

HOME

ISSUE THREE

SPRING 2010

IT'S BEEN SAID that the eyes are the windows to the soul. They give you a sense of the person within. That's why we're taught at a young age the value of a firm handshake and looking people directly in the eye. For us, this signifies forthrightness and engagement. Similarly, a great entry at your home strengthens the moments of greeting and farewell.

ENTRIES – THE EYES TO THE SOUL OF YOUR HOME

Many homes get built with little forethought given to the entry. One common blunder is the “hidden front door”, the one you can't find, leaving you haplessly traipsing off through service walks or probing into open garages in hopes of finding the elusive place to knock and let the occupants know you've arrived and would like to be greeted without walking into some potentially embarrassing private zone.

Contrast that with how, layer by layer, great homes unveil themselves. What a difference it makes arriving at a property where it's apparent through landscaping, pathways and architectural features that

you're on the right path to the front entry. For a first time guest, this is reassuring and reduces anxiety, knowing that you're welcome!

Great entries begin at edge of the property, with clearly defined addresses, driveways, gates and other distinguishing features. There are defined areas for guest parking. And, once your visitors do arrive, how do you enhance their experience?

Why not play with a number of elements along the entry way to invoke all the senses? Things like: beautiful landscaping; a focal point along the way; perhaps a piece of

art; a fountain that provides the sound of water and the sense of abundance; fragrant plants that bloom at different times, causing you inhale deeply and savor the moment; possibly an ornamental fruit tree to make your mouth water; an exterior entry that contains a promise of more to come. This is where the successful integration of landscape design and architecture increases the value not only of your home, but your life.

Many times, a property doesn't have the luxury of space, yet even though the arrival experience is abbreviated, it doesn't have to be less meaningful. There are some wonderful entries to

continued on inside flap



Entries *continued from cover*

small homes and condos that contain all of the elements above and are a delight to the senses.

Where properties have more distance, the front door may be hidden from immediate view, but the path to it is clear and obvious. Along the way, there may be a bridge over a water element with dramatic landscape, and when you see the front door, it's so unique that you are compelled to continue. The door itself is a statement piece. Intriguingly, it's a clue as to what you might discover and who you might meet, providing some insight of the people who live there, a sense of their prevailing attitude and outlook towards life.

The ancestral symbolism of opening

doors is powerful. A great front door has a sense of strength about it. It can be any number of materials, from a rustic plank door to iron and glass, from containing antique panels to modern and contemporary, but it's got to work well, close well and have an ergonomic sense of sturdiness and the feeling of security.

It can be solid, not giving a visitor a peek inside, to the other end of the spectrum, all glass, and still provide a sense of sanctuary while allowing a view into the home and possibly beyond. Whether it's a landmark in the distance or an internal piece of art, great front entries intentionally capitalize on axis lines that draw the eye to focal points. Also most people instinctively first look to the

right when entering a space - it can be another opportunity for a focal point.

Entries are places of greetings and farewells. They are transitional hinge points in the daily comings and goings of our lives. They are the literal portal into our own realities that we've created. They help to punctuate those poignant moments from the simple arrival of your children's friends to the surprise delivery of a bouquet of flowers.

Each entry is unique and says something about the people who live there, yet there are key ingredients that are universal. Here are the things we advise our clients in creating a great entry arrival pattern from property line to interior:



Clock wise from left: Architecture by Tom Meaney and Landscape Design by Margie Grace; Architecture by Tom Meaney; Architecture by Bob Pester, Zehren Design and Landscape Design by Katie O'Reilly-Rogers; Architecture by Howard Wittausch and Landscape Design by Eric Nagelmann.

- Well marked address with a distinctive landmark.
- Integration of landscape design and home architecture.
- Defined guest parking.
- An obvious pathway to the front door that contains elements that rouse as many senses as possible: visual beauty through an artistic element, pleasant sounds, fragrance, even touch—all of these work in conjunction to open up the soul to take in the moment and experience living.
- A focal point.
- Some shelter from the elements.
- A well built door that's properly outfitted with good hardware that conveys security as well as opportunity.
- Adequate space to welcome new arrivals and say farewell to old friends.

Having had a hand in creating several hundred entries, no two alike, we've seen a tremendous variety, from grand and glorious to mysterious; cozy and homey to palatial; simple to artistic; open and direct to festive and decorated; classic and traditional to breathtakingly contemporary.

