for a new kitchen banquette and a built-in daybed in Arndorfer's office.

The original dining room ceiling now graces the new front porch, and sections of old redwood were fashioned into a backsplash in the home office bathroom. It also sports a cabinet found on Craig's List, and a stylish stainless-steel counter top that Waldorf found discarded on a city street. "I took it home, cleaned it up, and it's perfect for the bathroom," he says.

Green materials include flooring — the dramatic cork floor in the family room, reclaimed wide-plank floors in the kitchen and dining area, and bamboo floors in the new master suite. Simulated stone kitchen counters (made from recycled paper products), bamboo kitchen cabinets, EnergyStar-rated appliances, non-VOC Yolo paint that eliminates out-gassing, and cement siding that emulates the original board-and-batten exterior continue the "eco" theme.

Arndorfer says the remodel took 14 months to complete and in spite of the inevitable hiccups along the way, she and her family are thrilled with their new house.

"It's a lot like giving birth," she says. "You ultimately forget the pain and tend to revel in the end result." **H+G**

Resources:

Project architect: David Waldorf, San Francisco, 415-377-7738; www.dogsix.com

Building contractor: R.J. Smith & Assoc., 460 S. California Ave., #82, Palo Alto, 650-321-1775; www.rjsmithconstruction.com

Landscape design: Candice Stein, 408-297-8873; www.candicestein.com

Goal of project:

Update and expand a ranch-style home, using as many "green" materials/building methods as possible.

Unexpected problems:

Roof needed to be recalculated and redone; additional permit needed for front porch

Year house built:

1943

Size of home:

Originally 1886 sq ft; now 2946 sq ft on a 10,000-sq-ft lot

Time to complete:

14 months



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The new kitchen/great room, located where the garage used to be, features a cathedral ceiling, with its large beam wrapped in redwood veneer. Green touches range from energy-efficient appliances to counter tops made of recycled glass and concrete.

Creating a REALLY GREEN home

Giving new meaning to
'reuse, reduce, recycle'

by Carol Blitzer /
photos by Dasja Dolan

It's no surprise that Tom and Darlene McCalmont are passionate about the environment. But, a year after selling their company, Regrid Power, and starting McCalmont Engineering, which designs solar-power plants, the couple has finally moved back into their now very energy-efficient, sustainably rebuilt Palo Alto home.

The McCalmonts bought their Barron Park home in 2004, after attending social events there for

years.

"I had such good memories of this house," Tom says, while acknowledging it was in terrible shape. "All the systems were starting to fail," from electrical to plumbing.

They lived there for three years before making significant changes.

"We liked the karma," Tom says, noting that the owner did a good job capturing sunlight. As "solar, green people," Tom says their goal was to keep close to the original character while updating.

But while the couple knew tons about solar, they weren't as knowledgeable about green.

"Everybody talks green, but few know what to do. We wanted to learn ourselves," he says.

It took awhile to find the right contractor, who agreed to accept their guidelines:

- 1) deconstruct, re-use as much as possible;
- 2) keep the walls where they are; re-use foundation
- 3) keep as many windows and

doors as possible.

"We wanted the ultimate house to use no fossil fuels, no natural gas," Tom says. Today even the two eco-fireplaces burn alcohol, an easily replaceable fuel.

"Our architect had a nice sense of style, but he was too modern," Tom adds, so they turned to Sue Harrison and Heidi Lane of Vision Design in San Jose to do the finish work.

Much of the framing, including studs and rafters, was re-used. The original old-growth redwood siding was stripped and re-used in the interior. The old Sheetrock was ground up for re-use; nails were sent to a steel recycler. Appliances, fixtures and cabinets went to The Reuse People in Berkeley.

"Some waste is unavoidable," Tom says, but while a typical project might require 11 Dumpsters, theirs only needed three.

"And deconstruction added about six weeks to the time," Darlene adds.

Every decision was made based



The original old-growth redwood siding, top, as well as rafters, were re-used in the hallways. **Above**, tile resembles flowing rocks in the master bathroom, where light flows in through glass-brick windows. A seat in the middle adds a practical touch.

on what green products were available. Instead of using a gas water heater, the McCalmonts opted for two electric, tankless “instant on” units. For insulation, they chose foam (“It’s warm, quiet,” Tom says), as well as some recycled blue-jean material that deadens sound between bedrooms.

All appliances are EnergyStar-rated, and the wood is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified. And, all paint is low- or no-VOC (volatile organic compound), with the exterior pale gray made of recycled paint. Flooring is mostly bamboo, caramelized to resemble dark wood.

The great room/kitchen was once mainly the old garage, but termite damage and a weak foundation forced them to tear it down. Today it features a cathedral ceiling with a large beam wrapped in a redwood veneer. A large island is topped by IceStone, made of

recycled glass and concrete. Cabinets are made of alder, and most of the lighting is from recessed LEDs in ceiling cans. More light streams in through skylights, offering both natural light and better airflow, Tom says.

