

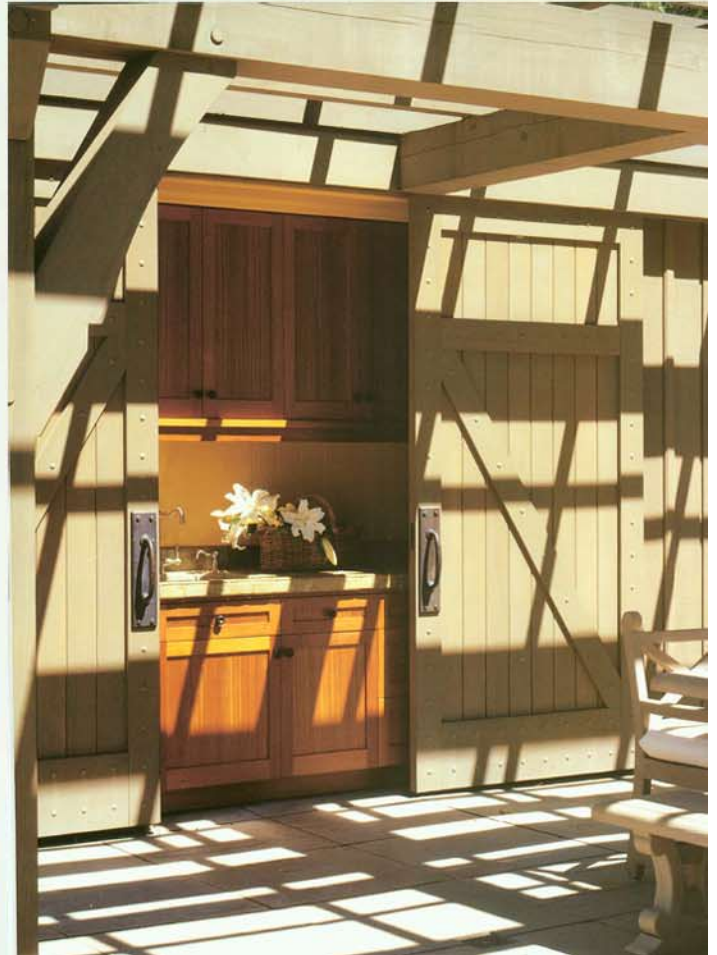


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HOME & DESIGN

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When the homeowners of this Silicon Valley property wanted to replace their weathered ranch house, they turned to San Francisco-based Walker-Warner Architects. What they got was an impressive new home, taking advantage of the best things California has to offer.

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: RON LUTZKO
CONSTRUCTION BY FORDE MAZZOLA
FLOWERS BY FIORI



When the homeowners purchased their property, there was an existing house located smack dab in the middle of their narrow three-acre, creek-side site, effectively cutting the lot in two. The architectural firm of Walker-Warner suggested leveling the house and starting anew. “We took the house out of the picture and focused on the site’s potential,” says architect Greg Warner.

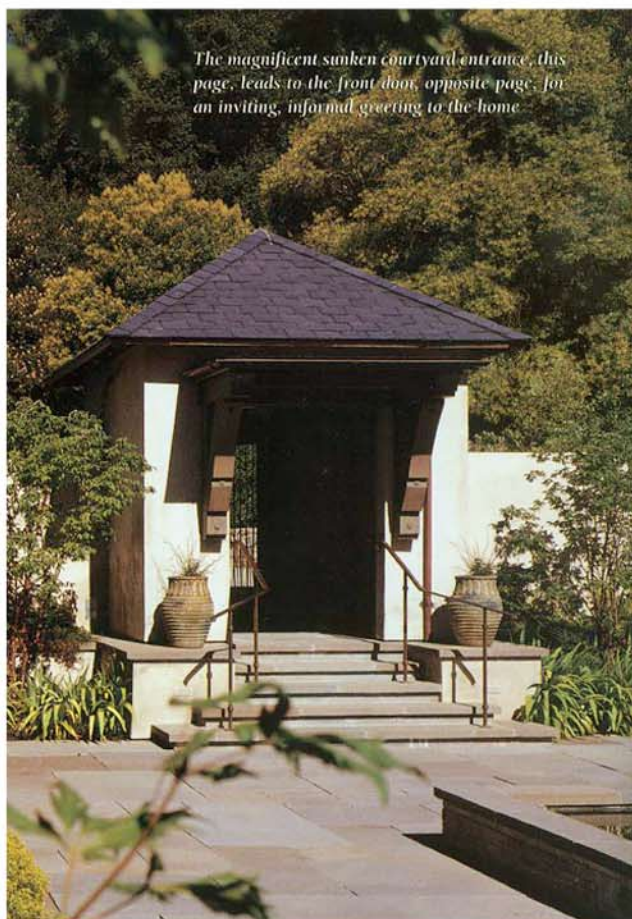
The result is a grand house that seems to sit naturally amongst its woodsy surroundings on the northern end of the property. Taking full advantage of the now more usable grounds, Walker-Warner made room for a pool, a large picnic area under a grand pergola, a putting green, and space for a sport court. By revealing a previously hidden creek, the property appears now to go on forever.

