

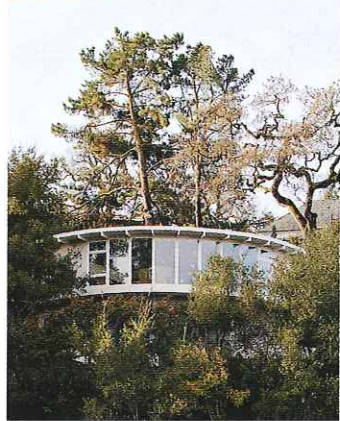
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SPACES

FEBRUARY 2007



THE SCOOP ON GRAINS
**An Airy Home
in Alamo**
SPECTACULAR DECKS



ROUND HOUSE BEAUTY

VIEWS + ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS = DREAM HOME

BY WAYNE RASMUSSEN ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFFERY CROSS



Nestled into a hillside lot with a panoramic view of Stone Valley, the Alamo Round House, as this home is named, was designed and built in 1973 by the late Leon Meyer of the firm Meyer & Taylor Modern Structures. The Oakland-based firm designed dozens of flat-roofed round houses as well as round libraries, schools and commercial buildings between the mid-'60s to the late '80s. The structural components were manufactured offsite, but the houses were designed to suit the hillside sites on which they were usually constructed.

One sure way to authenticate a Meyer house from others is the use of smoked Plexiglas windows. Meyer actually created the equipment to bend this material while maintaining the rounded building form. The windows were tinted in an effort to maintain a clean "minimal" design appearance and to avoid the need for shades or other coverings over the expansive window areas while keeping the house cool. However, the tinted Plexi did not hold up to the test of time.

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Attempting to preserve the original footprint of the house, the renovation included the completely round second floor area with the first floor partially set into the hillside and the remaining first floor area radiating out at geometric angles from the center point of the house (previous page and above).


Glass, skylights and mirrors all work together to bring in natural daylight, and enhance views of tree canopy, flora and fauna. The modified living room also includes a band of nine consecutive 42-inch-wide floor-to-ceiling windows following the round outside perimeter of the house.

A large mirror at the end of the fireplace reflects outdoor views and creates the illusion of a 180-degree curved wall in the living room.



Curved and architecturally sculptured entry staircase adds drama and elegance to this airy, modern home.

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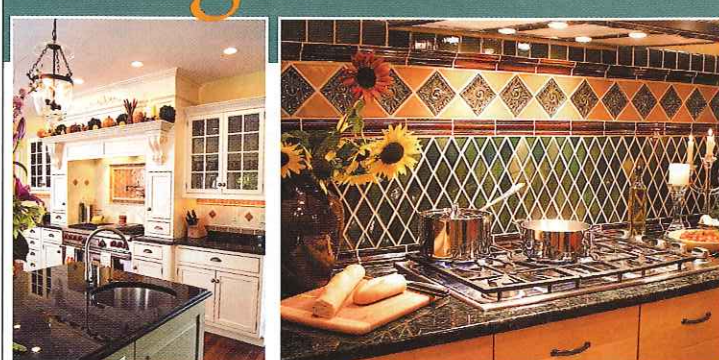
A state-of-the-art kitchen, like the rest of the house, takes full advantage of the views of trees and nature's full spectacle, where wildlife is free to roam.

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In 2005, the house was restored and an addition added by architect Mark Molinar, A.I.A., of Molinar Home Design located in Dublin, California. Molinar appreciated the graceful simplicity of the original house and introduced new ideas that built upon Meyer's vision, while at the same time correcting the original scale and durability problems. Molinar also made the space more livable through the use of light, warm colors, and opened up the rooms to outside views, making way for indoor natural light. The focus of the home is now its architecture rather than ornate décor. ■

Wayne Rasmussen is the president Rasmussen Planning, a land use planning and urban design firm located in San Ramon.

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