



perspectives

ON DESIGN
california

design philosophies expressed by california's leading professionals



introduction



Creating the spaces in which we live and achieving the beauty we desire can be a daunting quest—a quest that is as diverse as each of our unique personalities. For some, it may be serene hardscaped gardens, for others it may be opulent entryways. Aspiring chefs may find a kitchen boasting the finest in technology their true sanctuary.

Perspectives on Design California is a pictorial journey from conceptualizing your dream home to putting together the finishing touches, to creating an outdoor oasis. Alongside the phenomenal photography, you will have a rare insight to how these tastemakers achieve such works of art and be inspired by their personal perspectives on design.

Within these pages, the state's finest artisans will share their wisdom, experience and talent. It is the collaboration between these visionaries and the outstanding pride and craftsmanship of the products showcased that together achieve the remarkable. Learn from leaders in the industry about the aesthetics of a finely crafted sofa or how appropriate lighting can dramatically change the appearance of a room.

Whether your dream is to have a new home or one that has been redesigned to suit your lifestyle, *Perspectives on Design California* will be both an enjoyable journey and a source of motivation.



chapter one: the concept

Butler Armsden Architects.

Essalat Architects

Hablinski + Manion Architecture

Landry Design Group

M. Dean Jones Architect

Minardos Group

Nest Architecture

Oasis Architecture

Robert Senn Architect

Tyler Development.

Zak Architecture

chapter two: the structure

Anne Thull Fine Art Designs

DSI Entertainment Systems

European Iron Works

First, Last & Always

Hausmann Natural Stone

Lighting Design Alliance

Maison Degroote et Mussy

Real Illusions

StoneArt Marble & Granite

contents

chapter three: elements of structure

Eric Johnson Associates Inc

Future Home

Homescapes Carmel

Lantern Masters

Lazarus Woodworking

Maison Degroote et Mussy

NS Ceramic

Sandra Jordan

Scott Coulter

The Lights of Rome

chapter four: elements of design

EPT Design - Landscape Architects

Frank & Grossman Landscaping

Homescapes Home & Garden

Picture Perfect Construction

Stonebridge Pools & Gardens

Suzman & Cole Design Associates



The great power of landscape architecture springs from the junction of nature's bounty and the designer's vivid imagination. Stephen Suzman and Todd R. Cole have tapped into this power, creating outdoor spaces that are both beautiful and functional; natural yet artistic; carefully planned and dynamic. Each landscape designed by the Suzman & Cole Design Associates team is unique, is formed by the specific characteristics of its setting, and harmonizes with its architecture while reflecting the personal preferences and tastes of the clients.

Founded in 2004, the firm has distinguished itself as a leader in responsive and enduring landscapes throughout the Bay area and worldwide. Home to seven landscape architects, a team of talented younger landscape designers and a full time horticulturalist, the firm recently announced an alliance with a prestigious firm headed by Ron Herman.

The firm's designs are deliberately not iconic and encompass a wide range of different styles, scales and climate zones; from modern and minimalist to traditional and formal; from Mediterranean and desert to woodland and tropical; from urban rooftops to country estates. In all, the team aims to design environmentally responsible landscapes that are flexible enough to fulfill a client's current and future needs as the gardens mature.



“As landscape architects and designers, we are not just exterior decorators—we are sculptors of land.”

—Stephen Suzman



SUZMAN & COLE DESIGN ASSOCIATES



“A fragrance, a color, a surprising element, the sound of a fountain—any aspect of a garden can evoke an emotional response.”

—Todd R. Cole



ABOVE & FACING PAGE: Built on an incredibly steep site, the ultramodern home opens out to a bold, simple garden on one side and an infinity-edge pool and sculptural spa overlooking a 12-foot drop on the other. The homeowners’ desire for a low-maintenance garden led to a simplified plant and construction materials palette, and our abundant use of built elements minimizes the need for watering and upkeep. We worked with the architect from the project’s outset, integrating the same honed concrete and volcanic porphyry used in the home for the terrace walls and checkerboard-style paving stones in the garden. Our honest use of the interior materials on the exterior creates thematic unity of structure and landscape. The mirror-like quality of the entry fountain relates to the reflective nature of the polished concrete.

Photographs by Tim Griffith

PREVIOUS PAGES: Inspired by the famous Laburnum Arch at Bodnant Garden in Wales, we created a dramatic, arched allée leading to the golf course. With its cascading, fragrant yellow flowers under-planted with chartreuse *Euphorbia wulfenii*, the arch creates a multisensory experience that evokes images of a distant, romantic era.

Photograph by Stephen Suzman

“An excellent way to deal with persistent drought is to minimize areas that need frequent watering. Often we will eliminate the lawn altogether.”

—Stephen Suzman



ABOVE: Empty space is just as important as mass in a landscape. Formed by the same low stone retaining walls that continue as a theme throughout the gardens, the conference ring serves as a gathering place or a space for quiet meditation. With unobstructed views of the surrounding meadow, the conference ring marries the cultivated and wild portions of the landscape and serves as a pivot between the driveway and a garden-esque courtyard.

