

Architects with Japanese roots designed this home moored in Zen culture - the font of western modernism

Zahid Sardar

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for 10/07 mag design page, ok to tease and post on gate, credit John Sutton Photo: John Sutton



Alan and [Joy Ohashi](#) met in architecture school at UCLA and came north to build a practice in the East Bay. Their Zen-style designs, shown in *The Chronicle* a few years ago, caught the eye of a Japanese American couple in the food industry who wanted to remodel a dull, peak-roofed second home in El Cerrito for their son and for entertaining friends.

"The house did not capture the view of the Golden Gate at all," says [Alan Ohashi](#). They tore half the house down so they could raise the back roof, visor-like, to install tall view windows. To make the design greener, the rest was remade with sustainable Canadian white cedar siding stained dark. And an easy-to-maintain metal roof was covered with photovoltaic film. The Ohashis also installed solar technology and on-demand heaters to save energy.

To expand the interior visually, they extended new concrete floors from the inside outdoors to a wide terrace with a rock garden and glass railings that cantilever off the

house, high above the down-sloping lot.

The open-plan 2,500 square-foot interior is now focused on the original masonry fireplace, which was stripped of its original unattractive stone and recovered with glazed tile from Heath. The \$290 per square foot price tag includes custom furniture such as a sculptural wall-hung vestibule bench of walnut. "We strive for simple, timeless and minimalist solutions," says Joy Ohashi.

Made of natural materials, "Japanese design is also modern," she adds.

Resources

Ohashi Design Studio

Principal architects:

Alan and Joy Ohashi

5845 Doyle St., Suite 106

Emeryville, CA 94608

(510) 595-1300

www.ohashidesign.com

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