

December 2006/January 2007

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With Christopher Lowell

A HOME AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR NORTHBAY LIVING

Past & Present Meet

Celebrating Christmas at a century-old Mill Valley Craftsman

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When mortgage broker Bill Seaborg first saw the shingled Craftsman-style residence in 1984, he knew he had found the address he wanted to come home to every evening. Situated on the high side of quaint, quiet Buena Vista Avenue, a three-minute walk from downtown Mill Valley, the object of Seaborg's real estate intentions had a cottage gate that opened to a storybook garden. He had seen 30 homes and this was the first to capture his imagination.



The property was originally connected to a larger parcel, a hay barn and tack room once situated where the Craftsman now stands. The multi-level front yard with gardens, decks, and grassy flats surrounded a quaint two-bedroom, one-bath home with covered porches built in 1905. "We know the date of the house because workmen found newspapers in the walls during the remodels," Seaborg says.

Old and new

In the time he has owned it, Seaborg has invested in four improvements to update and expand the home. He remodeled the downstairs powder room and kitchen in 1989. In 1994, the upstairs bathroom was remodeled. After marrying

Gina, also a mortgage broker with First Security Loan in Mill Valley, the couple liked the location so well they invested in a major remodel to add a downstairs family room off the kitchen and a new master suite upstairs, making it a three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath home. At that time, a street-level, two-car garage was also added, the roof of which became a flagstone deck in the front yard.

The 2003 kitchen remodel brings us up to date, creating an open great room combining dining, kitchen, and family room areas. Designed by Lamperti Associates, the counter and island are topped with limestone, upon which a vintage ceramic Santa keeps fresh cookies for holiday guests. The kitchen is outfitted with

Above top: An intimate outdoor table is the ideal setting to relax and unwind.

Above: Although the home has been updated, some things around the home have a little history.

Left: The dining room is flooded with light for a warm and inviting feel.

Opposite: This Craftsman-style house was originally built in 1905. The various renovation projects have only added to its charm and character.







stainless steel Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances, including a warming drawer in the island. A faucet over the range extends from the washed brick backsplash, and favorite heirlooms are featured through glass cabinet doors. The wall and molding colors assure a pleasing visual flow and seamlessly connect the old and new sections of the home.

The cast concrete family room fireplace by Tile & Stone of San Rafael is a perfect focal point, capable of holding the heaviest of holiday stockings. The stockings the Seaborgs' put up each year on this mantel were made by Bill's mother when he was a toddler. The great room is ideal for holiday cocktails or casual family brunches. The family room fireplace is the perfect place for a riot of relatives and friends to open holiday gifts while meal preparations are underway. Intimate suppers on a colorful seasonal dining table offer views of neighborhood holiday lights after dark.

Decorating without dominating
Preferring to keep the main part of the century-old house

as original as possible, the living room features original windows. Soft persimmon walls provide a warm contrast for understated and

complementary holiday decor. The assertive wall color beautifully frames the home's original ornate fireplace, where dog stockings hang in honor of beloved pets. Ornaments purchased during traditional family holiday lunches at City of Paris (Blum's in San Francisco) are Gina's favorite holiday heirlooms. Her holiday decorating sensibili-

Above: The fireplace mantel is the perfect place for holiday decorations.

Left: Elements throughout the home carefully blend past and present.

Below: The remodeled kitchen features modern amenities, yet it seamlessly fits with the century-old home.



ties are that a little Christmas décor goes a long way. "I still want people to see the house because we are proud of it," she says.

Interior designer Lucy Junus selected décor colors and furnishings, all to perfect scale for the rooms. The guest bath off the living room features a pedestal sink and whimsical faces smiling from the yard's privacy screen.

Upstairs

The second story features a hall bath and two bedrooms, in addition to a new master suite.

The guest room is sweetly decorated with one's inner child in mind and is frequently filled with young guests.

High, vaulted ceilings in the master bedroom, lots of gentle daylight, and tranquil retreat colors of yellow and green create a sense of "aaahhh." Bill especially likes "tree house" window views of the neighborhood. The suite's bathroom has ample his-and-hers space, custom-pattern tiled floor, a skylight, cabana-style shower head, and glass shower surrounds that spell creature comfort and quality.

Weather permitting, or not

Arriving holiday guests have plenty of room on the covered porch to shed winter-wet outerwear. The porch, screened by lilac



vines, is also a great place to sip morning cocoa. On those surprising sunny winter days, the Seaborgs can take full advantage of the sun on the front yard flagstone deck above the hidden garage. Regardless of the weather, during the holiday season, the Seaborgs delight in holiday traditions with visitors, the warm glow of their home, and in planning another year in their Mill Valley neighborhood. |

Left: The bathroom features ample space, including his-and-her sinks.

Above: The master suite was part of the latest renovations.

Below: The tree, decorated by Frelen's Casual & Outdoor Furniture in San Rafael, awaits the frenzy of holiday activity.