The kitchen features a GE Monogram induction cooktop plus a combination microwave/convection/broiler/bake GE Advantium oven and a second conventional/convection oven.

Darlene, who’s been known to bake 800 cookies at Christmastime, reports that the convection oven allows her to put in three cookie sheets at once, cutting baking time by at least one-third.

Push-out metal trash chutes lead to recycling and trash cans outside.

The home is heated via an energy-efficient heat pump. “We had a perfect roof for solar,” Tom says, with very

continued on next page



The eco-fireplace, which burns alcohol and requires no chimney, is considered very "green" because the alcohol is made very quickly with fermented plants vs. millions of years to create fossil fuels.

continued from previous page
few panels visible from the street. A heat-recovery ventilator exchanges air but retains the warmth, he adds.

A half-bath uses one of the few stone counters, but it was made from a remnant, what Tom calls "post-industrial waste." A bigger challenge was finding a reasonably priced bowl sink made of recycled glass.

"We didn't get the \$3,000 bowl," Darlene says.

Although the flooring looks like slate, it's actually ceramic tile and functions as a passive solar area in the hallway.

One bedroom functions as an office for both McCalmonts, since they work at home. Each has a fold-up desk, and a wall bed sits in the middle, courtesy of Valet Organizers.

For privacy, they added a turn into the master bedroom suite, which features more exposed ceil-

ing beams with redwood veneer. The well-organized closet, again by Valet Organizers, includes a built-in ironing board, a retractable rod for dry cleaning, built-in hamper and skylights.

"This was our indulgent bathroom," Darlene says of the master bathroom. The counter is made of Vetrazzo recycled glass, and the ceramic floor (Casa Dolce Casa) is heated. Design elements include a tile pattern resembling a flow of rocks and glass-brick windows in the double shower, while practical touches include a seat in the middle and a wall niche for sundries. An exterior door leads right outside to the hot tub.

Much of the house is oriented to the back yard, with LaCantina architectural folding glass doors leading out to the patio, which is made of stamped concrete that resembles slate. The fence is made of FSC-certified cedar.

The McCalmonts had their Prius
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hybrid re-fitted as a plug-in electric vehicle, and they've pre-wired their garage for future all-electric vehicles.

"We made decisions based on long-term use," Tom adds.

The McCalmonts' home was featured on the 2009 Build It Green Tour and recently earned 188 green points.

"You only need 50 to be considered green," Tom says. **h+g**

Resources:

Building contractor: Peter Lyon, Campbell, 408-871-8665

Interior designer: Sue Harrison, Heidi Lane, Vision Design, San Jose, 408-590-1499, www.vision-design.us

Goal of project:

Remodel and update using green materials; deconstruct and re-use materials

Unexpected problems:

Needed to replace foundation in one room

Year house built:

1951

Size of home, lot:

Added 300 sq ft to 2,600-sq-ft house on 0.25 acre

Time to complete:

20 months

Budget:

About \$350/sq ft

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Plan before you plant

Ten things to keep in mind when designing your garden

text and photos by Laurie Callaway

Having trouble getting started on that garden project or backyard? Whether you are working with a designer or on your own, here are 10 ideas to get you motivated:

1. Look at your home's architecture and let its form, style and materials drive your design. Whether Mediterranean, modern or a cottage bungalow, there are many plants and accessories to enhance each style.

2. Your garden entry says much about you. What impression will people have when they approach your front door? Will they feel welcome? Make paths safe for walking, while filling the spaces with an abundance of interesting plants.

Use containers for added visual interest.

3. How are you going to use the garden? For entertaining, relaxing, play areas or all three? Barbecues, hot tubs, fire pits and dining areas help create outdoor rooms and expand your living space. Do you want a play structure for your young children? Do you want a vegetable garden? Make a list of all the ways you want to use the garden and sketch a layout.

4. Focal points add interest and can give you a pleasing entry point into the garden or help direct the line of sight. Fountains, sculpture, art and bold plants can also be excellent focal points.

5. Water is a wonderful element



Fountains, top, are wonderful focal points and quick ways to add sound and water to a garden. When choosing plants, vary color, leaf shape and size for dramatic interest.

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How you move about the garden is important to the overall feel of the garden. Paths create mystery and suggest unknown destinations.

for any garden. Pools and spas are great additions but not the only way to introduce water. A small fountain, pond, or shallow container

with water lilies can make dramatic statements. If road noise is a problem, the gentle sound of falling water is a great way to dampen

noise.

6. Think in terms of garden rooms. If you are on one acre or a 50-foot-by-80-foot city lot, carve out spaces to create elements of surprise and wonder. Large lawns are often boring and in today's environment, real water hogs.

7. A successful garden doesn't reveal everything at once. Think how you can add paths and movement to the garden. How you move around the garden is important to the overall use and feel of the garden.

8. Just like a successful outfit, gardens need accessories. Create personality by adding benches, containers, arbors, trellises and antique garden features. Do you have a collection of old garden tools or bird houses? Find a spot to highlight the collection.

