



Space Odyssey

By Hannah Roberts
Photography by Jim Bartsch

THANKS TO A DEDICATED ARCHITECT AND BUILDER,
THIS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HOME'S FACELIFT MADE
EVERY INCH OF IT PRACTICAL AND LIVABLE.

THE STONE PATHWAY LEADING UP TO THE
FRONT DOOR OFFERS A DEFINITIVE
WELCOME, WHILE THE PERFECTLY MATCHED
STAIN ON THE NEW GARAGE COMPLEMENTS
THE WOOD TRIM AND ACCENTS
THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE. THE DIFFERING
HEIGHTS OF THE WRAPAROUND WALLS OFFER
PRIVACY FOR THE IPE DECK WITHIN, WITHOUT
MAKING THE HOME FEEL CLOSED-OFF.

New floor-to-ceiling windows on the north and west walls further integrate the living room with a Zen-like outdoor garden, making a strong connection between indoor and outdoor spaces.

BRIGHT NEUTRALS IN THE PAINT, WOOD FLOOR AND FURNITURE GIVE THE HOME AN AIRY FEELING AND DRAW THE EYE TO THE SLEEK CONCRETE WALL SURROUNDING THE FIREPLACE. THANKS TO THE INTENTIONAL DESIGN OF THE OUTER WALL AND THE RAISED CEILINGS, THE SANTA BARBARA MOUNTAINS ARE VISIBLE FROM BOTH INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR VANTAGE POINTS.

Originally built in 1973, this Santa Barbara home had modern bones but lacked refinement and sophistication—a task that soon fell to architect Bret Ettinger, working in tandem with Allen Construction. The challenge for both architect and builder was to preserve the home's modest sensibility, while simultaneously making it feel larger and infusing it with craft and elegance. Additionally, they kept their key sustainability goal in mind: to keep the home's footprint small while embracing the beauty and solitude of the site's landscape.

All of the client's goals were met: The house is a model of sustainability, elegance, openness and function.

AGAINST THE CLOCK

Meeting the schedule for this project initially appeared to be a piece of cake—however, significant rains quickly delayed it by almost two months. The project manager redoubled his efforts to make up the lost time, with the teams working nights and weekends to meet the original deadline promised to the owner.

Achieving the architect's contemporary aesthetic details tested the skills of the builder's crews. Finish details included raw corners instead of troweled edges on the board-form, architectural concrete walls.

The major elements of this remodel began with creating a new entryway in a previously awkward space. Now, instead of gaining access through a pair of sliding doors in a shady area on the side of the house, guests follow a natural stone path to a five-foot-wide, custom crafted and stained, Douglas fir entry door.

Next on the list was raising the living room ceiling to just over 10 feet to capture mountain views and maximize space. New floor-to-ceiling windows on the north and west walls further integrated the living room with a Zen-like outdoor garden, making a strong connection between indoor and outdoor spaces. Both of these elements added to the open feeling of the home—a strategy used to make the space feel larger without increasing its footprint.

THIS SLEEK MASTER BATH WITH EXTERIOR ACCESS ALLOWS THE OWNER TO RETURN FROM HIS MORNING SURFING OR BIKING ADVENTURES WITHOUT TRACKING SAND OR MUD THROUGH THE HOUSE—ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF FLUIDITY BETWEEN INDOOR AND OUTDOOR.



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THE LARGE SLIDING GLASS DOORS OFFER A NATURAL TRANSITION OUTDOORS, WHICH THE MILD SANTA BARBARA WEATHER ALLOWS ALL YEAR ROUND. THE RETRACTABLE CURTAINS MAKE STAYING COOL IN THE SUMMER SIMPLE, WHILE GENEROUS ROOF OVERHANGS OFFER ADDITIONAL SHADE.

DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

The next challenge involved building a new two-car garage, to replace the old carport and provide privacy as well as additional storage for the owner. Installing the vertical grain veneer on the raw garage door panels—and getting the grain lines to match perfectly from panel to panel—proved extremely challenging and time-consuming for the carpenters. Working with the architect to find the just-right finished stain color also took multiple attempts.

Expanding the home's ipe deck included wrapping it around the side of the house and creating access to the rear yard by installing stadium-style steps across the entire rear of the house. Meeting the architect's details for the deck's concrete edge, skirting, iron railing and ipe caps required strict attention. Zero-tolerance finishes, clean lines and tight reveals all added an extra layer of complexity.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Once the larger overhauls were accomplished, it was time to add in additional, functional features. A shower with direct access to the outside offered a practical transition, and roof overhangs gave shade to the ipe deck area. Green features were the icing on the sustainable cake, including bamboo floors, dual-glazed windows, skylights, low-VOC paints and stains, and an on-demand water heater.

This contemporary remodel is a beautiful example of how a house can be transformed without making significant add-ons or completely tearing the existing structure down. All of the client's goals were met: The house is a model of elegance, openness, sustainability and function. Achieving this metamorphosis took careful planning and exact delivery, but all told, the client's remodeling dreams were achieved with only 300 square feet of space added to the original structure. ☼