Photograph by Annie Amundsen

FACING PAGE: Designed by Stanford Hughes, the Mediterranean home features formal gardens as well as a restored meadow. Built and natural elements subtly conjoin. Separated from the native trees and distant views of the San Francisco hills beyond by a low wall, the courtyard combines materials from the home with simple, often aromatic, textural plantings. Gravel pathways lead residents through the various areas of the landscape. A rectangular swathe of ornamental grass creates a foil for the adjacent pool terrace, and a low retaining wall of Elk Mountain stone separates the lawn from the elevated pergola.

Photographs by Stephen Suzman



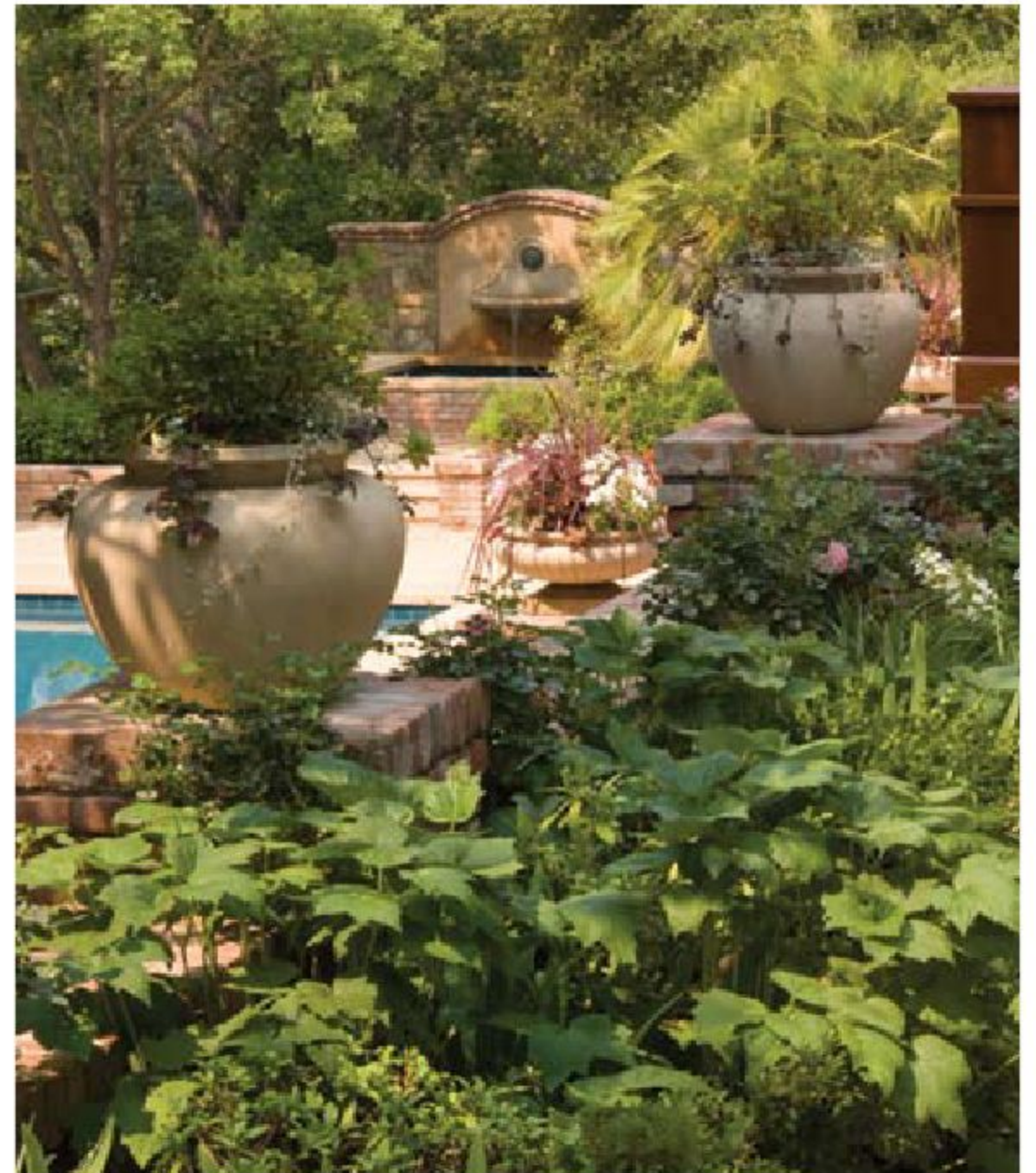
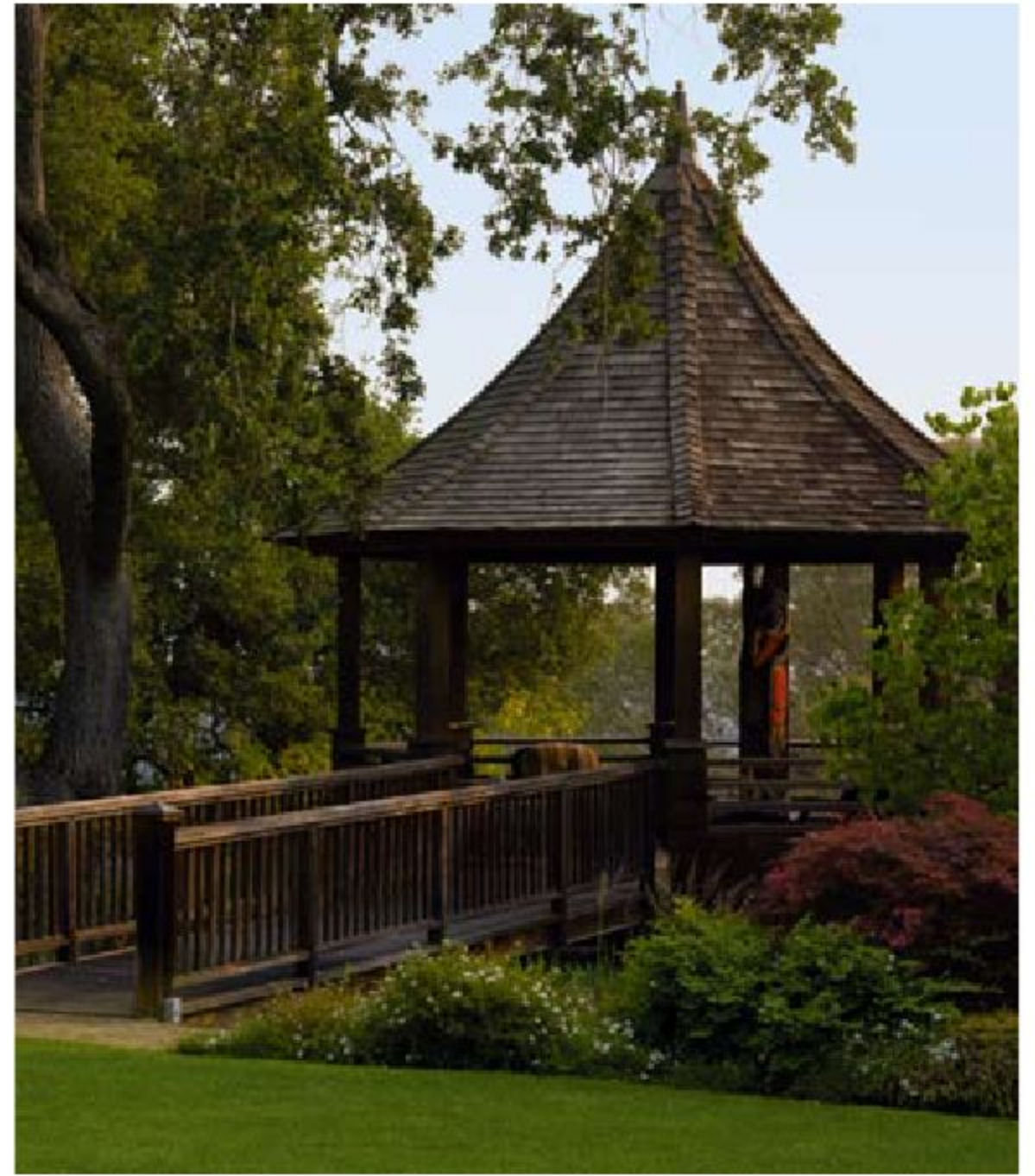
“Creating a strong definition between cultivated and non-cultivated areas is essential.”

