



Creating a peaceful refuge

1940's era home inspires new landscape/hardscape

By Susan Golovin / Photos by Veronica Weber

When Barbara Paldus and Mike Farmwald bought their Atherton home in 2011, the backyard was essentially a concrete slab. The house is a U-shaped hacienda-style adobe brick building with wide covered porches, and it sits on almost 2.5 acres.

The courtyard within the "U" and beyond is now a peaceful refuge with a design aesthetic that complements and enhances the home. Architect Judith Mattingly worked closely with landscape architect Jenna Bayer to effect the change.

Mattingly says that she created an axis in the middle of the courtyard in order to organize the space, and Bayer added "pots of bright colors" to further define this area. The axis consists of four "tile carpets" that point to an octagonal koi pond, complete with a central tiled pedestal topped with a blue stone fish. Four stone benches with blue-tiled seats are arranged around the pond. The fronts

and backs of the backrests are adorned with tile patterns that echo the tile carpets, and two benches flank each "carpet."

Towards the rear of the property, a new adobe brick pool house overlooks the pool. A covered outdoor kitchen with barbecue and pizza oven is set off to one side.

The stonework includes laying about 13 tons of Arizona Sedona flagstone.

Everywhere you look you see tile — even on the risers on the stairs that lead to the pool and

below the pillars supporting the structure over the kitchen. Although the predominant colors are blue and yellow, closer examination reveals a spectrum.

Mattingly designed the tiles and specified the pattern in which they would be laid out.

"All the tiles are Fire Clay, and they are very green (recyclable)," she says.

The stonework includes laying about 13 tons of Arizona Sedona flagstone.

(continued on page 26)



At top: A covered outdoor kitchen overlooks the pool at this Atherton home. **Above left:** A blue stone fish is the star of this koi pond. **Above right:** The new brick pool house features a fountain with a water spout set in a tree-of-life tile pictorial.



The pool house includes a great room, kitchen, bedroom and two bathrooms.

Peaceful refuge

(continued from page 26)

The strolling areas are enhanced by low-water and low-maintenance plantings. “The garden tends toward saturated color and strong contrast between texture and form,” Bayer says. To this end, she incorporated flowering herbaceous plants such as agastache and salvias — and lavender, which blooms three times a year.

“The plant selections are quintessential California.” Flowering stonecrops and *adjuga*, with its glossy leaves, are sprinkled throughout to unify the beds. Ornamental grasses add lushness.

Since the courtyard gets strong sun, Bayer planted a Catalpa tree.

“The only trees that were here originally are the citrus and the olive,” she says. The olive trees, as if straight out of central casting, stand on either side of the visual frame for the Mission Revival-style pool house situated toward the back of the property.

“We wanted to curve the front of the pool house because it is contiguous with the original curved adobe brick wall, as was the former pool house,” Mattingly says. “We couldn’t get bricks with the same dimensions as the old mud bricks, so we used pilasters at either end to compensate.” The new bricks do not “boze” mortar as do the originals, but the white paint unites them.

The central element of the front of the pool house is a fountain with a water spout set in a tree-of-life tile pictorial. The base of the fountain is a tile-topped half octagon that echoes the koi pond. Six blue-trimmed windows are equally distributed over four blue-trimmed double doors.

“I love the White Princess granite thresholds,” Bill Webbe, estate manager and contractor, says.

Webbe says that they had to dig 13 feet for the foundation, so deep that they had to create temporary stairs. The pool house is divided equally between the storage basement and the main floor. The latter consists of a great room with kitchen, bedroom and two bathrooms. Both baths, as well as the fireplace surround and the kitchen counters and backsplash feature colorful tile, and whimsical turtle, frog and fish tiles pop up in the bathrooms as they do in the fountain and pond. The floor is terra-cotta tile.

“The property sure looks a lot better now from Google Earth,” Farmwald says. **INS**

Resources:

Architect: Judith Mattingly Mattingly Thayer Architecture, San Francisco, 415-431-2848, matharch.com
Landscape architect: Jenna Bayer, Jenna Bayer Garden Design Inc., Mountain View, 650-988-9600, jennabayer.com
Tile contractor: Del Rio Stone, Menlo Park, 650-473-9903, delricstone.com

Goal of project:

Create a courtyard, pool house, barbecue and outdoor kitchen

Year house built: 1940s

Size of home, lot:

2.5-acre lot, 2,600-sq-ft pool house

Unanticipated issues:

Tile delivery from Vietnam was delayed; the curved foundation of the pool house was tricky.

Time to complete:

8 months design, 14 months construction



This tile backsplash echoes the hacienda style of the entire property.