

HOME TERRITORY

A house in Davis makes good use of wide-open spaces.

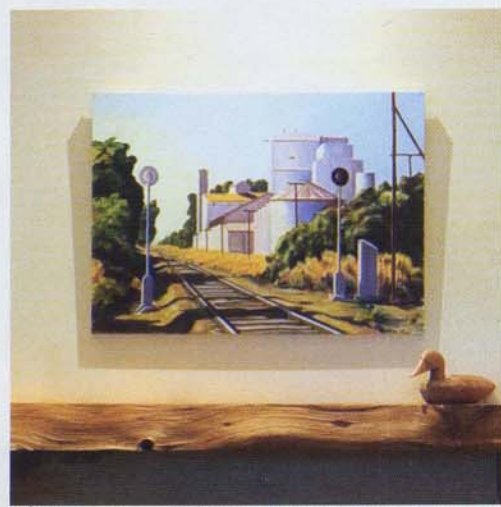
Photography by Mark Bernard




“It’s like living a bit outdoors,” says Jim Bruner about the Territorial-style home he built in North Davis Farms. Designed by JSW/D Architects of Berkeley, the house has a corrugated roof with deep overhangs that provide much-needed shade on hot Central Valley days. Inside, doors and windows swing wide open to capture cooling Delta breezes and offer floor-to-ceiling views of the landscape. “Even when I’m shaving in the morning, I can see the turkeys and pheasants going by,” Bruner says, explaining that the design is a traditional take-off on homes built in western Texas, New Mexico and Colorado and then adapted for California during the 19th century.

One of the home’s most striking interior spaces is a window- and door-lined great room, with a fireplace at one end and the kitchen at the other. To blend a sophisticated look with a hefty dose of utility, Elma Gardner of By Design in Davis specified concrete counters, custom-designed cabinetry, frosted glass, stainless steel appliances and storage everywhere. Whatever you need to cook, serve, eat or entertain is close at hand but tidily stowed out of sight. In fact, the kitchen has no overhead cabinets at all because Bruner wanted—guess what—windows. “Jim has wonderful ideas of his own and is also extremely open-minded,” says Gardner, a certified interior, bath and kitchen designer. “You get instant feedback so you don’t have to be afraid to come up with something out of the ordinary. He will give everything complete consideration. And that’s one of the reasons this house is so special.”

The great room’s Rumford fireplace (above) “really puts out the heat,” homeowner Jim Bruner says. A friend made the mantel from a solid piece of weathered cedar. Below, a close-up of The Yolo Rice Mill by Davis artist Phil Gross.





“Elma (Gardner) worked on a major makeover of our former house, so when I called her and said, ‘I’m going to do another house,’ she said, ‘OK. I’m all up for that.’”

— Jim Bruner

“The cabinets are a custom green color that Jim had in mind, but he had to find a sample of it somewhere so I could duplicate it. He finally found it in a magazine, so we sent it off to Wood-Mode (cabinetry) and they sent back a sample he could approve.”

— Elma Gardner

The landscape, designed by Randy Thueme of San Francisco, includes palms, turf grass, Berkeley sedge, Mexican feather grass and California fescue. Mature palms, trucked in from Carpinteria while the house was being built, were hoisted into place by crane.



To get the look of concrete pitted by rock salt, the contractor built a roller embedded with tiny spikes.



EASY ACCESS

Could you get any closer to a sleeping-outside experience than bedroom doors that slide open to the pool? "It's a great house in any climate, but when it gets warm, it's so pleasant to come home from work, sit out there, plop in the pool or grab a beer, do some reading or do nothing," Bruner says.

And when running into the house from the pool, it's great not to worry about what you're tracking in on your feet. Concrete floors were the answer, though no one could predict exactly what they were going to look like. "It really was a leap of faith," Gardner says. Bruner explains: "When the concrete is drying, they put a machine on it that has a blade, kind of like a fan, and it's the polishing that brought up swirls of the darker charcoal color. It was an experiment. A really big experiment." One that went with the territory.