

HOME

PREMIER ISSUE

SUMMER 2009

WELCOME TO the Premier Issue of *Giffin & Crane Home!* We're excited to share with you some of the things we've learned as well as news of local improvements to our community. For nearly 25 years, you've entrusted us to build, renovate and remodel for you. It's our honor to do so.

OUR PERSPECTIVE

It's been a dynamic 12 months. A real estate boom and bust, the economy in free fall and recovery, and two major catastrophic fires that destroyed hundreds of homes have led us to the old adage, "the only thing constant is change."

For the real estate boom, when the unprecedented rise in property values combined with EZ qualify loans proved to be unsustainable, the party ended. The result was a major shift in the market.

Manufacturers, mill shops, suppliers and trade contractors had built up their work forces to handle the

boom's demands. Now, they have excess capacity. Everyone has become more attentive and competitively priced.

So how does that affect home owners? We've found that today we're able to build the same quality home for about the same cost per square foot as we did in 2003. If you have the finances, now is a great time to build.

Likewise, the timing couldn't be better for those folks who lost their homes in either the Tea or Jesusita Fires. If you suffered a loss, our heart goes out to you. Giffin & Crane has put together a number of courtesy estimates for rebuilding efforts. Our

little sister company, *Projects*, will be building a home at below cost for a Tea Fire survivor. Unfortunately, many people will not be rebuilding due to inadequate insurance or because of lack of site accessibility according to current Fire Department standards.

To protect your financial investment and your property, here are a few things we've learned...

Policy value: Make sure the dollar amounts on your insurance policy limits are up to date. If your home was built or remodeled a few years ago, you may be underinsured. If you have questions about the current cost to rebuild, feel free to give us a call.

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THE OJAI VALLEY INN & SPA HERB GARDEN POOL PAVILION Q & A WITH GEOFF CRANE



For over 80 years, the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa has been considered one of the best kept secrets among leisure and business travelers. In an extraordinary setting spanning 220 acres, with luxury accommodations, Spa Ojai and a championship golf course, Giffin & Crane was honored to assist in building a new addition to the campus: The Lavender Cafe and Pool complex, situated in front of The Herb Garden suites and the 2.5 acre Herb Garden and event lawn.

Q Tell us about the project...

A It's a new pool pavilion with all the Inn & Spa amenities... dressing rooms, outdoor showers, Jacuzzi, kitchen, dining room, spa treatment rooms, private cabanas. You name it, it's got it. Located in front of the Herb Garden Suites, it's designed to accommodate large groups in a private setting. It opens up an entirely new area of the Inn for people to enjoy.

Q Okay, give us some specifics...

A A 40' x 75' pool along with a 14' x 12' Jacuzzi. Large modern commercial kitchen with a great adjoining dining room, full service snack bar and soda fountain. 12,000 square feet of pool deck that accommodates 100 chaise lounge chairs. Private spa treatment rooms with fireplaces. 12 private cabanas. Easier accessible paths to the suites. All new sus-

tainable landscaping over 5 acres with new specimen trees, gardens and edible greens cutting garden for the Inn's chef.

Q How long did it take to build?

A We started grading on January 23rd of '09 and reached substantial completion less than 3 months later.

Q What were some of the challenges you and the team faced?

A Schedule...as always in the hotel industry!

Rain – the Inn provided a tent over the new excavations during storms in order to keep us working...and we did! As Chris Leonard put it, "it was a sea of mud!" but no one slowed down.

Events – planned event deadlines kept everyone on their toes.

Q What element of the project are you most proud of?

Our project managers, Chris Leonard and Mike Staniforth, for



skillfully managing a high-energy job without missing a beat.

Q Any special acknowledgements to key trades or vendors?

A Yes, many thanks to the following companies for working together on a fast paced job with less than perfect working conditions that required working many overtime hours to see it through...

