

# HOME

ISSUE SEVENTEEN

SUMMER 2019

SUMMER IS THE SEASON for having fun in the sun, but also for getting things done. The days are long, giving ample time for enjoying the fruits of one's labor. It's also a time when homeowners get into full swing with their home improvement projects.

## CAREFUL PLANNING, A KEY TO SUCCESS

For us builders, it's a time to be productive—to make hay while the sun shines by making things happen. And the goal? To complete all projects on time before the hoped-for winter rains arrive. To succeed, it takes a seasoned and experienced team—architects, engineers, planners, consultants, and estimators, all working together. Successful projects derive from great upfront planning, scheduling, and budgeting.

Our two estimators, Dave Farrell and Matthew Morphy, do a tremendous

job of taking plans, thoughts, comments, dreams, and ideas, and translating them all into hard budgets. It's not an easy task.

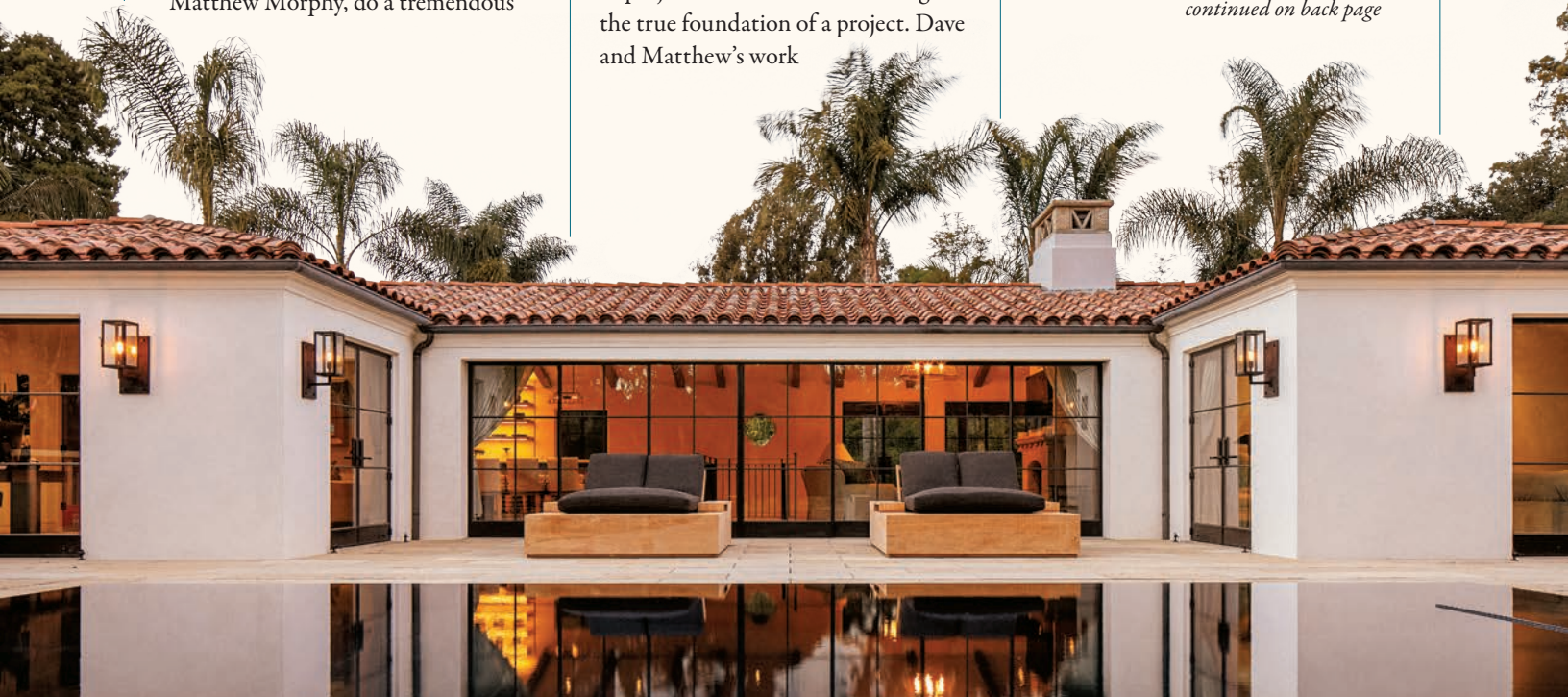
Ideally, every project needs a budget. It doesn't matter who you are or how many resources you have. The bottom line has to make sense.