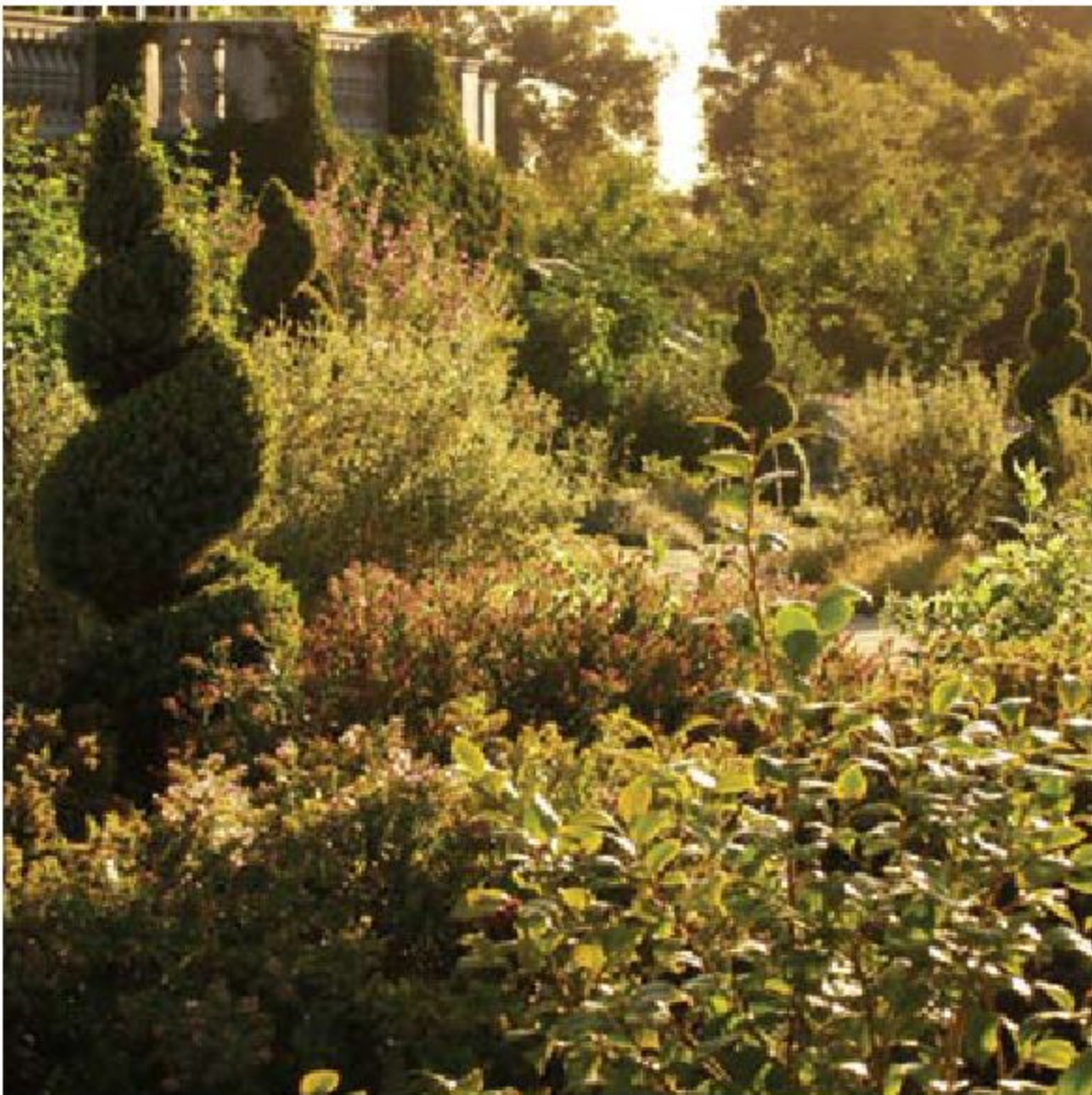
—Todd R. Cole



ABOVE & FACING PAGE: The exterior spaces of the classic, century-old California Shingle-style home were in serious need of updating. To meld indoor and outdoor space, we opened the home to the pool terrace, replacing the existing pool and adding a hot tub—the clients’ request—which doubles as and looks like a fountain. Arizona flagstone composes the terrace and fountain backsplash, and new, hand-cast brick was utilized for the hot tub accents and garden pathways to match the brick that adorns the home. A romantic footbridge and gazebo provide views over the adjacent valley, Old World gardens, replete with conventional plantings, provide a full year’s worth of color, texture and fragrance.

