

AIA East Bay Home Tours features six houses

By *Marta Yamamoto, Correspondent*

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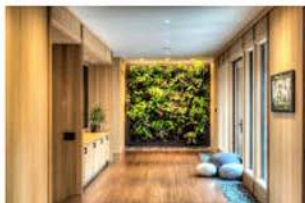
0 COMMENTS



Piedmont's LEED Ranch, designed by Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, added LEED features including rooftop solar collectors, an interior plant wall to clean the air and driveway permeability for water absorption.

BERKELEY -- There's something unique about a new home, addition or remodel designed by an architect who transforms the "before" into an "after" that solves problems and pleases aesthetically. And it's no surprise that touring examples of these homes can be educational, inspiring and fun.

Luckily for East Bay residents, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) East Bay Home Tour on Aug. 9 has selected six contemporary homes for a self-directed tour that promises a day full of architectural experiences. Designed by the Bay Area's leading architects, the homes offer a diverse selection that range from modern statements and historic renovations to a contemporary cabin.



Piedmont's LEED Ranch, designed by Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, is an ultra-sustainable house that remains respectful of the neighborhood and its 1960s California ranch style.

The rationale behind the tour is to remind people of the value of using an architect for practical and aesthetic reasons and to benefit the community. AIA believes that having the public tour houses is the best way to put this point across.

"Architects are experts at solving complex, three-dimensional puzzles, know how to use materials wisely and are up on the energy and carbon conserving abilities of different construction methods," said Kurt Lavenson, AIA, co-chair. "Having a well-designed, comfortable and functional home makes a difference and there's also a community aspect that a better built environment benefits everyone."

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The homes on this year's tour were selected based partly public feedback from previous tours, where positive responses were given to remodels, additions and small houses.

"I believe the average tourgoer is looking for inspiration of what they can do in their own home and they're interested in the possibilities within a 1,700-square-foot house or 700-square-foot bungalow," said Sidney Sweeney, AIA East Bay executive director.

One of the six homes is in Albany, three in Berkeley, and the other two in Piedmont and in the Oakland hills. Special this year is that four are architect-designer owned and as always, architects are present to discuss their work and answer questions.

In Albany, a Craftsman Addition was bought by Stacy Eisenmann, AIA, with the intention of a quick remodel and resell, but the house and neighborhood soon changed her mind. The result is a contemporary two-story home that combines Eisenmann's minimalist eye and artistic color palette with the traditional Craftsman detailing.

Berkeley's Midcentury Modern, architect-owned by Joanne Koch, AIA, demonstrates how the architect took advantage of the home's steep hillside site to dig underground to double the size and add several modern spaces. During the past 14 years, the home has been transformed in a modernist style while preserving its original design integrity.



The View House in the Oakland hills, designed by David S. Wilson, AIA, closes off the front of the house to the busy street with plaster, steel and concrete and opens it to the landscape with two stories of glass.

Jon Quiter, AIA, took a small artist studio in Berkeley and employed fine craftsmanship and respect for the site to create a Contemporary Cabin that embodies modern simple design and minimalist detailing. By reshaping the studio's footprint and adding a sloping roof, the house now extends upward, capped by windows that reveal Bay views and oak trees.

Berkeley's Gallery House is brand new, commissioned to Regan Bice, AIA, by the owners. The smart, modern, rigorous design appears as a large geometric box, deceptively simple, with a solid base and a very open void-like glassy top that gives the feeling of being in a fortified tree house.

Piedmont's LEED Ranch, designed by Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, is an ultra-sustainable house that remains respectful of the neighborhood and its 1960s California ranch style. The remodel added much needed space to accommodate a large family while seamlessly adding LEED features including rooftop solar collectors, an interior plant wall to clean the air and driveway permeability for water absorption.

Oakland's View House was commissioned 15 years ago, but still looks brand new. The design by David Stark Wilson, AIA, closes off the front of the house to the busy street with plaster, steel and concrete and opens it to the landscape with two stories of glass, artfully integrating the house, landscape and rooftop patio.



This Midcentury Modern home in Berkeley is owned by architect Joanne Koch.

The AIA tour exemplifies the idea that there's no substitute for being inside a work of architecture to experience it firsthand.

"The tour allows you to go into a house that has not been staged and see how other people chose to design their home, to be inspired by it and to talk to the architects," Sweeney said. "It's a fun day."

IF YOU GO

What: 2014 AIA East Bay Home Tours

When: 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Aug. 9

Tickets: \$50 through Aug. 8, \$60 on tour day;

<http://events.r2o.constantcontact.com/register/event?>

[oeidk=a07e99zyhdqddoc3982&llr=ornjwn6](http://events.r2o.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e99zyhdqddoc3982&llr=ornjwn6), 2014, 10am-4:30pm.

Tour day ticket headquarters: Bica Coffeehouse, 5701 College Ave., Oakland

Information: <http://aiaeb.org/events/2014hometours/>

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