By working with great architects, landscape architects and interior designers, we've seen what works. Through the years, the accumulated knowledge and wisdom we've gained ultimately benefits our clients.

Looking ahead, here's to opening doors and new opportunities!

by Bruce Giffin



Cover: Architecture by Don Nulty. Above: Architecture by Chris Dentzel

SPRING CHECK LIST— EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS:

- Understand that in a major earthquake, in the first 72 hours, police, fire and medical support teams will be overwhelmed. Be prepared to care for yourself, your family and your neighbors on your own for several days.
- Check, update and replenish emergency supplies—bottled water, battery operated radio, extra batteries, first aid kits, flashlights, back up heat source or camp stove for cooking.
- Recognize that your water heater may be the only source of a limited amount of potable water.
- Secure large furniture pieces (hutches, armoires, etc) to walls.
- Know how to open your automatic gates without power.
- Know where your gas and water shutoffs are and that they are easily accessible. Exercise water shutoff valves every 6 months. Have emergency shutoff wrench close at hand.
- Make sure that you have 5 gallons of bottled water stored per occupant of your home. Refresh every six months.

As always, if we can be of assistance, please give us a call.



Build It! Q & A *continued*

Quick Build. On the Showhouse, we decided that we would layer our forces. I was the strategic, long range person and ultimate decision maker. Our Project Manager was in charge of all site operations and paperwork as well as the liaison with our office and consultants. Another key person was our site superintendant. He was in charge of the nuts and bolts and organizing the crews on a daily basis.

Q It's interesting that none of the quick build outs had a home owner involved. Is it possible to do one with an average homeowner?

A No!...just kidding! At times it's even tough for me to let things go, but in order to keep moving ahead without losing time, you have to learn to disconnect. We pride ourselves on doing things to the best of our ability and at the highest standards we can achieve, but, when it comes to doing something crazy like building an 11,000 square foot showcase home in 365 days, you have to let the professionals do their job. The typical project leads to design meetings where everyone, including the builder, is involved in creative ideas and cost options, slowing things down. In a quick build, they tell us what to build and we build it! However, at the same time we are always on the lookout for things that are simply wrong.

Q What are the top ten tips you would give home owner clients to assist us in meeting deadlines?

- 1 Pick your team very carefully. You have a long relationship ahead.
- 2 Be sure that you understand what has been designed.
- 3 Be sure that the design is exactly what you want.
- 4 Stay very involved with the design process and select your finishes up front.
- 5 Be sure that you understand the budget and plan a contingency for any unforeseeable conditions or changes.
- 6 Plan on attending weekly meetings and be prepared to answer any questions from the previous meeting.
- 7 While we all have great ideas about how things should be run, it's important to let the builders manage the work their way.
- 8 Always run things through the jobsite supervisor. Giving the subcontractors directives only creates confusion and leads to unbudgeted costs.
- 9 Keep the relationship with your builder at a professional level. We are in this together!
- 10 Enjoy the process! Good feelings and happiness CAN be built right into your new home.



GIFFIN & CRANE
ESTABLISHED 1986

FEATURED HOME:

CIMA DEL



DWIGHT LOWELL HAD AN IDEA revolving around an incredible piece of ground: bring together a team of top notch, talented professionals to create an outstanding property. Dwight brought in the land owner, Tad Buchanon, and secured the financing for the venture. Dwight assembled a team of design experts that were led by Don Nulty, architect, and included Sue Aldrich, interior designer as well as Eric Nagelmann, landscape

MUNDO

designer. Dwight selected Giffin & Crane to be the builders. Providing construction accounting was Dave Larson, CPA, with McGowan Gunterman. The result—Cima del Mundo, considered by some to be the finest home in Santa Barbara County.

Encompassing approximately 13,000 square feet in a H shaped floor plan, Don Nulty's design concept was to create a classic home that would feel like it had been on the site since the halcyon days of Santa Barbara's great estates—the roaring '20s, yet at the same time be completely contemporary with 21st century amenities, fixtures, electronics and comfort. Don has a tremendous talent for getting architectural scale and volume to ring true. His design philosophy about what makes the size of rooms absolutely right resonates.