9. Don't forget to light your garden. Lights in the garden add beauty and interest by highlighting

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shapes and forms. By illuminating stairs and transition points, you will not only create safe pathways but also improve security. For mood lighting, lanterns and candles are magical on a summer night.

Flowers come
and go but
it's the leaves
that give the
backbone to
the garden.

10. Finally, when you select plants, start with leaves first. Flowers come and go but it's the leaves that give the backbone to the garden. Besides green, choose from different colors such as variegated, grey, red, chartreuse or purple. Choose selections of evergreen plants for good bone structure through the year and deciduous plants that signal the changes of the seasons.

Remember, however you choose to start, just start! A home surrounded by a lovely garden adds value and gives hours of pleasure. **h+g**

Laurie Callaway is a national board member of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD), and president of the Peninsula district. She is a regular contributor on HGTV's program "Curb Appeal." She can be reached at www.callawaygardendesign.com.

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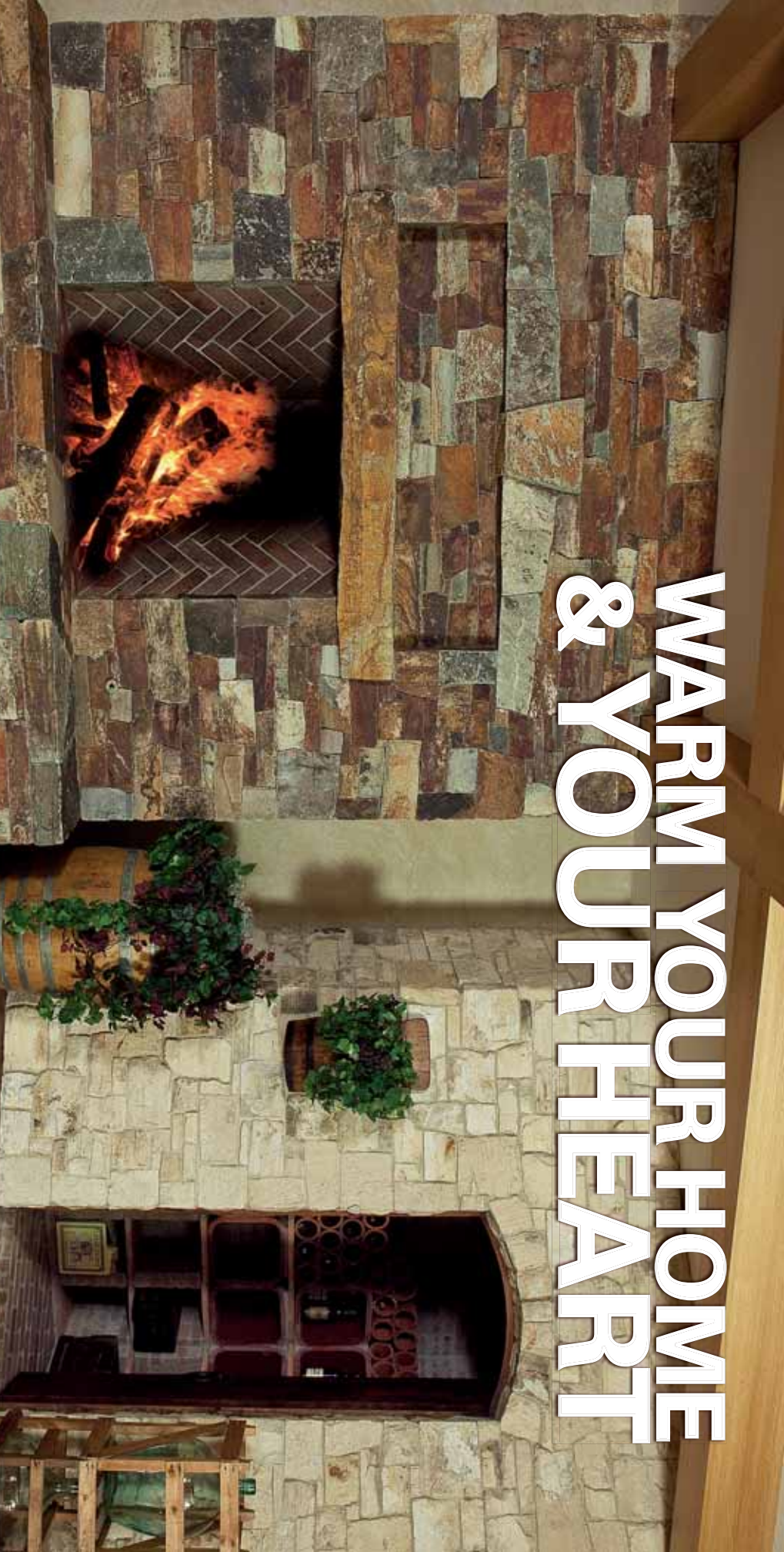


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