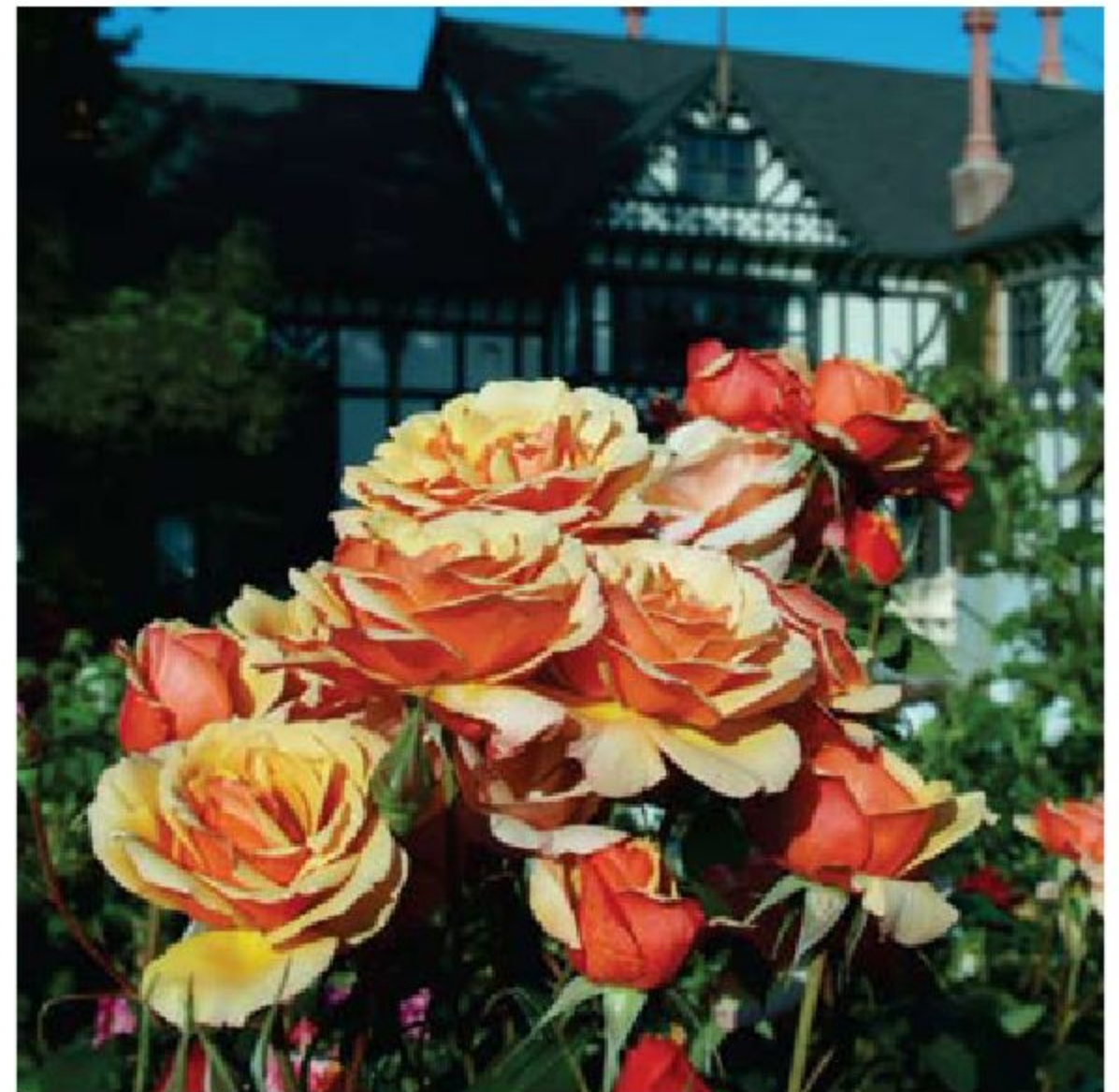
Photographs by Mark Darley





“Good landscape designs should inspire busy people to stop and smell the roses—literally.”

—Stephen Suzman



ABOVE & FACING PAGE: Built between 1914 and 1916, the 30,000-square-foot former day school was originally gardenless and surrounded by asphalt parking. The expansive lot presented the opportunity to create a strong entry sequence that appropriately built up to the revelation of the massive Tudor Revival home. Our plan has guests entering through an orchard, from which the driveway splits into two—one leading under the house to the garage, and the other leading guests to a square reception courtyard lined by pollarded plane trees, whence they ascend to the house. The entry sequence is situated on an axis that makes its way under the old carriageway across the great lawn and culminating at the mound, a Tudor-inspired artificial hill designed to allow better vantages of the surrounding landscape. Suzman & Cole Design Associates created a perimeter walk that leads pedestrians through numerous little gardens and “incidents.” Wild and whimsical plantings encircle the home, while more traditional flowers and shrubs grace the formal gardens.

Photographs by Kelly Porter



“We know our landscapes are successful when our clients begin to take notice of and engage with the environment around them.”

—Todd R. Cole

TOP RIGHT: Much can be done in a small space. We replaced a space-consuming, irregularly shaped pool with a small raised lap pool and minimized the lawn. An outdoor kitchen is shaded by a custom pergola. Open vistas to the rear take advantage of extensive views of the distant hills. Wild ornamental grasses blur the edge between the garden and the hills beyond.

Photograph by Mark Darley

BOTTOM RIGHT: Stone salvaged from villages drowned by the Yang-Tze dam give the garden walls an ancient feel reminiscent of Japanese gardens. One of only five plants in our minimalist palette, the native live oak shares the focus with a subtle composition of rocks and gravel, evoking serenity.

Photograph by Mark Darley

FACING PAGE: We carefully select each element of a design with an emphasis on purity. Texture, color, mass and volume are considered, ensuring that materials are appropriately used and nature's virtues are underscored. A lap pool nestles in a spot of sunlight between a large redwood tree and an arboreal gate in the historic garden which has allegedly been in the same family for 75 years. Stainless steel and blue Indian sandstone combine to form an unusual fence that embodies the personality of an avant garde client; a Chinese granite hot tub becomes a reflecting pool, dramatically mirroring the surrounding Agave while Star Jasmine perfumes the air; a client's own Korean rice-grinding bowl holds water, acting variously as mirror, birdbath and provocative conversation piece.