“Having the house on the north side, in this case, is the ideal spot,” notes Warner, “because the south is where most of the day’s sun comes from.” This allows the family to enjoy the

morning and afternoon light that streams into the kitchen, family room, and breakfast area where they are most likely to spend those hours, particularly on a summer day when the children are out of school.

When asked to describe the style of the house, Warner says it isn’t a style that can be described in a traditional way. “Our clients had no preconceived ideas. We tried to find an architecture that married well with its surroundings.”

What they ended up with is a derivative of the Arts and Crafts movement reinterpreted for California living today. “Architecture is really in the detail. It’s an appropriate blend of raw, natural materials typically used in California—redwood siding, plaster, copper, bronze and earthy colors—in an atypical sort of way,” Warner says. “To make sure things weren’t perfectly conventional or formal,” he points out, “the home is purposefully asymmetrical. We tried to collaborate with local artisans in the spirit of art and craft in architecture.”



The magnificent sunken courtyard entrance, this page, leads to the front door, opposite page, for an inviting, informal greeting to the home



The kitchen was designed for functionality and beauty, with shifflably hidden bowls inside the chopping block. The poolside pergola, on opposite page, has its own hidden weather behind sliding barn doors.

The courtyard entrance, which was part of the design’s initial concept, is people’s first impression of the house and, therefore, needed to feel particularly inviting. The architectural team accomplished this by making the wall and gatehouse informal. Even the gravel of the auto court was done to “soften the walls and architecture,” notes Warner.

“We used the shape of the house to form exterior spaces. The courtyard is meant to be an exterior room, if you will,” adds Warner. With the exterior of the living room serving as one of the “rooms” walls and the guesthouse the other, the sunken courtyard is an enclosed and intimate area, which has proven useful for parties. The fountain serves as a focal



Walker-Warner and landscape architect, Ron Lutzko, worked closely together to create a marriage of both house and garden, as seen on this page. All the custom ironwork around the exterior has integral-colored plaster, top of opposite page, which will never need painting. The redwood siding is covered in a Spanish oak stain giving it a green hue. The copper was left natural, not forced to patinate. The bathroom's mosaic tile design, top right of opposite page, was created by Archetile of San Francisco. The French doors, bottom left, and the Dutch doors, bottom right, lead out to the courtyard entrance.

point as well as a directional device to the front Dutch door which opens on top, allowing the outside in without letting pets and kids out.

Because the family already had an extensive modern art collection, Walker-Warner allowed for plenty of wall space for the existing pieces as well as the anticipated additions. The large hallway acts as a gallery that leads into the living and dining rooms where the collection continues.

The ceilings in this wing are high, featuring impressive reclaimed fir structural beams. The flooring is scraped for a natural, worn look. Like the exterior, the earth-tone walls inside are an integral-colored plaster that will never need to be painted.

While the front of the house is the formal space, the back is the casual, everyday space where the family spends most of its

time. With that concept, Walker-Warner created a barrier-less kitchen that flows into the breakfast area and family room. Although there are no walls, there is still the perceived notion of separation. The eating counter, for instance, “keeps party guests out of the kitchen,” says the homeowner, “yet allows them to be part of what’s happening in here. It also hides whatever mess might be in the kitchen sink.”

In the family room, one can lounge on the large, colorful, sectional couch to enjoy the fireplace or the entertainment center, carefully hidden inside the inglenook which serves to create a more intimate space.

According to the homeowners, “The house has good karma. We love it.” The Walker-Warner team says they couldn’t ask for a better compliment than that. ■