To be able to get one's arms around a project, to define it, and let our clients sort and sift through their choices to make wise decisions is one of the keys to project success. A realistic budget is the true foundation of a project. Dave and Matthew's work

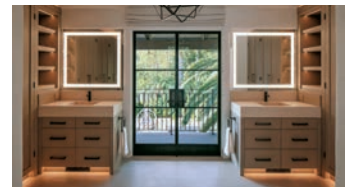
is significant. What they ultimately produce is what we call the Scope of Work.

The Scope of Work is what our builders in the field refer back to, over and over again. As every project is dynamic, the Scope of Work is the keystone that holds the center ground. Ultimately, the Scope of Work is a meeting of the minds—client, design team, builder, trades, and vendors. As such, Dave and Matthew's work is indispensable.

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## THE TEAM

**Britt Jewett**  
*Architect*

**Jordan Design Crew**  
*Interior Designers*

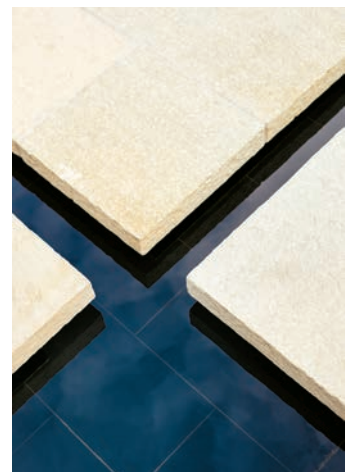
**Bob Truskowski**  
*Landscape Architect*

**Ann Kale**  
*Exterior Lighting Designer*

**Bruce Giffin**  
*Team Leader*

**Derek Shue**  
*Project Manager*

**David Farrell**  
*Estimating*



## FEATURED HOME:

## Spanish Contemporary Jewelbox

*A Transformative Remodel for a Montecito Hidden Gem*

To call the remodel of this traditional Spanish-style home in Montecito “extensive” or “comprehensive” or even “whole-house” doesn’t quite capture the before-and-after look and feel.

Just ask the scores of creative people who had a hand in the two-and-a-half year project.

The adjective that pops up most? Transformative.

Built in 1982, the two-story home measured roughly 3,000 square feet, with two bedrooms, three-and-a-half baths, an office, and an attached two-car garage. As the remodel unfolded, the square footage and floor plan remained the same, yet the home emerged with modern lines and a neutral pallet of color and texture throughout reimagined rooms that blend indoor-outdoor living.

“The owners wanted a comfortable, casual beach environment that had recollections of the traditional Santa Barbara style,” remembers design architect Britt Jewett about one of their earliest meetings. “They wanted it updated and clean, streamlined and simplified. Early

on,” he added, “we decided to take advantage of the bones of the house. We brought in steel windows that really enhanced the quality of light.”

Those windows, manufactured in Ventura by Riviera Bronze, have less material than a wooden frame and utilize simple geometry to frame a view more aesthetically.

Out front, those views stretch from a comfortable patio with water and fire features (see sidebar) to the Montecito mountaintops. Out back, it’s even better.

Originally, a wall had separated the spacious living room from the private backyard and swimming pool. Designers had a different idea. “That was the single-most important decision of the entire project—to turn that wall into a glass door,” says Cheryl Nuemann, of the mother-daughter Jordan Design Crew, with Courtney Jordan Bindel. “We’re interior designers but we’ve never had a project that didn’t spill outside.”