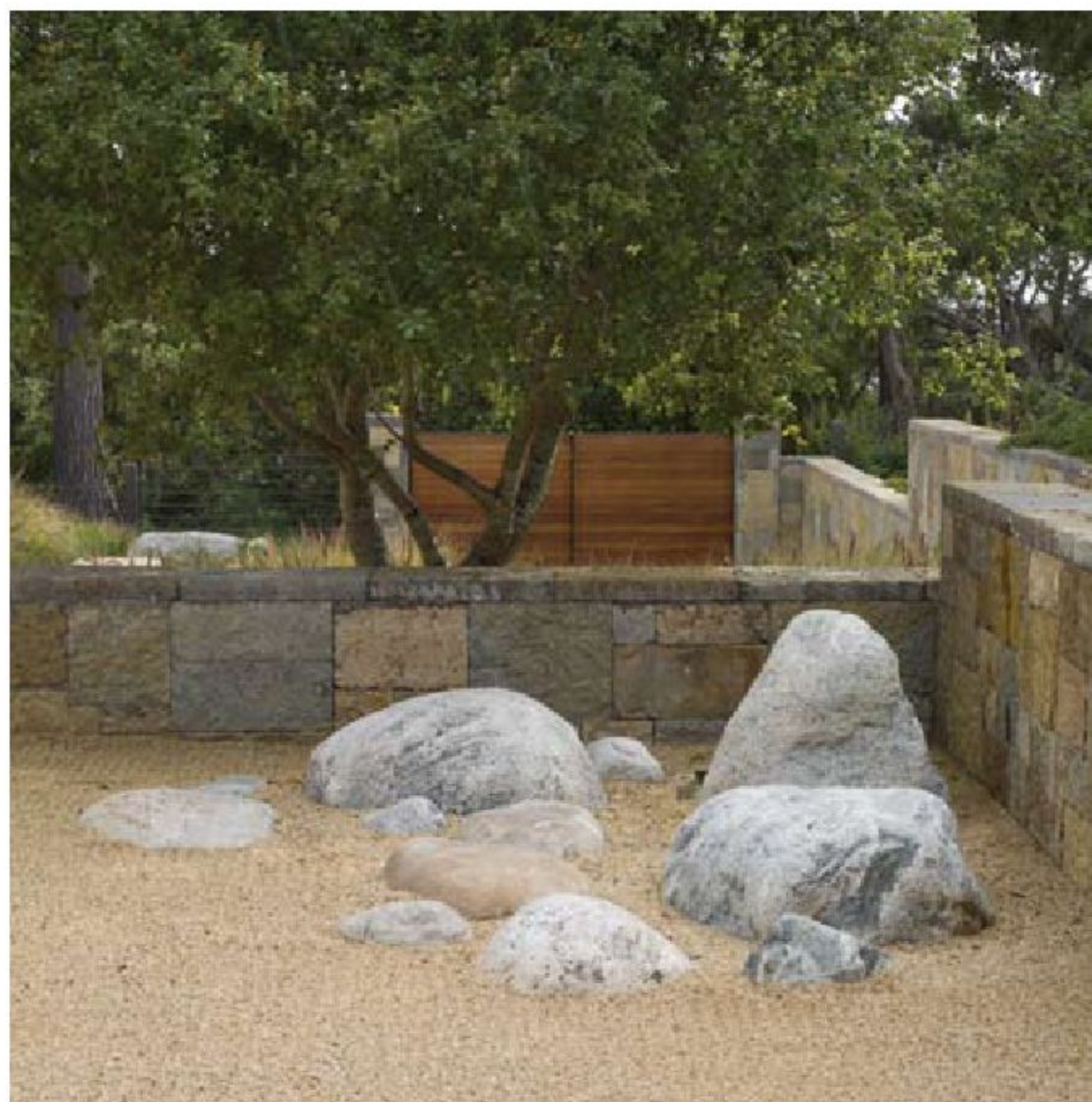
Top left photograph by Marion Brenner

Top right photograph courtesy of Suzman & Cole

Design Associates

Bottom left photograph by Stephen Suzman

Bottom right photograph by Richard Snyder



With a concentration on high-end residential work, the 15-member firm of Butler Armsden Architects focuses on contemporary design. However, given that the firm is located in one of the most historic cities in the country, many of its projects entail remodeling older buildings and bringing them back to life in a new way.

The firm retains appealing traditional elements when working on older structures while simultaneously altering them to reflect the way that people live today. In the case of contemporary projects, the firm responds to the elements of the site and also incorporates natural materials into the design. In either case, Butler Armsden creates warm and soothing spaces that exceed expectations.

While practicing both contemporary and historically rooted design may seem a paradoxical idea in theory, the architects at Butler Armsden find it to be a natural mindset in that they practice that type of work on a daily basis. The result is award-winning work that responds to the homeowner's wants and needs.



“Whether a house is contemporary or historically inspired, it should fit seamlessly into its surroundings.”

—Lewis W. Butler



BUTLER ARMSDEN ARCHITECTS



“Collaborating closely with the homeowner is the best way to create a space that fits their lifestyle and needs so that the result is absolutely unique to their vision.”

—Lewis W. Butler



TOP: A house in Sonoma features a family room designed around the practicalities of children and grandchildren. Large built-in cabinets afford plenty of storage space for toys and games.

Photograph by David Duncan Livingston

BOTTOM: The living room of the same house, complete with a fireplace and a comfortable seating area, features a barn-shaped ceiling reaching 20 feet tall. Six trusses span the family and living room to make it structurally sound. With an abundance of windows, the room enjoys panoramic views of Sonoma Valley.