Seacon Construction, Jeff Shaw Excavation, Challenge Asphalt, David Tait Masonry, Kettering Architectural Metal, Walker Construction Framing, Trim Works Finish Carpentry, Silver Strand Cabinets, Devore Insulation, G.M. Weeks Roofing, Tom Curry Roofing, Competitive Roofing, Quality Plastering, Thomas Drywall, Kipp Harmer Tile, Armstrong Marble, Dago Orozco Hardwood Floors, S.B. Surfacing, Gary James Paper Hanging, Chuck Theriot Painting, Bischel Enterprises, Extreme Fire Protection, Construction Plumbing, Talent Air, Blum & Sons Electric.

Also a special thanks to Brian Meadows, Building Inspector for the City of Ojai, for working closely with the team to help us achieve our goal.

Giffin & Crane team:

Geoff Crane – *Principal*
Chris Leonard – *Project Manager*
Mike Staniforth – *Project Superintendent*

A SPECIAL INVITATION...

“We would like to offer you a complimentary cocktail for two on your next visit to Jimmy’s Pub or the Oak Grill. Please be sure to call the executive office and let us know when you will be visiting.”



Janis Clapoff
MANAGING
DIRECTOR,
OJAI VALLEY
INN & SPA



Deb Treadway – *VP of Operations*
Karen Mills – *Contracts Administration*
Chris Renelli – *Project Estimator*

And the extended team:

Janis Clapoff – *Managing Director, Ojai Valley Inn & Spa*
Brian Skaggs – *Director of Engineering, Ojai Valley Inn & Spa*
Leland Walmsley – *Evergreen Landscape Architects*

FEATURED HOME

The Jones Residence: A California Ranch Reinvented

The ubiquitous 1960’s California Ranch lends itself well to improvements and upgrades. Generous square footage and good bones are excellent starting points. Yet, the architecture and systems typically need freshening up.

Some of the design problems that were addressed included an undefined front entry, low ceiling heights, dated bathrooms and kitchen, original plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems, as well as a tired landscaping scheme that lacked focus.

David and Judy Jones, the clients, were intimately involved with the design and product selections. The project was completed on time and under budget.

The end result... a completely updated home that reflects the owners’ tastes and desire for gracious and comfortable living.



A Job Well Done

A special note of appreciation goes out to Egon Milbrecht, Specialty Door & Cabinet Shop, for fabricating the elliptical arch front entry millwork. Additionally, we want to thank Jerry DeHoog of Trimworks, our finish carpentry contractor, and his crew for their fine work in bringing the front entry woodwork together.



THE TEAM

David & Judy Jones Owners

Bernard Austin Project Architect,
Harrison Design Associates

Katie O'Reilly-Rogers
Landscape Architect

Fran Wolfe Interior Designer

Joey Tasca Structural Engineer

Steve Litchfield Project Manager,
Giffin & Crane



OUR SANTA BARBARA ROOTS

Giffin & Crane had its nexus in 1978 when a couple of young carpenters got to know each other and became friends. Over time, Bruce Giffin and Geoff Crane cemented their friendship into a business. Starting in 1986, they bootstrapped their way up into the forefront of high-end home builders in Santa Barbara.

Geoff is a seventh generation Santa Barbaran whose local ancestry goes back to Benjamin Foxen and the Osuna family. The Crane family is closely connected to Crane School, having been co-founded by Geoff's grandfather. The Cranes have a strong affinity for the ocean and the Channel Islands. As a young man, Geoff worked a couple of summers

as a commercial fisherman up in the Gulf of Alaska. Surviving those adventures prepared him well for the market swings of the construction industry.

The Giffin family moved to Goleta in 1927 and Bruce's formative years were in Southern California. In 1973, Bruce began his construction career relocating historic log homes near Sandpoint, Idaho. His apprenticeship focused on building custom homes in Washington, DC and Boston. While the level of traditional architectural detailing in the East was good training, it was the memory of mild winters in Santa Barbara that brought him back for good in 1980.



Bruce Giffin and Geoff Crane

Together now for nearly a quarter of a century, what has sustained Giffin & Crane is a belief system that Geoff and Bruce share: *Call people back promptly. Do what you say you're going to do. Produce great work for a fair price. Stand behind what you build.*

GIVING BACK

There is a strong local culture of generosity here in Santa Barbara. Time and time again, Santa Barbarans have made a difference. With several hundred local non-profit foundations working near and wide to advance a wide variety of causes and programs, Giffin & Crane has contributed to a number of them.

