

## IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

*An El Cerrito couple discover that it's easier than you'd think to blend beautiful design and green building practices*



With its welcoming rooms and dramatic 180-degree views of the Bay, Irene Kiebert and Michael Fischer's house doesn't shout "green." In fact, its eco-friendly features are so well integrated that it's easy to overlook how much attention the couple paid to choosing design strategies and materials that are easier on the environment.

Built in 1938, the 1,700-square-foot home underwent a major renovation in 2000. Working with architect Karen Drozda, Kiebert and Fischer came up with a plan to replace the original kitchen, dining room and garage, and add a bedroom, bathroom, laundry room and balcony upstairs. Downstairs they added a wine and storage cellar, gardening room, two-car garage and deck. Although the house is built on four levels, the entire main floor, including a bedroom and bathroom, is wheelchair accessible.

Throughout the project, the couple adhered to three basic principles: reduce, reuse and recycle. Each step of the way during the remodel, they looked for opportunities to reduce energy use and waste; to reuse building materials and furnishings; and to recycle waste and purchase products with recycled content.

*"Irene and Michael were completely devoted to the idea of sustainable building. We found a ceramic bathroom tile from Indiana that incorporated 55 percent recycled glass and Irene asked, 'Isn't there a product like this made locally?'"*

—Karen Drozda, architect

### REDUCE ENERGY

**Hydronic radiant-floor heating.** A new radiant-floor heating system is zoned so it can be turned off in vacant rooms. The system is served by an on-demand water heater that also provides hot water for household use.

**Daylighting.** Windows and skylights were oriented to provide daylight throughout the house, virtually eliminating the need for electric lights during the day. Tubular skylights in two bathrooms provide daylight in spaces where windows or regular skylights wouldn't be possible. Windows and glass doors are double-pane with a low-e coating for energy efficiency and comfort.

### GREEN at a GLANCE

#### ENERGY & SYSTEMS

- Hydronic radiant-floor heat
- On-demand water heater (Heat Transfer Products' Voyager)
- Low-e windows and glass doors (Milgard)
- Skylights and tubular skylights
- Covered porches and balcony for shading
- Cellulose insulation for bathroom walls and new cathedral ceiling
- Fiberglass insulation with no added formaldehyde
- Energy-saving clothes washer and dryer (Maytag Neptune)
- Energy Star® dishwasher (Bosch) and refrigerator
- Well-insulated hot tub
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs

#### MATERIALS & PRODUCTS

- FSC-certified Douglas fir framing lumber and pine trim (Hayward Lumber)
- Locally harvested tan oak for kitchen cabinets (EarthSource; cabinetmaker: Real LaPalmas)
- Original redwood exterior siding remilled and used for dining room wainscoting
- Engineered lumber for beams
- Wood I-Joists for floors and ceilings (Trus Joist)
- 100% recycled wood and plastic decking and railings (ChoiceDek)
- 40% recycled flyash in foundation concrete
- Fiber-cement exterior siding (Hardiplank)
- 55% recycled-glass ceramic wall tiles for bathroom (Terra Green Ceramics)
- 90% recycled-glass counters in kitchen and bathroom (Counter Production)
- Salvaged bathroom sinks, bathtub and doors (Urban Ore, Omega Salvage)
- Zero-VOC interior paint (Benjamin Moore Eco-Spec)
- Low-VOC water-based wood varnish

## REUSE MATERIALS

**Reuse original building material.** Old-growth redwood siding from the original exterior was remilled and used for the dining room wainscoting. The redwood paneling in the downstairs bedroom is original. Aluminum siding on the bedroom wing was in good shape, so the couple decided to leave it in place.

**Purchase used materials.** Kiebert and Fischer bought used sinks, a bathtub, the front door and some interior doors from Urban Ore and Ohmega Salvage in Berkeley.

## BUY RECYCLED PRODUCTS

**Recycled content materials.** The terrazzo-style kitchen counters and upstairs bathroom counter and shelf are 90% recycled glass made by Berkeley's Counter Production. Bathroom wall tiles contain 55% recycled glass. Exterior decks and railings are composite lumber, a blend of recycled plastic and wood fiber.

**ORIGINALLY BUILT:** 1938

**REMODEL & ADDITION COMPLETED:** 2002

**ORIGINAL SIZE:** 1,700 SF

**SIZE AFTER REMODEL:** 2,400 SF

**ARCHITECT:** DROZDA + OTHERS ARCHITECTS

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** SUN LIGHT & POWER

*“Green is beautiful,  
practical, and economical.  
As we say about the project,  
‘It is easy being green.’”*

—Irene Kiebert

