

HOME

ISSUE NINETEEN

SUMMER 2021

IN SPORTS, there is always a field, court, ring, pitch or some other setting where the event takes place. In construction, it's really no different. Our jobsites may not resemble a traditional field of play, such as Wrigley or Fenway, but just like in those legendary spaces, our project teams take their positions at the beginning of each game, prepared to execute what they've practiced

CONSTRUCTION IS A TEAM SPORT

so many times before. In our world, the team in the field is made up of our laborers and carpenters working alongside trusted tradespeople of all stripes, many of whom we have been working with for decades. With the guidance and direction of our onsite superintendents and project managers, our teams are able to produce the incredible projects we are known for.

However, it does not stop with the onsite team. Each one of our projects is a prototype, as each design is unique from the start and continues to evolve until completion. Such a journey requires strong partners on the design side who can help our players in the

field get the information they need to perform. We are fortunate to work with some amazing architects and designers who are up for the challenge. Much like our trusted trade partners,



CONSTRUCTION IS A TEAM SPORT *continued from previous page*



we have worked with many of these firms and individuals for years, and that familiarity is valuable for creating a common playbook so that we can all continue to improve our performance. And when we get the opportunity to work with a new design firm, we always end up with some new innovation or idea to carry forward to the next game — er, excuse us, the next project.

At the end of the day, none of this work would be possible without our

clients. When it comes down to it, they are the most essential members of the team and their engagement is critical from start to finish. As builders, there is an indescribable excitement that comes with witnessing an owner take in their project at its various stages. Whether they are surveying the freshly graded land where their home will be built or seeing the finishes they selected applied for the first time — it just never gets old to us!

It likely comes as no surprise that our 2021 theme at Giffin & Crane is “Construction is a Team Sport.” As mentioned above, that

team extends beyond our internal G&C team to our trade partners, design partners, and clients. As general contractors, we are calling the plays and helping our teammates to perform at their best because we know that what makes our projects special is the combined heart and professionalism of everyone involved. The fact that we have been able to continue to do this safely throughout the pandemic, without sacrificing quality, is something we are very proud of.

This is our summer 2021 newsletter, and we want to end by mentioning that cofounder, Bruce Giffin, finished our summer 2018 newsletter’s cover article with these sentences: “Those day-to-day neighborly interactions of human kindness...that’s what makes Montecito, and by extension Santa Barbara, special. Re-establishing normalcy is how we honor those we



lost.” At that time, he was referring to how our community would rebuild after the mudslides that devastated the area earlier that year. Three years on, Bruce’s words are again timely. While the scope of the events we are recovering from are global this time, and what normalcy looks like may have changed, the basic tenets of human kindness and our ability to strengthen our resolve to move us forward have not. So please, enjoy the summer, be good to each other, and take the time to enjoy your favorite sport, whichever field it’s played on!

—Eric Carlstedt

Left, top to bottom: Architect (and teamplayer) Chris Dentzel has worked with Giffin & Crane on several major projects over the years, including a remodel of his own home. Skilled laborers build a deck on the “field of play” Santa Barbara is famous for. A concrete crewmember ties rebar before a big pour. Below: A team of framers tests beam strength.



THE WET BAR IS BACK



There was a time when a home wet bar was fairly common. Mostly, it was just a simple countertop sink and cabinets in the corner of a living room, creating a convenient space where wives gathered chilled wines on weekends and husbands mixed drinks after work.

Then, despite being great gathering hubs of residential entertaining (and decompressing), the home wet bar fell out of vogue. During the inevitable remodeling projects of outdated homes, wet bars were often replaced by the components of changing tastes, such as bigger TVs, stereo systems, and the accompanying entertainment cabinets.