In addition to modern amenities—such as a home-automation system and kitchen appliances hidden in lighted cabinets of white oak—the owners emphasized their desire for seamless transitions between interior and outdoor spaces. The new motorized multi-slider glass door between the living room and backyard creates that smooth connection—whether it’s open or closed—as it frames the all-new vanishing-edge swimming pool and nearby cabana and sandstone kitchen.

*continued on page 5*

**A TREASURE TROVE OF INNOVATION**

Inside and out, our featured home showcases countless innovations. Some are on display. Others are hidden. Each of them brings clarity to the overall vision of a relaxed and comforting place to call home.

Leading to the main entryway, a unique path of symmetrical stepping-stone slabs appear to float upon a calm pool. Nearby, custom seating surrounds a fountain that’s part water, part fire, and all outdoor ambiance. A simple voice command can turn that fountain on and off, as well as control dozens of home-automation features, from interior heating, cooling, and lighting, to motorized sliding-glass doors and the temperature of the backyard hot tub.

The entire system can also be monitored and controlled via smartphone, from which the homeowners can conveniently adjust settings from the comfort of their vaulted living room or from halfway around the world.

“Just about all the interesting details in the home look simple,” says Executive Vice President Derek Shue, who managed the project. “But making it all look simple—that was very difficult.” ▲

***Facing page, clockwise from top left:***

*Pool cabana reflections in the evening glow; voice-operated patio doors open with one word to create a seamless indoor/outdoor living space, while, the vanishing edge pool and spa complete the experience; custom lighting and personal in-mirror TV screens at each vanity provide solace in the master bath; elements meet at the entry walkway; form and function combine again in the home’s welcoming kitchen.*



## GREAT THINGS CONTINUE

GIFFIN & CRANE FOUNDERS WELCOME THE NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS

*Late last year, Bruce Giffin and Geoff Crane made it official: longtime project managers Eric Carlstedt and Derek Shue became company partners and executive vice presidents. Both have been with Giffin & Crane General Contractors, LLC for a decade. Each brings highly refined skill sets to the highest levels of custom homebuilding, from project management and employee operations to upfront team-building with clients, architects, designers, engineers, and experts in permitting and inspection.*



*Left to right: Eric Carlstedt, Bruce Giffin, Geoff Crane, Derek Shue*

For Eric, who began as a part-time laborer while completing his degree in Public Policy, Planning and Management (plus a minor in economics), Giffin & Crane has always been the family business.

After meeting Geoff's daughter, Karrie, in college, they moved full-time to Santa Barbara, got married and he began managing projects while absorbing knowledge and technique from his father-in-law. "We've always gotten along," Eric says. "I've learned a lot of what I know from Geoff. And a lot of that has

been by getting thrown into the deep end," he adds with a smile.

About their recent arrival to the company's executive ranks, Eric, says, "Derek and I have been helping to keep the company's promises for a long time. It's felt like a really organic transition. And who better to take the helm than two guys that have been involved for years?"

Derek comes from a family of builders. "I've been on job sites since before I could walk and started working in the trades when I was 16,"

he says. "The transition period means I'm training new project managers so I can spend more time working directly with clients, architects, and realtors."

"It's an exciting time," Derek adds. "Taking the wheel of the most recognized custom contracting firm in Santa Barbara, Eric and I are well prepared. We've got the 'best of the best' backing us, both in the office and out in the field. The excitement comes from knowing that the industry is ever-changing. Our newer generation of builders coupled with

our experienced group of ‘master builders’ makes for a powerful team!”

“These guys have been around long enough to know how to build not only high-quality homes, but more importantly, high-performing teams,” says Geoff, who plans to stay aboard as chief of operations for another five years or so. “They do it well and they’re very good at giving our clients the best service possible.”

