



DESIGN BUZZ

## A FARMHOUSE TAKES FLIGHT

Woodpecker Ranch in Woodside melds midcentury modern with barnyard chic.

BY CAROLYNE ZINKO

In most any backyard in Northern California, you'll hear a familiar hammering sound: the rat-a-tat of woodpeckers who pose trouble mainly to the insects they eat. But at a remodel in Woodside, hundreds of mysterious holes in the exterior siding led to the discovery of an avian culprit—and a wryly apt nickname for the project, Woodpecker Ranch.

Feldman Architecture of San Francisco was charged with renovating the 9,900-square-foot spec farmhouse. The clients, a couple in their 40s with preteen daughters, wanted midcentury interiors and more outdoor function than their previous digs. The home, built by a developer, had originally been clad in reclaimed barn siding, “a weathered-out, beautiful product,” says Chris Kurrle, Feldman’s partner in charge. But as the remodel started, the crew noticed holes in the wood. “We took out the siding in one spot and 200 acorns fell out,” says Kurrle. “This was a really small portion of siding, and we had the whole house to go.” Thus, a nickname was born.

Minor revisions were made to the main level and basement, while Kendall Wilkinson Design filled the home with clean-lined furnishings. An open kitchen, a family



room and a family dining area extend off of a central great room, as do a separate formal living room and dining room. A family wing contains bedrooms, office space and guest bedrooms. Bathroom windows contain electronic privacy glass that turns opaque at a button’s touch. A basement (with lightwells for daylight) contains a bar, a TV and game room, a gym, an arts and Lego room, and a sound-proof band room for musical jam sessions. (It was created from a room originally built as a home theater.)

Outside, a pool was refreshed with a lining of new tile. An outdoor dining area with a pizza oven and catering kitchen was added. A bocce court, a treehouse, a half-pipe for skateboarding (for the husband), and a full production garden

Clockwise from top left: The two-story foyer shows off a remodeled staircase with floating treads, as well as a rear courtyard that separates the two wings of the home; the great room, which serves as the central focus of the house; and a view of the retiled swimming pool and sun lounge area on the 3-acre property.

PHOTOS BY PAUL DYER





From top: The second-story master bedroom affords views of native live oak trees; a bridge leads from the home's great room to outdoor patios on the 3-acre property, which also contains an orchard and full-production seasonal vegetable garden.

and orchard were also part of the mix, the work done in conjunction with Arterra Landscape Architects.

One of the bigger architectural challenges was reimagining the main entrance to the home. The original front door was “not obvious,” Kurrle says, “because of the scale of the driveway and parking area,” which he says dead-ended at a garage that was adjacent and behind the front door. The landscape team designed an entry fountain and sculpted the land to funnel visitors toward the front door. The changes allowed the front door’s axis with a heritage oak 100 yards away to be better revealed.

In the foyer, floor-to-ceiling glass windows at the back of the home overlook a courtyard that separates the two wings of the house. Second-story outdoor balconies overlooking the courtyard were removed to eliminate visual bulk. An original staircase, “heavy and chunky,” recalls Kurrle, was replaced with a staircase with floating treads and guards of wire mesh for transparency and lightness. Architecturally speaking, Kurrle says, “that’s the element that’s the most successful in the house.” The woodpeckers might beg to disagree. ◦