Recently, however, there’s been a resurgence. This wet bar comeback can give thanks in part to the popularity of craft cocktails and to the fact that during most of 2020, our favorite watering holes and restaurant

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FEATURED HOME:

Framing Nature's Splendor

A Bluff-Top Modern Captures Oceanfront Beauty and Structural Art

All it took, they say, was one of those breathtaking doses of natural splendor Santa Barbara is famous for. From the balcony of their blufftop home, Glennis and Jim Malcolm recently flashed back to that fateful autumn day in 2010. They had been house hunting nearby. For fun, their real estate agent urged them to take a look at an oceanfront fixer-upper outside their budget.

We were all over the map!”

Long story short: They made an offer that was immediately accepted. Over the next five years, the Malcolms—now semi-retired real estate developers—spent every weekend at their one-bedroom, one-bath fixer with some “bootleg additions,” as Jim likes to call them.

“We were thinking the whole time, ‘What would our dream

of cost. But they knew we could do something more exciting and creative—they insisted, ‘let’s make it more sculptural, a real work of art.’”

Winick provided the Malcolms with a shortlist of contractors, including Giffin & Crane, with whom Winick had worked on several projects.

The comprehensive remodel took roughly three years, counting a nine-month delay to remediate the unexpected discovery of contaminated soil surrounding a relic well from the Mesa Oil Field, where production had peaked in the 1930s.

The finished two-story home features two bedrooms, two and a half baths, and a media room across roughly 3,200 square feet. Outdoor living space includes a kitchen in the breezeway, a deck over the carport, and comfort zones that blend the boundaries between inside and out. All the better to enjoy those views, they say.

“Back when we were dating, way before we had kids, we were always saying to each other, wouldn’t it be great to live in Santa Barbara someday?” remembers Glennis. “I mean, look at this place—it’s a dream.” 🏡

Above left: Facing south, our featured home takes advantage of sun exposure and a front-row ocean view. Facing page, clockwise from top left: Long lines, tall glass, and a staircase chandelier. Ocean view from the living room, across the cantilevered balcony. Authentic portholes with cumaro siding and stair treads. Outdoor living space with maximized views and comfort. Modern kitchen with an island for casual dining.



Jim’s memory: “It was mid-November. One of those drop-dead clear days—a 10 out of 10.” The unobstructed view stretched from Point Mugu to the western horizon of the Santa Barbara Channel and out beyond the islands. Stunned, they drove in silence back to their Los Angeles home.

“We were looking for an escape,” remembers Glennis, a UCSB grad. “We were looking at Wyoming or a studio in New York City. San Francisco. La Jolla.

house be like?” says Glennis.

To help refine their vision, they hired Winick Architects, Inc. and started talking with Barry Winick about the view, prevailing winds, and where the sun and moon would rise and set during different times of the year.

“We very much like to take context into the beginning of any design,” says Winick of those early conversations. “I take my hat off to them,” he adds. “We originally had a more modest design that was conscientious



THE TEAM

Geoff Crane
Project Lead

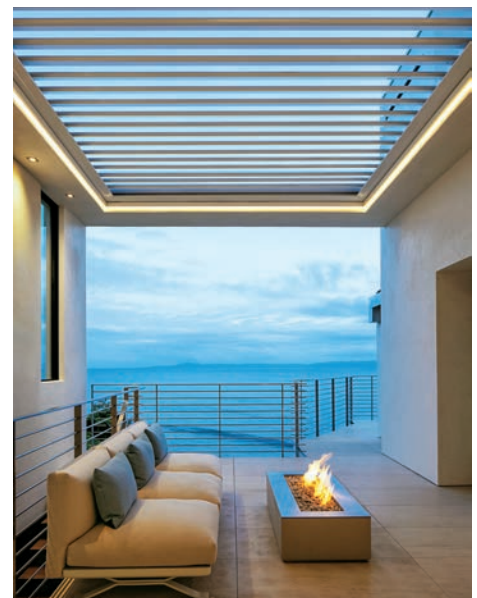
Bryan Boyd
Project Superintendent

Barry Winick Architects Inc.
Architect

Taylor & Syfan
Structural Engineer

Pat Brodie Landscape Design
Landscape Designer

Debbie Shaw Landscape
Landscape Installation



NICK PENDLETON, SUPERINTENDENT

BICOASTAL EXPERIENCE, AND A PASSION FOR HIGH-END BUILDING

Before him, many of the men in Nick Pendleton's extended family were craftsmen. Some were simply handy with the endless projects associated with home or auto upkeep, while others—including his father, a general contractor—were professionals.