Photograph by David Duncan Livingston

FACING PAGE: The inspiration and design objective for a remodeling project in Sonoma was to create a traditional Sonoma residence beginning with a basic wraparound porch. As the porch shields the interior from the sun, it also offers a gracious outdoor living space on three sides. Oak trees preserved during the design offer further shading.

Photograph by David Duncan Livingston

PREVIOUS PAGES: The goal for a contemporary residence in Napa Valley was that the structure's basic form respond to the region's weather and elements. We generated a wonderful outdoor room under an overhang that would be sunny in the winter and shaded during the summertime. The 15-foot overhang created a two-story high exterior space facing south to the swimming pool, allowing for year-round outdoor living.

Photographs by Butler Armsden





“We find it thrilling to use a vernacular building type and architectural vocabulary to produce spaces for contemporary living.”

—Lewis W. Butler



TOP: The old attic of a Victorian residence in San Francisco was annexed and remodeled into the rest of the house. By expanding into the attic of the home, we created a loft proportion master bedroom and an exterior deck that gave the homeowner access to views of San Francisco Bay.

BOTTOM: The master bathroom exudes a clean, contemporary feel with walnut cabinetry, black slate and carrera marble. Strategically positioned skylights add natural lighting to the space.

FACING PAGE: Three rooms were combined to create an open space that includes the living room, dining room and kitchen. Oversized steel pivoting windows from Switzerland provide 270-degree views of the Bay area. Walnut floors and a grass cloth ceiling add warmth and scale to the space while an asymmetrical and abstractly designed entertainment cabinet on the west side of the living area provides practical storage and a sculptural form.

Photographs by John Hayes





“Although the building is from the Edwardian era in San Francisco, the apartment speaks to today. The two eras exist harmoniously together, engaged in a dialogue that spans 100 years.”

—Lewis W. Butler



TOP: The living room of a San Francisco residence houses a phenomenal collection of art and objects. Because the homeowners have children and a dog, we designed the room for daily living as opposed to formal occasions.

BOTTOM: The study and entertainment area of the home provides a cozy retreat for watching movies or reading a book, and also offers stunning views of the home's garden. The wood is painted a deep color to give the space a study-like feel.

FACING PAGE: Although the house was built in the early 20th century, it was architecturally unrecognizable in terms of style. We turned the home back into a classical San Francisco townhouse by reinstating its simple, vertical lines.

Photographs by Donna Kempner





ABOVE: An AIA award-winning house pays homage to San Francisco through a variety of materials and styles. The stucco base of the structure takes inspiration from Mission Dolores, the oldest building in the city and the metal part of the structure, which is also featured in the floating staircase, is the same red color as the Golden Gate Bridge. The horizontal windows are a salute to the area's strong Asian heritage. The beams and other metal structural elements reflect the technological excitement of the Bay Area.

FACING PAGE BOTTOM: As the home occupies a prominent site in San Francisco, it offers 270-degree views of the city. A tall, mitered glass corner window offers views of the downtown area while the deck provides an exterior space for dining.
Photographs by Donna Kempner

FACING PAGE TOP LEFT: A steel canopy shields visitors at the front door. The stucco façade steps back from the street in three major planes, providing privacy for the spaces inside.

FACING PAGE TOP RIGHT: A two-story-high living room featuring a curved ceiling envelopes a loft, which is suspended from the ceiling beams. The bottom of the loft is paneled in anigre and curved to enhance the feeling of floating in the space, while it also provides a canopy for the dining area.





DSI ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS

West Hollywood



“While technology is an important part of today’s home, it’s also important that it not be intrusive.”

—Eric Thies

ABOVE: The indoor-outdoor living area of a contemporary home called for an audio-video system that could disappear with the push of a button. Strategically placed in front of large pocket doors, a 60-inch television telescopes from the floor to the perfect viewing height. Sonance architectural speakers blend with the ceiling to offer surround sound without clutter.

Photographs by Glenn Campbell Photography

FACING PAGE: Designing an entertainment system that worked with the existing architecture of an opulent home theater presented the challenge of attaining high performance from an acoustically imperfect room. We engineered an atypical theater construction and design with Mohamed Hadid of Hadid Development that included a 12-foot-wide screen with ample space to entertain up to 20 guests effortlessly. The system works around the architecture to create a cozy theater environment.

Photograph by Mohamed Hadid, Hadid Development



“There are infinite creative ways to incorporate technology into a home. Every project calls for a unique solution.”

—Eric Thies



TOP RIGHT: A performance-oriented home theater rendered a design that incorporated seating positions, the sightlines of the projector, and the best in high-performance sound and video. The result is an acoustically perfect room.

Photograph by Michael Kalla Photography

MIDDLE RIGHT: A contemporary home called for high-performance technology that could easily disappear. Above a floating credenza, hidden speakers offer the best in sound without being intrusive while two sub woofers reside underneath it. By masking the technology involved with the system, we were able to uphold the clean, modern look of the room.

Photograph by Ed Rooney



BOTTOM RIGHT: A lounge-inspired theater serves a dual purpose, as it morphs into a living room overlooking the city when the screen retracts. High-end residential audio/video and control systems offer the best in viewing pleasure. All you need to add is popcorn.

