

# CALIFORNIA HOMES

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# AN EDWARDIAN GOES MODERN

A SAN FRANCISCO ARCHITECT REMODELS HIS OWN REMODEL  
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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**S**ome fifteen years ago, Dan Phipps, a San Francisco architect for the past twenty years, had been involved in a major remodel of an early 1900s Edwardian home in which the spaces were reconfigured. His firm, Dan Phipps & Associates, had added a third floor to the single-family home by converting the attic into an office and bedroom and adding a staircase leading up to it.

About eighteen months ago, the home's new owners contacted his firm as the original remodeling architects and wanted him to upgrade the interior finishes as well as the appliances.

"This was an opportunity to go back and combine functionality with aesthetics, to create a gestalt," said Phipps, a native San Franciscan. "There's always a desire on my part to do a very comprehensive project, to look at a project from the macro down to the micro, and pull it all together in the details. It's very satisfying when you get to do that."

Phipps' clients are a married couple, who both cook and wanted to be able to work in the kitchen together. He's a collector of shot glasses, and requested a spot in the kitchen for his collection. Phipps designed a recessed cabinet in the kitchen wall covered with a clear glass panel. The collection sits on glass shelves and is lit from above.

Both clients are also avid gardeners so Phipps did two things to open up the house to their picturesque rear garden. First, he tore out a wall in the kitchen and installed floor-to-ceiling glass overlooking the garden, designed as a sequence of spaces incorporating two fountains, an arbor and small private spaces for contemplation.

*PRECEDING LEFT PAGE:* Angre wood veneer, which comes from Australia and Africa and is covered in a semi-gloss lacquer finish, is again used in the living room fireplace with the same patinated metal surround that is in the home's other fireplace. Phipps added this fireplace during the remodel. *PRECEDING RIGHT PAGE:* The fireplace in the family room, which is off the kitchen, was given a concrete mantle about 6 feet high that floats across the space and sits on a metal facing surrounding the fireplace. Phipps said he worked hard with artisans to create the right patina for the metal, which is a cold, rolled steel. Heat and chemicals were applied to create the effect. Phipps and his clients also love the effect on the fireplace of the dappled sunlight through the trees in their back yard. "I couldn't have planned it as well as it happened naturally," says Phipps.



**T**hey love gardening and it shows," says Phipps of his clients. "It was so beautiful, and they have put time and energy into it and have great results. It was important to look out that way." Phipps also arranged for a very private glimpse of the verdant outdoors from the bathroom. Next to the bath is a long, narrow panel of sand-etched glass, which lets in some light but insures privacy. At the bottom of the glass panel he left a square of clear glass a foot off the floor to view the garden. "It's very private, and a cool thing," he says.

The main task for Phipps in the remodel was to incorporate high-quality, aesthetically-pleasing finishes and appliances to replace, tired, dated ones. He replaced the painted, generic kitchen cabinets with a rich-textured anegre, a wood from Australia and Africa that Phipps appreciates for its character. In fact, he was even able to select the particular tree he wanted from Architectural Forest Enterprises, in Brisbane, which displays the trees sliced into veneers. Phipps likes "the tone, the grain and the wonderful warmth."

"Anegre has more character than oak and the other standard woods used in kitchens. All we needed to add was a clear stain," he says.

The new owner of these elegant cabinets was so happy when she saw them that she did something no client of Phipps had ever done before. "She hugged me," says Phipps. "She had no idea what she was getting and she was stunned at how beautiful they were." During the remodel, Phipps didn't have to convince his clients of anything because they told him at the outset, "We want what you want." "Of course, there's always some dialogue with clients. But every time I walked in the door with some new idea or information, they said 'Cool!'" Phipps has been creating clean, contemporary spaces with humanity in mind for his clients since he started in the business after graduating from U.C. Berkeley.

"My designs are not austere, they're comfortable places for people to live their lives."

That is his basic creed as an architect. "People go to Yosemite or the Grand Canyon and are in awe of it. They respond to certain things in their living environments, too, like woods that have warmth. I'm not interested in the coldness of stainless steel. It's not humane in terms of living around it. If people surround themselves with more natural materials, they respond in a primal way. That's easy to say, but it's complicated how you achieve it." ○

The bathroom walls are made of large custom-colored concrete tiles, as is the custom-made curved shower wall. The floors are ceramic tile. The architect and his clients wanted everything open, light, and fresh. The mirrors above each of the two vanities (not seen) have a sand-etched frame around the edge. The mirrors are set off the wall from 1/2" to 3/4" so they appear to be floating. At the rear of the bathroom, the long panel of sand etched glass next to the john assures privacy, while the clear glass panel at the bottom peeks into the garden below. The hardware is by Kohler and Aino.



