

Carlsbad upgrade designed to maximize ocean views



LEFT: Ann Gunter and architect Sam Chereskin in front of the Gunter's "Prairie" style home. Photos by Louis Shook

BELOW: The living room has a "Rumsfield" fireplace designed with a shallow depth to efficiently radiate heat.

By Louis Shook
SPECIAL TO THE UNION-TRIBUNE

Tim and Ann Gunter were faced with a decision of whether to remodel their existing home built in 1959 or add a new home on their Carlsbad hillside property. "The original house was termite-ridden and dilapidated," according to Ann Gunter. They decided to do both - remodel the existing home at the front of the property and build a new house toward the back of the property to take better advantage of the ocean views.

Tim Gunter is retired from his sheet metal fabrication business. Ann Gunter is a land use planner with a private company. Ann interacts with many architects at her business which was helpful in making their selection of an architect to design their new home. After considering a number of architects they chose Sam Chereskin.

They met Chereskin at a class he was teaching at Mira Costa College on "How to design and build a custom home."

"We really clicked with Sam," said Ann. "We liked his approach to designing a house that just wasn't a stucco box with a roof."

The Gunters liked Craftsman and Prairie styles which blend in with the natural environment. Chereskin proposed a design similar to the landmark "Robie House" built by architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The Robie House is in Chicago and is renowned as the greatest example of his Prairie style, the first architectural style that was uniquely American. The term was coined by architectural critics and historians (not by Wright) who noticed how the buildings and their various components owed their design influence to the landscape and plant life of the midwest prairie of the United States.



To comply with local building codes they needed to reduce the size of the existing house to 640 sq. ft. They built the new Prairie style house on the backside of the property which is at a higher elevation. The new home is approximately 2,675 sq. ft. with two bedrooms and an office. It also has a basement, which is unusual for the area.

According to Chereskin, building the basement was one of the main challenges. "The basement covers one-third under the house," he said. The basement is used for storage and a game room complete with a pool table and large screen set up for playing video games.

"The home is a very linear design," explained Chereskin. There are many large west-facing windows take advantage of the ocean views and brings in lots of natural light.

For the interior, the Gunters enlisted one of their best friends, Alison Haley Paul, who is an artist and interior designer. "She helped out a lot, even at the blueprint stage," said Ann Gunter. "Alison helped select many details including cabinet hardware, flooring and light switches." A number of her paintings are also on display throughout the house, including a beautiful piece above the living room fireplace.

The fireplace is a "Rumford" according to Ann Gunter. She did a bit research on Rumford fireplaces which are tall and shallow to reflect more heat. They have streamlined throats to eliminate turbulence and carry away the smoke with little loss of heated room air.

True to the Prairie style, the house relates seamlessly to the outside spaces. The back has a beautiful courtyard that is protected from the prevailing wind. It is a perfect place for entertaining friends. The front has a number of balconies situated perfectly to watch sunsets. The landscaping is designed for low-water usage and uses many native plants.

The Gunters rent out the remodeled "original" house. They love their new house. "For us the house is not a huge house, but it's really comfortable," said Ann Gunter. All the spaces work well."



The kitchen has large windows that have ocean views.

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