Geoff adds, “There is still much to learn, especially with the advances in technology throughout the building industry, and I look forward to finishing out my building and business career helping Derek and Eric continue to carry the legacy of Giffin & Crane over the next few years and into the future. I truly love what I do and being a family-run business will give the guys a longtime advisor even after I’m out of the day-to-day operations. I know that goes for Bruce as well.”

“Geoff and I are really pleased that Eric and Derek are our successors,” says Bruce, who, while seeing his current projects through to completion, will begin to step away from day-to-day company oversight in January 2020. “Derek and Eric are solid guys and they’re wise beyond their years.”

“They fully embrace the core values that Geoff and I founded the company on 33 years ago,” Bruce adds. “They’ve earned the opportunity to take Giffin & Crane forward another 30 years. I look ahead to see how they will continue to make the company even better builders for our community!” 🏡

## FEATURED HOME *(continued from page 3)*



“And think of the landscaping as the wallpaper of this exceptional outside space,” Jewett said.

To successfully create and sustain the scene was no small feat of engineering, adds Derek Shue, a Giffin & Crane executive vice president and the project’s manager. “If the pool settles half an inch, it messes up the whole thing. It has to be perfect and stay perfect.”

Inside, there’s custom-made furniture with fabric designed to withstand exposure to the elements (and the family dogs) but also to look and feel good. “It’s extra plush,” Nuemann says, adding that all the furniture in the house was designed and built custom, along with the rugs in the living room, master bedroom, and office. Other standouts include blown-glass light fixtures by Alison Berger Glassworks and a redesigned stone fireplace, by Pat Scott Masonry, repositioned to line up with the living room’s new

overhead ridge beam, a structural feature that replaced the original, which had sagged a bit over the years.

Among many upgraded details that pay homage to the home’s original style include authentic ironwork with a pewter finish (instead of traditional black) and a modern kitchen with hand-glazed oversized Moorish tiles. The kitchen also showcases an island that’s been extended to serve as both an informal and formal dining area, with a heated countertop (a one-of-a-kind detail that was dreamed up and actualized during the course of the project).

“The scope of the project changed as we progressed,” remembers Jewett. “And we achieved an exceptional level of refinement that can be challenging to accomplish during a remodel, as we were inheriting an established structure. I enjoyed working with Jordan Design to maintain the vision and with Derek as the vision was transferred physically to the site.” 🏡



## DAVID FARRELL, SENIOR ESTIMATOR AND PROJECT MANAGER

### A BALANCED LIFE OF WORK, PLAY, AND FAMILY

Growing up in the San Fernando Valley, David Farrell's career in the building industry happened by a twist of fate. As the story goes, a neighbor who spotted him tinkering in the garage introduced Farrell to a friend who invited him to build homes in Malibu, where he learned the building trade from the ground up.

Having studied architecture in high school and college, Farrell developed a clear understanding of how a home should be constructed to become a living, functioning environment. "It's been a long journey," Farrell says, remembering his first job as a

One such development—Storke Ranch in western Goleta—brought Farrell aboard as a project manager. Commuting from the Ventura home he shares with his wife of 35 years, he spent his workweek in Santa Barbara, where he crossed paths with local builders, including Giffin & Crane.

Farrell remembered Giffin & Crane from back in his sales days, when the company was just starting out. Three decades later, he noticed they were still in the game. "That's a good sign," he says. So when a job opportunity with Giffin & Crane opened up, Farrell threw his hat in the ring. "I sought out Giffin & Crane because of

the complexities of permitting and budgeting. "There's never a dull moment in working with thousands of products and building remarkable homes together," he says. "There aren't a lot of places like Santa Barbara—I like to call it authentic. Building here can be ridiculously difficult but it's also what makes the community what it is."

Like most dedicated professionals in his trade, Farrell can attest that work takes up much of his time. But he is also dedicated to outside pursuits that serve to counterbalance inevitable job stress. Plus, they're just plain fun.

