

Homes for the Holidays

By MARYBETH VARCADOS
Sentinel features editor

COMING HOME from their high-pressure business life convinced Peter and Terry Vokos of one thing — that their domestic surroundings must be soothing.

As soon as they began to visualize the home they would custom build in the rolling hills skirting UC Santa Cruz, they defined such requirements as lots of space, soaring (10½-foot) ceilings, nooks for privacy — and a spacious kitchen to accommodate Terry's gourmet talents.

Add one more requirement — quality. No shortcuts.

Three and a half years ago, they and their daughter, Ali, now 12, moved into their new Normandy-style home on Moore Creek Road, off Western Drive. What they look back on as epic discussions, struggles, demands, concessions happily produced a center of comfort and a showcase.

The old saw about building homes ruining marriages came to mind several times during the process, Terry says, but now they good-naturedly list who won disputes, and where. The rose shade of the master bedroom carpet, for example, went to Peter.

Moore Creek encompasses an architecturally controlled neighborhood of 16 homes. Here, residences must pass muster.

The 3,300 square-foot Vokos home sits back from the street with two levels on one-third acre. Peter, who owns the Men's Room at Capitola Mall, had built two stores previously, so acted as his own contractor and worked with an architect.

But the hero, the couple agrees, is builder Joe diMarzio. "Look at that crown molding," Terry says, indicating the edge of the 10½-foot ceiling. "It is meticulously fitted." Care with the finish work is crucial, Peter added. The walls are finished with plaster, not sheetrock.

Entry to the two-level home is on the hill side, with the reception hall breaking into three staircases. One leads down to bedrooms, a plush family room featuring a grape-toned sink-in couch, and the laundry. The other two go upstairs, one rounding an open bar area into the living room and the other leading to the dining room. An opening in the dining room wall looks back and down at the entry hall. So,



Carousel theme adds fun.

from the entry, two spectacular light fixtures are visible — crystal in the entry, and a lily-style water-fall in pink glass in the dining room.

Interior decoration was a personal matter with Terry, who owns Ali Claire's women's shop in Capitola Mall, in charge. A close look reveals their affection for whimsy. Ethereal pastels, while airy and calming, also suit a carousel theme. Living room walls are a tone called "crysanthemum," with the taupe carpet leading to a marble fireplace and cabined wall, designed by Peter. A carousel horse hanging, in pastels, was designed and made by a friend.

Pouf curtains in a pink and white Laura Ashley stripe set off the French-style windows that side the fireplace and eventually give way to sliding doors along the bay-facing wall.

The use of pastels wraps through the dining room, lightens in the kitchen and eventually turns to a lively pink in the windowed dining nook. A copper hood hovers over the cook's island, complete with commercial-style gas range and service sink. One kitchen wall is filled with a desk area, the exterior wall holds cabinets, including handy appliance barns.

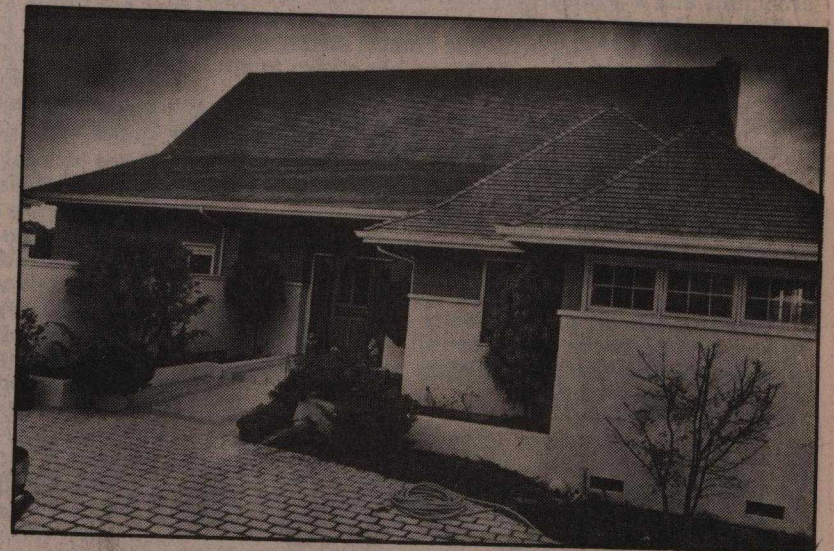
Terry points out a large kitchen witch, recostumed to meet the color scheme. But the best part of the kitchen, Terry concluded, is Corian sideboards. "I would use it everywhere, if I had the choice again," she said.

What Peter learned from the process, he said, is "When you plan a custom home, you should plan your furniture, too. We had a lot that we couldn't use."

So the dining room set with glass-top table was specially made by a San Francisco firm. And Peter himself made a French-style cabinet with stained glass-style doors to house the entertainment center.

VOKOS: Pastels and whimsy

An opportunity to see the Vokos home comes Saturday during Santa Cruz County Symphony's Holiday House Tour. Five decorated homes will be open for touring from noon to 4 p.m., with refreshments starting at 1:30 p.m. in the courtyard at Silver Birch Lane, Soquel, with two homes open for touring. Music will be by Aptos High School Chorus directed by Merri Tassano and the Santa Cruz Chorale, Mary Lynn Place-Badarak, director. The Rose Quartet will play selections "from Mozart to mariachi" at a Victorian home, Epworth-by-the-Sea on West Cliff Drive. Final stop will be the home of Tia Baldwin on Walnut Street, Santa Cruz. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. For more information, call 688-0779, 438-7264 or 688-7192.



Peaked roofs, paned windows give home distinctive style.



Kitchen dining nook faces the bay and opens to second-story deck in the home of Peter and Terry Vokos, above.

Photos by Bill Loveloy