Recently, Giffin & Crane underwrote the printing costs of the Elings Park



Phase III brochure. Elings Park, operated by a nonprofit foundation, receives no taxpayer dollars to operate a park dedicated to active recreational use in an extraordinary setting. The Phase III project is a 23-acre endeavor to add athletic fields, a community center, and a family activity zone that includes a ropes course, zip line, and rock climbing wall, as well as a miniature golf-sculpture park. According to Bruce Giffin, "Phase III, when completed, will make Elings Park financially self-sustaining."

Throughout the years, Giffin & Crane has contributed to the ongoing renovations and restoration work at Lotusland. Recent projects there have included renovations of

the kitchen, the sunken drawing room, the pavilion, fountain and Torii gate. The most recent project is to restore the front entry at Madame Ganawalska's home to its original architecture. During the renovation, the framing for the entry's original arched openings were discovered and re-incorporated into the work. "Lotusland is such a unique Santa Barbara treasure. To bring it back for the community to experience and enjoy is a real pleasure," said Geoff Crane.

Giving back really ties into Giffin & Crane's vision of creating an extraordinary community, a home at a time, with and for people who enjoy life, as their most trusted builder.

Our Perspective *continued from cover*

Policy time limits: See what your policy specifies as a time limit for rebuilding. Many policies state 18 or 24 months. A few say unlimited. It's important to know. In our area, if you opt to modify your home from the current plan, going through the strict design review and permitting process can add a lot of time to the rebuilding effort. Many insurance policies say that if you do not have a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) within the specified time, you will not be able to collect all your benefits.

Dwelling replacement extension coverage/% increase for building code upgrades: Most policies have one. It is typically 20% or 25% of the dollar limit that the home is insured

for. Some policies offer either 50% or 100% extension coverage. Our recommendation is to ask for the higher % when you re-visit your policy with your agent.

Contents coverage: You may have the right dollar amount of insurance coverage for your contents, but remembering what you have and making a claim for it is a whole other story. The people who have digital images and video of their home and contents have a much easier go of it.

Negotiating with adjusters: Our clients' experience has been that negotiations are on-going until the home is completely rebuilt or repaired. You may be dealing with multiple adjusters. Be prepared to bring successive adjusters up to speed. Keep good records of your negotiations. Know your rights. Most people have had good experiences with their insurance companies in satisfying their claims. However, when in doubt, feel free to contact the State Insurance Commissioner's office.

Fire suppression systems: While interior fire sprinkler systems may not save a home in a fire storm, a new exterior fire suppression system warrants investigating to see if it would be right for your property. It's called FireBreak. It is a series of golf course-sized RainBird sprinklers that blanket the perimeter of your property with Phos-Chek, the same product

dropped by air tankers on forest fires. It requires no electricity. It can be activated automatically, manually or via cell phone.

Stay and defend or evacuate? While we heard of a number of homes that were saved because someone chose to stay and defend their properties, it is a major role of the dice. You might save your home; you might also lose your life. A suggestion: do what you can to protect your home; get people, pets and photos to a safe haven; recognize that everything else is just stuff and it's all replaceable.

More fire resistant homes: After looking at a number of destroyed or damaged homes, a common cause of combustion was wood decks, trellises and handrails. Additional sources were wood mulch, wood eaves, crawlspace vents, attic dormer vents and gaps at missing door bottoms. Careful attention to construction detailing can make your home more fire resistant.

With no loss of life, we thankfully acknowledge all those who put their lives on the line to protect our homes. Fortunately, we live in a resourceful community that comes together in times of crisis.

HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST – SUMMER

- Know where your gas and water shut offs are. Keep a shut off wrench readily accessible.
- Review how to open automatic gates when there is a power outage.
- Inspect the plaster weep screed at the perimeter of the home to ensure it is not buried with added mulch and soil.
- Verify all site drainage catch basins are free of debris.

Call us at 805.966.6401 if we can be of assistance with these or other home maintenance projects.

GIFFIN & CRANE
GENERAL CONTRACTORS, INC

