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Handcrafted Happiness

A Mill Valley home that gets all the details right.

BY LAURA HILGERS | PHOTOS BY TIM PORTER

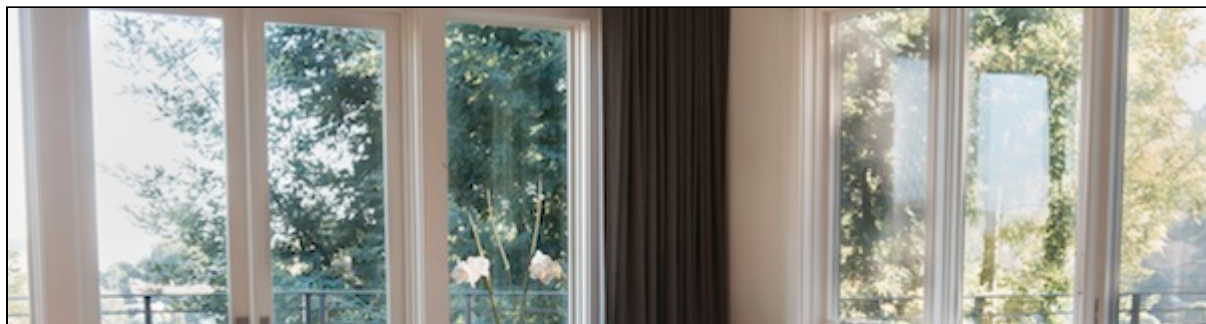


TIM PORTER

It says everything about Michelle and Brad Stauffer's Mill Valley home that when they moved in, they didn't so much as change a doorknob. "Usually, when I look at a house, I think, I'd change this and this and this," says Michelle. "But I walked in and thought, I love this home just as it is."

The Stauffers weren't really in the market for a new home. They were enjoying loft living in the city with their two children when Brad, who is president of Tiburon's Digital Foundry (Michelle is the marketing consultant), started having neck issues from the long bike commute. So in December 2012, Michelle Googled houses within five miles of the office and found this home, which resonated, she says, with their "clean modern aesthetic."

Their realtor, Todd Gray, insisted that they see a few other properties in the area, but none came close to the workmanship and design of this newly built home, so they bit on it quickly. That's no small tribute to the builder, Shahram Ghodsian, who prides himself on hand craftsmanship and construction that lasts a long time. Ghodsian's ethos is visible in details throughout the house, from the handrails, which were constructed on site, to the elegant eight-foot-tall interior doors (compared to the standard, which is 6 feet 8 inches.) Even the stained wood is made of vertical-grain lumber rather than horizontal because, says Ghodsian, "it's far more stable against the elements."



While the house has solid bones, it's the



aesthetics that hit you first. Ghodsian, who says he has “a penchant for the vernacular of colors,” custom-blended all the paints, creating a rich palette in varying shades of gray. The kitchen/family room alone has seven shades of it, from the paint on the wall to the blue-gray tile of the backsplash to the stained wood of the white oak island. Even eyesores like electrical outlets are out of sight, neatly tucked under kitchen cabinets.

The attention to texture and color extends to the outdoors, too. Off the kitchen, the black slate deck is ringed by a sensuously curved railing and a wall made of manufactured stone, in — surprise — gray.

One of the home’s most delightful rooms is its smallest. Open the door of the first-floor powder room and you’re hit by a waterfall of handmade glass mosaic, in gray, that extends from floor to ceiling. The effect is startling.

Todd Gray emphasizes how unusual this is, and how happy it’s made the Stauffers. “I can’t tell you how many times I’ve sold new construction and at least the paint gets changed,” he says. “But this house was just perfect.”

The Details:

Where They Purchased The Homestead neighborhood of Mill Valley

What they bought A contemporary four-bedroom home, with built-in apartment.

Listing agent Sherry Ramzi, Decker Bullock Sotheby’s

Selling agent Todd Gray, McGuire Real Estate

Stats Price per square foot in the neighborhood: \$711–\$1,151.