Regardless of their day job, they were all mechanically inclined and enjoyed working with their hands," Pendleton remembers. "Growing up around that, I learned to enjoy it, too."

Pendleton graduated from Camarillo High, in Ventura County, and attended Moorpark College. After his dad passed away in 1998, he moved with his mom to the Washington D.C. area, where she had family. In 2002, his uncle, a carpenter, helped get him a job with Mauck Zantzingler & Associates, a general contractor specializing in high-end custom homes.

"I worked in the field as a carpenter for about three years," he remembers. "Then they moved me up to project management. I understood the drawings, and I think they saw in me the willingness to take on a more managerial role. I had always envisioned that this field is what I would go into."

Pendleton also picked up good relational skills from a pair of early



mentors, he says. "I do try to be diplomatic and fair with all parties on a project. Problems come up, and getting bent out of shape on a job site is not productive—it's not going to help solve the problem."

After more than 15 years with Mauck Zantzingler, Pendleton moved back to Ventura. "It's always felt like home," he says, adding that his weekend go-to is setting out on his mountain bike in the Los Padres National Forest backcountry or in Sycamore Canyon, near Point Mugu. These days, he rides a Specialized Epic Evo on serious trails. On a big job site with a lot of acreage between project buildings, you might spot him on a custom ride

cobbled together with spare parts and a basket.

"Life is work, and some downtime and weekend trips to the backcountry are necessary," he says. "I try to escape civilization for a bit when I can."

Careerwise, he knew exactly what he wanted to be doing when he returned to California. He scouted out the architects who were building the best custom homes in the region to ask which builders they liked working with. Giffin & Crane was on the shortlist. "Santa Barbara was where these kinds of projects were happening," he remembers, "and I knew I didn't want to work in L.A."

Pendleton came aboard in 2018 as a project manager. Giffin & Crane Principal,

Derek Shue, said Pendleton's experience back East played a big role in the decision. Plus, Giffin & Crane is similar in size and structure to Pendleton's former employer.

"I like the high-end residential market because the clients are in the position to build things the right way," Pendleton says. "And I've always appreciated being able to build historically significant buildings true to their original design and being able to work with these architects in Santa Barbara. If you like building well and working alongside extremely talented people in a beautiful setting, this is the place to do it." ■

PARADISE FOUND. AGAIN.

A SHIFT TO SANTA BARBARA AS THE WORK-FROM-HOME ETHOS EXPANDS

A big part of the current surge of people moving to Santa Barbara has a lot to do with longing. Many of the newly arrived have actually been here before. Some were born and raised, then moved away for school or work. Others lived in Santa Barbara temporarily for college. Still more were married here or, while growing up, visited on vacation. All of them, it seems, have since been longing to come back.

“For many, there’s always been that Rubik’s Cube,” says Josiah Hamilton, a realtor with Berkshire Hathaway. “They’re wondering, ‘How do I get back to Santa Barbara?’”

As we all know, Santa Barbara is an appealing place to call home, with interesting history, culture, architectural design, and a vibrant countywide food-and-drink scene. And, of course, we have the mountains and the sea—plus those islands—all of it blessed with great weather pretty much all year long.

“It’s a real lifestyle change for people coming from L.A. or the Bay Area,” says Hamilton, whose local family roots date back five generations. “Santa Barbara is a pretty good choice.”

Ramping up last year during the peak of the pandemic, there’s been a big shift to remote working, remote learning, and just about remote everything. That makes a beach town like Santa Barbara become “even more appealing because the walls of commerce have disappeared,” adds Hamilton.