In the Farrell garage, for example, there's a BMW F 800 GS motorcycle. "It's not your typical dirt bike" he says. It's a "global-adventure bike," designed for multi-day wilderness travel across remote acreage within the vast boundaries of the nearby Los Padres National Forest.

Off the bike, David and his wife Jodi share many interests, including mountain biking, hiking, surfing, fly fishing, and especially music. She's the real musician in the family, a singer-songwriter and performer who has been a music teacher for 25 years. There's always music in the Farrell home and a song on the way.

And when they're not playing music, going on hikes, or enjoying quality beach time together, David and Jodi enjoy making time with friends and visiting their two grown children, son-in-law, and baby granddaughter, all living in Colorado. ■



framer before branching out into project management and community development. "I've done a lot of things both inside and outside of the building industry, but I'm a builder to my core."

their reputation in the community as the prime builder of custom homes," says Farrell. "I had found a family of building professionals with core values that I wanted to be a part of."

In 2009, Farrell came aboard as an estimator, navigating clients through

## MATTHEW MORPHY, ESTIMATOR

A COMPETITIVE SPIRIT, AND GOOD WITH SPREADSHEETS

Born and raised in Pasadena, Matthew Morphy followed his father and brothers' academic footsteps to the Carpinteria foothills, boarding at Cate School, a private college preparatory founded in 1910. Athletic and six-foot-three at the time, Morphy joined the volleyball team. "We weren't very good," he remembers, lamenting how the team "only won one match in three years." A year after graduation, however, his competitive slump flipped upside down.

In 1985, as a six-foot-six freshman at Pepperdine University, Morphy walked onto the volleyball team on the last day of tryouts. By the end of his first collegiate season, Morphy's personal record had gone from a single victory in three years to an NCAA national championship. Pepperdine defended that title in 1986.

Off the court, Morphy studied marketing and advertising. His first job right out of college was swinging a hammer for a framer in Pasadena. "I've always had a big interest to build things," he says. "And I've always been a woodworker and do-it-yourselfer." Soon enough, though, he found work in his field. After a handful of years in advertising, he started his own business in desktop publishing and took it to Ketchum, Idaho, where he lived for several years.

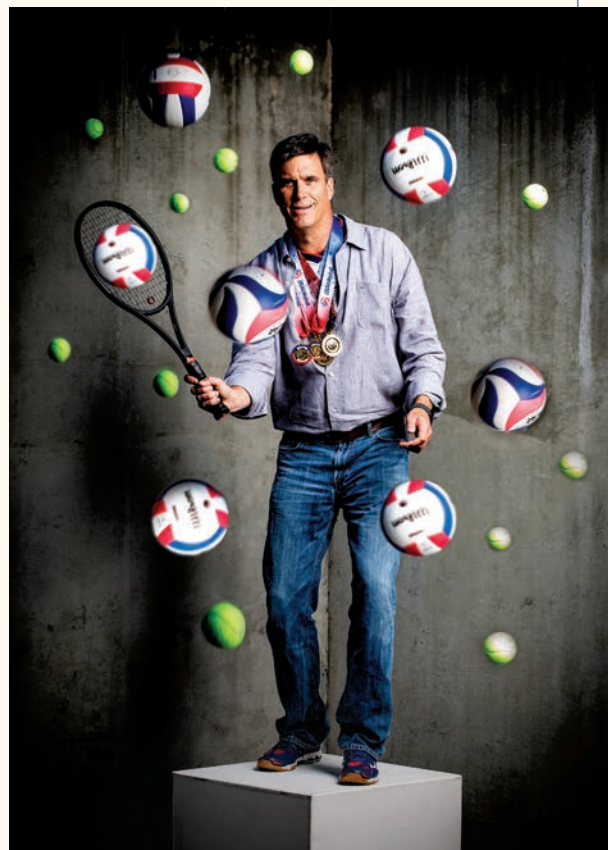
In 2000, Morphy landed in Santa Barbara with a handful of tech-job leads. Then the dot-com bubble popped, and all bets were off. After a stint as a fundraising director for Cate, Morphy worked for Sport Court of Southern California,

selling and constructing residential tennis and basketball courts from Cambria to Ventura. That's when he first crossed paths with Giffin & Crane.

