

10th Annual Lafayette Juniors Kitchen Tour Features Variety

By Rosylyn Stenzel



Big windows deliver lots of natural light into the Smiths kitchen on Happy Valley Road Photo Andy Scheck

Six Lafayette kitchens presenting the latest in design and style will be open for touring on Saturday, May 16th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The 10th Annual Lafayette Juniors Kitchen Tour offers an interesting variety ranging from kitchens inspired by a historical perspective to the Diablo Valley's first LEED-certified green home.

It's easy to be intrigued by the history of Mike and Stacy's Happy Valley home. Built in 1941 it was once the home and working office of a Lafayette doctor. A separate entrance off the porch as well as a door that locked from the hallway piqued their curiosity as to the history of the small room. After contacting the previous owners, they soon discov-

ered it was formally a waiting room for patients. This feature along with many other historical characteristics inspired them to keep to the integrity of the Ranch-style home when planning the remodel.

The Smiths met with several designers, before deciding to design it themselves. Their inspiration came from the original white Carrara Marble fireplace with original mantel in the living room. They carried the same theme into the kitchen using white Calcutta Marble for the countertops along with antiqued custom made cabinets. When the Smiths designed their kitchen, they had two must haves in mind; lots of natural light and an island where the family of four could be comfortably seated.

The Smiths added several family-friendly components to the kitchen. A kid-sized refrigerator right under the countertop is perfect for little hands to grab a juice box. There is also a pull-out microwave

drawer under the countertop for easy access. And no slamming the drawers in this kitchen, thanks to the slow close drawers that don't make a sound. Lastly, their island with dark wooden cabinets is the perfect spot for doing homework.

Another not to be missed is one of Lafayette's historic homes built in 1929. Affectionately named The Cottage by homeowner Jim Peacock, it was once a summer home for a San Francisco family. As the contractor Peacock remodeled and added a second floor and has passionately worked to keep with the décor of the 1930s.

Peacock's kitchen is a working kitchen. When asked what he likes best about it, he answers, "Using it!" The unique galley kitchen boasts two sinks, marble countertop, Maple countertop for making pasta and an old butcher block from a meat shop where he worked as a teenager. He loves to cook and entertain having trained at several world-renowned cooking schools including Le Cordon Bleu.

In addition, Peacock's an avid collector with items from all over the world. Upstairs an antiqued door from France opens up to a temperature-controlled wine room stocked with over 600 bottles of wine. Here the walls are lined with planks of redwood flipped over and reused from the old siding of the home. Next to it is a library with a collection of over 1000 cookbooks. Also displayed throughout is his copper collection of over 200 usable pieces. Furthermore, most everything is recycled including all doors, windows, upstairs flooring and light fixtures.

Also featured on the tour are four other spectacular kitchens, including the first home in the Diablo Valley to attain LEED certification for sustainable design and construction. The LEED rating is the benchmark for promoting high-performance green buildings.

Proceeds will benefit Youth Homes Inc.; a non-profit organization that provides high-quality residential and outpatient counseling treatment for 1,000 abused and neglected youth in Contra Costa County.

10th Annual Lafayette Juniors Kitchen Tour, Saturday, May 16th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased at Douglass Designs and Premier Kitchens, both in Lafayette. Visit www.lafayettejuniors.org or call 925.283.6722 for more information.

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Food writer Susie Iventosch was intrigued when we told her about Jim Peacock and his kitchen – read more about him and glean a recipe on page 20



Jim Peacock's cook book collection



The Peacock kitchen at La Fiesta Square

Photos Andy Scheck

Playing Fair

The "extras" in home construction and who should pay for them

By William Marquand, AIA

(Part two of a three part series)

In tough times there are some good reasons to take on remodeling or building projects. Prices are very competitive, especially for materials.

But there are also dangers. Many projects cost more than anticipated. Will your credit cover it? Setting aside some extra funds is common sense. But more important is controlling costs to begin with, and knowing what is a justified "extra" and what is not.

Form realistic expectations at the outset. Forge a detailed agreement with your contractor that anticipates needed cost increases, but wards off needless ones. Finally, make sure you get in writing what any "extras" are, and what their "install costs" are.

Today's segment delivers the bad news first: What would be a "justified" extra that the owner, not the contractor, should pay for.

Let's say you want an item that you did not include at the outset. You may never be able to have it installed for a reasonable price again. First, get a realist estimate for materials and installation, and keep a running total, however sketchy, on ALL your changes. Partial "totals" are dangerous. Track your bottom line.

Such an extra could be anything from a window, to an appli-

ance over your allowance or an added paint color. Be responsible, and don't kid yourself into thinking that you can toss in extras that you won't have to pay for in the end. It is not fair to think "I'm giving this contractor lots of work; it hardly costs him anything to include it."

Your project is a business arrangement. If the estimate is acceptable, tell your contractor to proceed. Or try horse trading, or talking him down on price. Don't proceed without an explicit agreement.

You are responsible for unforeseeable cost increases. Suppose the building department decides that they require slightly different construction. Maybe the soil is different than anticipated. This is something the owner has to allow for. If 1) it is necessary, 2) it is not part of normal construction and 3) it was not in the drawings, then it's your project, you have to pay.

That is why developers need deep pockets. When taking on a building project the owners should see themselves in a small way as a developer. Risk and a few gray hairs come with the territory.

Was the added cost really unforeseeable? If it is expensive, you

may want to get a second opinion. A talented but shady contractor is a bad contractor to have on the job site – so is one who, rightly, feels cheated.

If this seems like cold comfort for your high hopes for building, the good news is that sometimes an owner has no place paying for a change. Surprisingly, that can be the hardest thing for an owner to insist upon. Contractors can be very enjoyable to work with, and sometimes it's tough taking a stand on that to which you have a right, under your agreement.

That's when personality gets too big. Remember, the project is always best when it is the most professional. You can't be a wallflower and, inside, be content with the result. Make sure you pay for what you get, but also that get what you pay for. My next column will describe what extras should not be at your expense.

Reach William Marquand by email: 925architect@gmail.com. Bill is an architect and 2008 Chairman of the City of Lafayette Design Review Commission.

For Part one go online to issue #1, March 18th, 2009 www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0301/Playing-Fair-The-extras-in-home-construction-and-who-should-pay-for-them.html



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