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Holiday Homes on Display

By Susie Iventosch



The Ramatala home in Moraga Photo Andy Scheck

said Marilyn Simonsen, Publicity Chair for the tour.

The homes range from brand new construction to remodeled homes and even one that received the 2004 Design Review Board Award. Interior themes run the gamut from a blend of Middle Eastern and Western furnishings to Brazilian hardwoods, and family treasures from the Far East (Tibet, Africa and China) to Bavaria feature prominently in the decor.

Tree houses, outdoor pavilions (complete with kitchens), hot tubs, pools, lagoons and waterfalls are strategically nestled about the exteriors for outdoor living. And, on one property, Syrah vineyards blanket the hillside. Landscapes, gourmet kitchens, and historical furnishings dating to a Bavarian castle and the American Civil War are all part of this eclectic mix of homes.

The Ramatala home, which was a typical two-story home, has been remodeled in spectacular fashion. Ethar Ramatala designed her own interior, which reflects her personal artistic touch and a blend of Middle Eastern and Western furnishings.

"This is a big event and there will be lots of people touring the homes," Ethar Ramatala said. "I feel excited because many people want to transform an ordinary home into something more dramatic and unique according to their own tastes. This tour will give them ideas on how they

can do that. Our home has a Tuscan feel now, but is not so massive like some of homes built these days. Even after the remodel, it still feels homey."

The Ramatalas sought to create a dramatic change in the original footprint of the house and the architect created a seamless integration of the old and the new, resulting in a light-filled two-story foyer opening onto the warm living room. This room is adorned with Ethar's exquisite framed petit-point, a piece of Greek whimsy art and a notable piece of Arabic calligraphy.

The dining room, decorated in warm cinnamon tones, adjoins an outdoor patio, providing an inviting extension of the formal dining room. Kitchen cabinets of cherry, travertine floors, black granite countertops, and stainless steel appliances all serve to complement Ethar's culinary skills. Possibly the most useful feature is the hidden toe space switch for the vacuum system, making floor crumbs vanish in seconds! The backyard boasts a pavilion with outdoor kitchen and fireplace, hot tub and pool, colorful landscaping and vegetable garden.

The guest quarters are off the family room and the guest bath doubles as a pool bath. Good idea! The main floor is also home to a beautiful powder room with gold-leaf accents and mosaic tiled floors, and Ali's office with a closet to tuck away the printer and computer accessories.

The second floor hosts a game room (complete with outdoor Christmas light remote controls), laundry room (with concealed ironing board in the wall), the boys' rooms with a Jack and Jill bath and the Master Suite with a fabulous view and a cozy sitting room for reading and lounging.

"These women really work so hard and hold so many events," Ramatala remarked about the Moraga Women's Society. "I raise my hat to them, because especially in this economy, it's tough to raise money for philanthropy, but they are persistent. I admire that."

The Moraga Women's Society contributes to wide variety of local organizations, and has been able to raise \$334,051 for the community since its founding in 1967.

Moraga Women's Holiday Home Tour

Friday Dec. 4 Tour 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. /Boutique and Tea 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

(Tea and Boutique to be held at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St. in Moraga)

Tickets may be purchased at King Florist in the Rheem Shopping Center and at Moraga Lumber & Hardware and Across the Way in the Moraga Shopping Center

What fun it is to peek into other people's homes when they're all decked out for the Christmas holidays! It's a visual extravaganza and a great way to pick up ideas for your own home decorating. Once again, the Moraga Women's Society is providing that opportunity with its 23rd Biennial Holiday Homes Tour.

Five gracious homeowners will open their homes to the public for viewing and disseminate the holiday spirit in the process. These families are Ethar and Ali Ramatala, Fernanda and William Studebaker, Vickie and Dick Davis, Carol and Gerard Tanner and Sabine and David Hathaway.

The tour takes place on Friday, December 4 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and ticket holders are invited to view these five beautifully appointed homes adorned in their holiday splendor. It is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a day with friends, pick up some great decorating, remodeling and furnishing tips, or simply dream about how you might decorate your home, given the time and the talent! A box lunch is available for purchase, giving visitors plenty of time to peruse the homes on tour, and tickets also include a Tea and Boutique. Proceeds benefit the Moraga Schools, Library and Parks and the community in general.

"Last year we were able to give \$13,400 back to the community,"

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Cost: \$30 donation for tour, \$10 for Pre-ordered box Lunch

Proceeds Benefit Moraga Schools, Library and Parks

For More Information Please Call: (925) 376-3187

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