

REAL ESTATE

Local companies earn design and construction awards

On Thursday, October 17, the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) announced the winners of its annual REMMIES awards in multiple categories for design and construction. Many local companies earned awards, and the Grand Prize went to McCutcheon Construction of Berkeley for a residential remodel on Yosemite Road.

Other local winners were building Lab, Inc., which won four REMMIES total in both design and construction categories; HDR Remodeling of Berkeley, which won First Place – Residential Bathroom \$30K – \$60K; and Custom Kitchens of Telegraph Avenue, which was awarded First Place – Residential Kitchen over \$100K.

McCutcheon Construction was presented three awards overall, and First Prize in two categories: Entire House \$500K – \$1 Million, and Residential Interior \$100K and over. It was the smaller of the projects that also earned McCutcheon the Grand Prize.

More about the Grand Prize

The subject home, built in the 1920's, was originally constructed atop a small basement. Little more than 175 square feet, it was just enough space for a washer and dryer and limited storage around the furnace, water heater, and other utilities. In 1994, the home was extensively remodeled; however, the basement area underneath was left untouched. Consequently, occasional basement floods brought by seasonal rains and the desire for further earthquake proofing, habitable guest quarters, and a modern media room finally inspired the family to take action.

Working with designer John Wheatman, the underlying idea of this project was to create a significantly larger space sub-grade that somehow integrated into the suburban garden setting of the home.

The project began with a challenging excavation of Northbrae Rhyolite natural stone, some of which was retained and re-used for garden walls, while the rest was shared with very grateful neighbors. This excavation extended beyond the original footprint of the home, which simultaneously opened the downstairs spaces to natural light and created private outdoor living space and light wells on either side of the home's formal entry.

Careful placement of windows and doors, as well as the addition of an outdoor terrace, converted what could have been a dark and dingy "basement" into a light, bright and airy living space in keeping with the qualities of the remodeled home above.

Many technical improvements were also accomplished as part of this renovation. After 8 feet of dirt and rock were removed, the entire foundation was replaced, and surrounded



Photo by Scott Hargis



HDR Remodeling: Bathroom remodel with Turkish tile accents; REMMIES First Place, Bathroom Remodel \$30K – \$60K



Photos by Treve Johnson

building Lab, Inc.: In an older compartmentalized home, a newly remodeled kitchen now opens to the family room; REMMIES First Place, Residential Kitchen over \$120K.



Photos by Treve Johnson

McCutcheon Construction: (1) In the newly created sub-grade basement, the Media Room now opens to a sitting area and terraced garden. (2) A new proper set of stairs help integrate the new sub-grade space with the rest of the remodeled home. (3) The excavation was intense and challenging. (4) The new guest quarters – REMMIES Grand Prize, Residential Interior, over \$100K.

by a sophisticated drainage system involving multiple keys. Additionally, a radiant heating system was included in the basement slab, and installed in the ceiling to warm the main floor above.

Overall, without altering the footprint of the original home, this project enlarged the basement to 955 square feet (an increase of 780 feet) – enough space for a proper staircase, a media room, a guest suite with private

bathroom, a wine cellar, and storage area, as well as an expanded laundry area.

"We were surprised," commented company President Michael McCutcheon about winning the Grand Prize. "Compared to some of our other projects, this was not a flashy job. Yet the work was intense and technically challenging. So in that way, it's very rewarding."



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