Morphy also opened the Ohana Fun Company storefront in Carpinteria, selling everything from marbles and board games to stand-up paddleboards and waterproof cameras. The company motto was "Fun for the whole family!" Morphy's own kids are 18-year-old Shelagh, a Cate graduate now at Northeastern University, and 15-year-old Makaio, who attends Bishop Garcia Diego High School.

When Morphy came across an employment opportunity with Giffin & Crane, he pursued it. "I had some building experience with Sport Court, and I think my technology skills were a plus," he remembers about interviewing with company co-founders Bruce and Geoff. "Attention to detail has always been very important to me." He came aboard in 2016.

While fine-tuning spreadsheets is a big part of his job, Morphy also understands that estimators are often some of the initial company representatives to walk job sites with potential clients. "We try to bring our professionalism, organization, and confidence to make them comfortable," he says.



Morphy, who recently got engaged to his favorite tennis partner, has maintained his competitive streak, playing middle blocker for the Balboa Bay Volleyball Club against age-sorted teams from around the world. They go to the USA Nationals every year and have finished first several times. They won it again this year. They also have a 2017 Global Cup on their trophy shelf. Plus, Morphy competes each fall at the Huntsman World Senior Games; his team won that one the past five years in a row. He doesn't plan on slowing down.

"At Nationals, there are age divisions up to 78 and over," he says. "I hope to keep it up—especially as the net gets lower!" 🏐



*continued from page 1*



And, as such, this is a great moment to announce the promotions of Derek Shue and Eric Carlstedt to Executive Vice Presidents. Over the last decade, we've watched them take on more and more responsibilities, both on the management of some great projects as well as in our organization. We welcome their energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to G&C's senior executive team.

Additionally, at Giffin & Crane, we celebrate the art of craftsmanship. We've always enjoyed that sense of satisfaction that comes from putting together a well-crafted product. We're fortunate that our team includes many talented trades and vendors. They are people who take great pride in perfecting what they do.

The home that's profiled in this issue is a great example. While it appears to be simple and elegant, the truth is that it is highly complex. To achieve its simplicity required much ingenuity, forethought, diligence, and elbow grease. To execute and integrate the architectural and design intent with the owners' interests was impressive. It's with much appreciation to all those who worked on this extraordinary home—we are truly grateful.

Two words about our current local economy—it's busy! While some of the busy-ness is related to the rebuilding efforts in Montecito,

most of it stems from an overall good economy, low interest rates, a profitable stock market, and low unemployment. While it's good to be busy, and it's certainly much better than the alternative, it's not without challenges.

The primary one is that skilled, knowledgeable workers are hard to find. The trades definitely took a hit in the Great Recession. Many got out of the trades and did not get back in when the economy rebounded. And many of the tradespeople themselves are getting up there in age.

While there is beginning to be an influx of millennials into the construction workforce, they haven't arrived en masse yet. Those who have, and who have embraced the industry of craft, are finding themselves most welcome. There's a lot to learn, and those of us who are older have a lot to teach. It's a transitional point in time in our industry and for Giffin & Crane.

In looking out at the horizon, we see good things continuing on for our clients, our community, and our company. The founding values remain fully embraced in our company. We believe it's why our team shows up to work each day, ready to take on challenges and solve problems of executing high-end craftsmanship.

It's reassuring to know that those values will live on: "Always do the best work, no matter what. Know your numbers. And own your mistakes." Together, they add up to our core value of *Building Peace of Mind*.

—Bruce Giffin

## G&C ON THE WEB

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