Photograph by Paul Jonason Photography

FACING PAGE TOP: A shared sound system provides two viewing areas for a bedroom. One party can watch the television that telescopes from the foot of the bed, while the other lounges in the sitting area. The flat-screen television mounted on the wall moonlights as a digital art piece.

Photograph by Glenn Campbell Photography

FACING PAGE BOTTOM: A 2.35:1 ratio screen combined with a JBL Synthesis sound system serves as the focal point of a dedicated screening room. The screen allows viewers to watch films in cinemascope, so classics such as Ben Hur and Star Wars appear to be larger than life.

Photograph by Mary E. Nichols Photography



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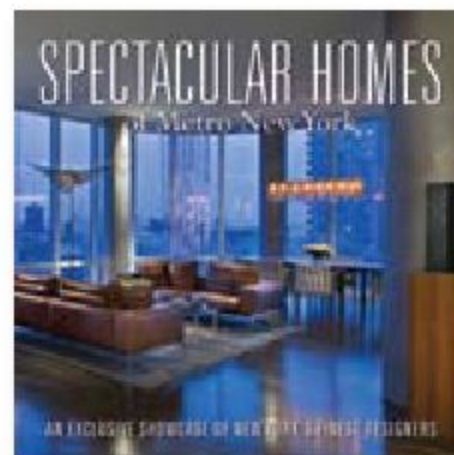
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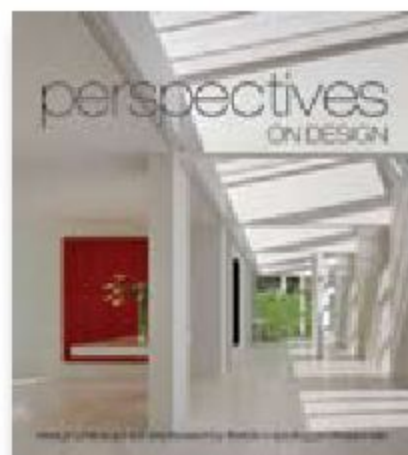
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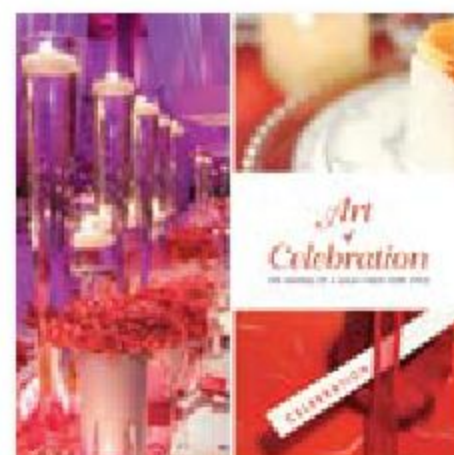
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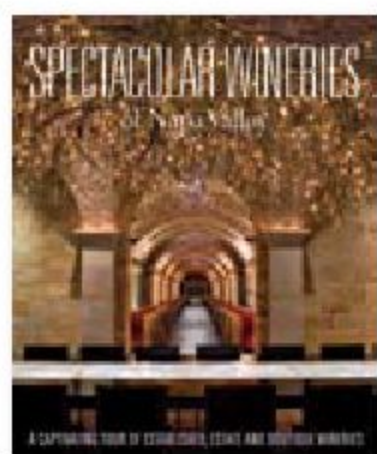
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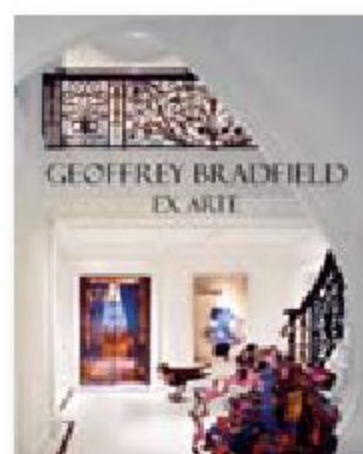
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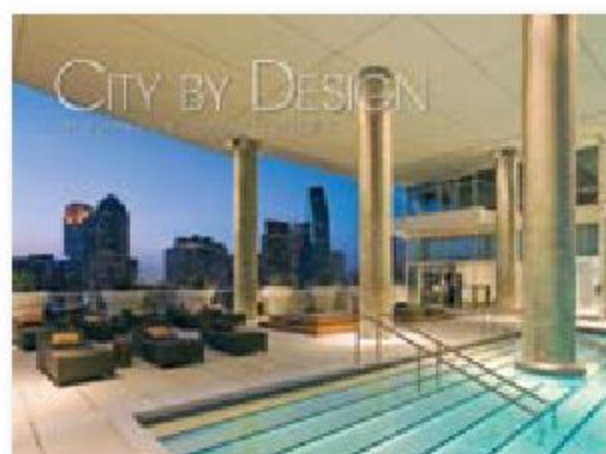
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Publication inquiries contact:

Rosalie Wilson

rwilson@panache.com

469.246.6060

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