



A Mid-Century Modern Makeover on the Rincon

Architect Bill Wolf, of Pacific Architects, Inc., remodels and updates a vacation beach house and opens up the views

By Leslie A. Westbrook

Photos by Jim Bartsch





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rchitect Bill Wolf, who
has been designing
residential and com-

mercial projects from his Coast Village Road office for the past two decades, notes that he flies under the radar a little bit. "All of my business is word of mouth from realtors, contractors, and previous clients." That wasn't the case for his masterful remodel of a mid-century modern house in exclusive Rincon Point on the Santa Barbara/Ventura County line.

His clients, Jeff and Elisabeth Lipsman, having just closed escrow on their vacation beach house in 2009, were walking past Bill's office, Pacific Architects, Inc., when they decided to pop in. The Los Angeles couple took an immediate liking to Bill and his work. They were also surprised to discover that Elisabeth's brother had attended the same elementary school as the architect.

Jeff Lipsman had certain ideas and Bill, open to suggestions, worked hard to try and make those things happen. "He wanted to create a beach house that could weather the elements, was functional, incorporated new technologies and building materials, all while maintaining the original character of the Mid-century modern design. The goal was to maximize ocean views, while maintaining the feel of sitting on a dock over the water," Bill noted.

Upon entering via the new deck that edges Rincon Creek, one gets an immediate sense of dropping into a Hawaiian tropical paradise. The three-bedroom, three-bath residence with an open living room/dining area/kitchen, provides the perfect relaxing weekend retreat from the hustle and bustle of L.A. living.

"I like to create unique spaces, that function well for the client and are pleasant to be in," Bill said. When asked about his design philosophy, he stated: "My focus is to understand the client's goals and dreams, support that with the creation of timeless, creative, site-appropriate design that resonates with their way of life and practical needs, balancing innovation and tradition, with careful consideration of scale, proportion and detail."

Jeff Lipsman also wanting to "do this once, to do it right," did not spare any expense in making sure the remodel was structurally sound, as well as stunning in design. Among other issues, the original 1960s structure lacked uniform windows with views.

"The challenge," recalled Bill, "was that if you were to tear down and rebuild, we could only build a 10' x 10' structure, due to the new setback requirements. We had to work with the existing footprint of the house."

Additionally, water passed underneath the house during high tide, so they had to find a way to keep driftwood and debris from banging into the utilities underneath the structure, built on the original pier and beam foundations.

"We knew what we were going to get into, so we eliminated a lot of the surprises and challenges by preparing. Jeff was very diligent in making sure the plans were complete. We met with the various subcontractors as well as the interior designer Lisa Turner, to select the appropriate systems and materials for the home be-



fore drafting the final drawings. General contractor Allen and Associates also became a big part of that success story. We had a great team of professionals," noted Bill.

All in all, the complicated project, due to the location near the Pacific and the creek, took several years to complete, with Coastal Commission reviews, permitting, planning, flood control and more.

Bill Wolf has worked in Santa Barbara for over 30 years. He enjoys experimenting with both the site and custom designing a house that fits it – or taking an existing house and making it better for his clients. Custom designs and remodels range in style from Craftsman, Mediterranean, and Spanish to Contemporary.

The Cal Poly graduate has received awards for design excellence and for community beautification projects. His projects include commercial, residential, institutional, interiors and urban planning. He is on the Architectural Board of Review for Hope Ranch

and a Board of Director for the Santa Barbara Contractors Association. Bill, a married father with a young daughter, has taught in the "Kids Draw Architecture" Series. He also enjoys engaging in educational lectures to communities and architectural interest groups.

"I loved to build and create things as a kid. I also loved to draw and paint, so architecture was a natural fit. As a child, I would build tree houses and forts from scrap and discarded materials that I collected from construction sites. My tree houses were always in very unusual shapes and forms because of the materials I could find," he remembered.

For this project it appears that Bill Wolf got to create the ultimate fantasy beach fort:

"I love what I do. I am fortunate to practice my profession in a beautiful environment and I am blessed with great clients."

Those who beat a path to Bill Wolf's door are also blessed, with a very conscientious professional who is not only talented, but also very easy going.

SOURCES

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