Additionally, Don's design strengths lie in his ability to capture focal points, shape a balanced home based on strong axis lines, and create an experience of unfolding depth for the visitor. In describing Cima del Mundo, Don said that one of his objectives was to design a home where, as a person would walk through, the architecture would elicit seven succeeding "wows".

Cima del Mundo is considered by some to be the finest home in Santa Barbara County.

Sue Aldrich, the interior designer, utilized a Moroccan theme in the tile selections, lighting and decorative finishes. Working a year in advance of completion, she integrated the rooms' details and finishes with the furnishings that would be placed in the home upon completion. Always the professional, Sue kept well ahead of the builders' requirements for product specifications and materials. It's a home described as casually elegant—one where we all feel at home.

Eric Nagelmann, the landscape designer, took 2 ½ acres of completely bare ground and transformed them into a veritable garden of Eden. Over the land, there are a variety of settings and experiences, with each garden relating to the space it's in as well as local micro climates and architecture. It culminates in a gated entry patio that feels like an oasis of green.

Construction was led by Geoff Crane, with support from Tom Amos, superintendent, Karen Mills, contracts and admin, and Denise Petruskin, financial control. Working together, they delivered the project in 18 months from ground breaking to completion. A typical work day on site would have about 60 to 70 tradesmen and there were a number of times where the workmen numbered close to 100.



The home was brought to market in August 2008, listed with Suzanne Perkins of Sotheby's, and sold to a lovely family who enjoy it's beauty and workmanship. In a community with many extraordinary homes, Cima del Mundo stands out as one of the best, thanks to the vision of Dwight Lowell and the team of professionals he assembled.



THE TEAM

Don Nulty
Architect

Sue Aldrich
Interior Designer

Eric Nagelmann
Landscape Designer

**Geoff Crane, Tom Amos,
Karen Mills & Denise
Petruskin**
Giffin & Crane



BUILD IT! Q & A WITH GEOFF CRANE ON QUICK BUILDS



Q What are the key things that need to be in place to make a quick-build happen?

A Design elements and planning need to be completed and approved by all parties before beginning. This means that everyone involved fully understands what is being built and will allow us to do just that. Careful up front review and acceptance is critical. The other aspect is cash flow. If we are asking people to “work out of the box”, be prepared to pay them quickly in return.

Q What kind of team does it take?

A Professionals! In particular, those willing to work longer hours and under a bit more pressure to get it done. Patience is key as tempers can often flare when things are being pushed. Trades need to be willing to work together in conditions that are busier and in spaces that they normally have to themselves. Before bidding, it’s important to make them aware of what’s expected, and again at the start of work that this is not going to be just another job.

Q What types of commitment from the design and engineering professionals are required?

A The designers must be willing to answer questions or turn Requests for Information (RFIs) around as if this was their only job. Changes

Geoff Crane has been the principal builder on a number of significant architectural projects (CALM/ Traditional Home Magazine’s Showhouse 2004, CALM Showhouse 2006, Ojai Valley Inn & Spa

2009 Spa) with remarkably short build out times.

or questions that require drawings are either in the fax or emailed on the same day. Also, everyone checks their ego’s at the gate...in order to keep moving forward, we all need to work together candidly. No finger pointing allowed!

Q How about communication?

A Everyone must know what they are getting into. Regular “quick” meetings with key people are necessary. Agendas are kept short and action items completed immediately...like now! Working through long to-do lists is another waste of time. The goal is to get all to-do’s done prior to the next “quick” meeting. Every phone call or e-mail is direct and to the point with enough information to allow for a straight answer. A construction schedule is a very good way to map out time sensitive

items and especially long lead time items, but really, the main thing is to hit your milestones! There is a critical path to follow and lots of stuff happens around it that are not so time sensitive....don’t let yourself get hung up on non critical items. Stay on your path!

Q How do you organize a team to handle a project like this?

A Choose your team carefully; there will be a lot of tense moments during a quick build. Not only do the team members have to be very organized, they have to be able to work with you and each other with open communication, whether good or bad news. Everyone needs a good kick in the rear at times so taking this constructively instead of negatively is just good teamwork! The other aspect is how to staff a

continued on back



Top: Ojai Valley Inn & Spa 2009 Spa, Architecture by David Bury. Above: Traditional Home Magazine Show House of the Year, 2004, Architecture by Harrison Design Associates