It’s true, a lot of people have moved away from California to states with lower tax rates. But at the same time, now with the ability to work from home, people are also figuring out ways to remain in the Golden State, or to return. And it doesn’t hurt that L.A. is only a two-hour drive, and the Bay Area is about a six-hour road trip. Also, in recent years, Santa Barbara Airport has increased the number of flights to travel hubs and major destinations around the country.

But this big shift of people leaving the big cities to settle in small towns isn’t exactly new, according to those who

Finding a path out of the concrete jungle has been easier as work-from-home resources—such as strong and dependable wireless services, for example—have become more abundant and affordable. Some employers have also become more lenient in recent years, allowing workers to punch in remotely at least once a week. As the pandemic shut down indoor gathering spaces, dedicated remote workers proved that many businesses could stay successful even without the traditional shared office space.

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watch the trends. While the social distancing and work-from-home realities of 2020 certainly piqued interest in people wanting more elbow room than their metropolitan counterparts, this uptick dates back at least five years. Overall, during that time frame, growth in cities has trended slightly downward as suburban populations have sloped up.

A seaside town with a mountain backdrop, the charm of Santa Barbara has a long history of attracting new residents and convincing departed locals to come back home. With interesting history, architecture, good weather, good schools, a vibrant food-and-drink scene, and plenty of outdoor recreation, it’s no wonder. Pictured, circa 1909, a tee shot at Potter Country Club in Hope Ranch, with Las Palmas Drive in the distance. Photograph Courtesy of the Santa Barbara Public Library, Edson Smith Photo Collection.

PARADISE FOUND *continued from previous page*

“The pandemic has changed how we look at our homes,” says Hamilton. “Today, a home is less a place just to eat and sleep and be with your family. Your home is now your fortress, self-contained, where you have everything you need to live and work and play and raise a family and have people come over.”

In that respect, when a home sells and its new owners arrive, they’re not just looking at the home office space, but also at the interior and exterior living spaces as places to be able to conduct business and take online classes.

But the perfect at-home workspace setup is a rare product in the real estate market. Often, these spaces have to be built. While so-called “Zoom” rooms can be achieved with furniture and privacy features, new owners now often want to have the option of setting up their mobile desks in a private corner of the bedroom, or outside in a quiet shady spot.

For some, all the pieces come together. Santa Barbara’s newest residents have found their way back—or arrived for the very first time—to a smaller, more tight-knit community with great weather, schools, and places to work productively, reliably, and safely. 🏡

G&C ON THE WEB

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giffinandcrane.com/blog



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THE WET BAR IS BACK *continued from page 3*



bars were closed to indoor dining and drinking. Plus, here’s something that never goes out of vogue—our timeless attraction to simply enjoying the familiar comforts of home while imbibing on the good stuff and—even better—inviting friends to join in.

Pictured above and on page three, this wet bar, installed in January, checks a lot of boxes, including countertop sink, built-in refrigerator and ice maker, and plenty of Moroccan-style cabinet space for bottles, glassware, utensils, and other essential elements. As a bonus, it also features a sitdown design, with a trio of barchairs and a roomy wraparound serving counter.

This wet bar is part of a two-room guest house that was

previously used as a yoga studio and sleeping quarters. During the transformation, Giffin & Crane brought the guest house (and main residence) up to date with the new owners’ taste for finishes—including floors, cabinets, paint, and stucco—and bigger modifications to bathrooms and the kitchen. Where the wet bar is now used to be a closet.

“In the guest house, we turned the bedroom into an office and the main living space into an entertainment room with a card playing area, seating area, wine cellar, and that wet bar in the corner,” remembers Giffin & Crane Superintendent Jake Lewis, who oversaw the project. “It’s just a great sitting room for enjoying time with guests and listening to music.”

Outside the wet bar window are roses and a vegetable garden. It’s also just across the room from a pair of French doors that open to the pool patio, and a short chip to a private golf course.

The wet bar idea was a dream of the client, who’s a wine connoisseur. Giffin & Crane worked closely with John De Bastiani Interiors to make the client’s vision a reality. We say, cheers to that! 🏡

GIFFIN & CRANE
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