

# CALIFORNIA HOMES

THE MAGAZINE OF ARCHITECTURE  
THE ARTS & DISTINCTIVE DESIGN

## The New Traditional

SAN FRANCISCO

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SANTA BARBARA



ISSUE 100, APRIL 2014

ISSN 1549-0804



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HARMONIOUSLY  
**ITALIAN**

ARCHITECT HOMER DATMAN BRINGS ITALY TO LIFE IN THIS NEWPORT BEACH HOME

TEXT BY KATHY BERNAT PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHY WILLET CHEN

**idea!** This challenging staircase is a focal point of the house. **owner** Tom Giesebach wanted an open-plan layout that reflected the grand, 17th-century buildings of his native Italy. His Italian pottery collection is an artistic **statement**.

**Opposing materials** found in different ways is found throughout the house.





**T**he entrance screen or screen entry room is approached from the exterior by its characteristic Italian design: well-proportioned work in limestone and stone prefabricated half-surrounding the Pacific Ocean.

"My late husband Kirk and I traveled to Italy several times and he has family there. They showed us a villa of Italy that we would've loved to see our own," says Reed. It was through their visits that the Banks decided to build an Italian-inspired house of their own. "Architect Homer Holmes is famous for his ability to design houses in the regional Italian styles, particularly 'Tuscan,'" says Reed. "He shared ideas, pictures, art from Italy with me and his passion for the country came through."

"I try not to impose my own or clients' projects," explains Holmes. "I strive to design the best house possible to meet their goals, their vision and their aspirations. I tend lightly when I suggesting alternative ideas. After all, it is their house, not mine." This willingness to work well with clients is evident in his many repeat clients. Reed, for one, can't stop raving about him.

The challenge for Holmes was to design Reed her dream house that was not only traditional but practical and modern since she often used it to entertain members of Cole Incorporated of Orange County, a charity that's vitally important to her since it helps girls from ages 1 through 18 get an education. She was on the Board of Directors for 12 years and still involved with their support groups.

New houses can take many years to settle into their landscapes, but this 4,000 square-foot home fits the site right from the start. The welcoming path with its far-reaching screen doors cleverly introduces the interior. It has four high



rustic entry door with distressed windows from an old Italian fence into the space for what is to become a welcoming open kitchen. "I always wanted an open kitchen," says Reed. "It even has a walled glass area that Homer built for me later. That was something my late husband wanted since he was quite the pizza maker. I wanted this to feel like grandmother's kitchen."

Besides working closely with Gutman, Reed also collaborated with interior designer Karen Slavetti, AIA, CTS and general contractor Mike Torres of Corbice Rivera Construction throughout the design and construction of the project.

"I had worked with Karen on the interior design of her first custom-built house built on this same site," says Slavetti. "She is a fun and forthright woman and a great partner in problem solving and, bonus, she's! Karen had definite ideas about the design direction of her home as they all worked together to achieve the Italian country influences that she wanted. One example of this was the way Slavetti displayed Reed's collection of Italian





perfect for the kitchen. Attention to detail is evident wherever one looks throughout. The focus remains with the surface finishes, reclaimed ceiling beams and the reclaimed brick wall in the bar.

Mike Reeves, who has built several of the homes Outman has designed brought together a team of talented craftsmen and artisans to create a home that was constructed and finished as historically correct as possible within the constraints of local codes and contemporary construction methods and materials. The team included George and Richard (brothers) of Coastal Marble and Stone who carved several custom stone pieces including mantle, sink and bathtub. Gerald Weber of Architectural Detail Group, Inc. designed and fabricated custom lighting fixtures as well as leading original Murano glass fixtures which were strategically located through the house. Matt Meyers of Young Glass Construction installed all the exterior and interior stone wall cladding and brick-reclad ceilings. "It all is terrific when it comes to authentic stone design and installation," says Outman. "Matt and his team take incredible pride in their work and they are one of the few sources in southern California I know of who can pull it off to my satisfaction."

Another hallmark of Outman's designs are their stairways. "The stair should be unique, captivating and creative, but never ostentatious in a 'Pewee' design," he says. The staircase in Reed's house is a great point and note that also sets the tones looking up on every day.

Both Outman and Shaver agree that at the end of the day the best reward for their work comes from their clients smile and say, "This is home." ■



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**Materials** in the living room: the chandelier was hand-forged and are used by SPG Lighting. The hand-made rug is from Aga Jute while the sofas and chairs were custom designed for the correct scale of the room. Fabrics were selected for richness, pattern and durability in the design direction of traditional country style. **Decor** The warm family kitchen looks out over the Pacific Ocean. The glass main area specially designed for this space.

