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Eisenmann Architecture

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK LUTHRINGER
CONTENT PROVIDED BY AIA EAST BAY

A couple from Crockett approached Stacy Eisenmann, AIA, of Eisenmann Architecture in Albany with a dilemma. Their house contained a staircase that divided the floors uncomfortably, leaving narrow access on both levels. Progression through the house was lacking as each floor provided only bare functionality.

The clients hoped to uncover potential in their home but were unsure if it could it be accomplished within the existing infrastructure, or if an addition would be necessary. A kitchen remodel became the catalyst to finding the answer.

Eisenmann set out to re-create the circulation from the first floor entry to the second floor kitchen, reorganizing the spaces between. Preliminary design studies found that an addition, while adding desirable square footage, was not essential or cost effective. However, through further study, the firm discovered the underlying character of the house. Some existing elements of the structure could be embraced, such as the gentle point on one wall that earned the nickname "the prow." The homeowners initially had thought about flattening the wall's surface, as furnishing that room had proved challenging. Instead, the prow became an asset to the space by exposing the column at its point and weaving it into a continuous line of millwork.

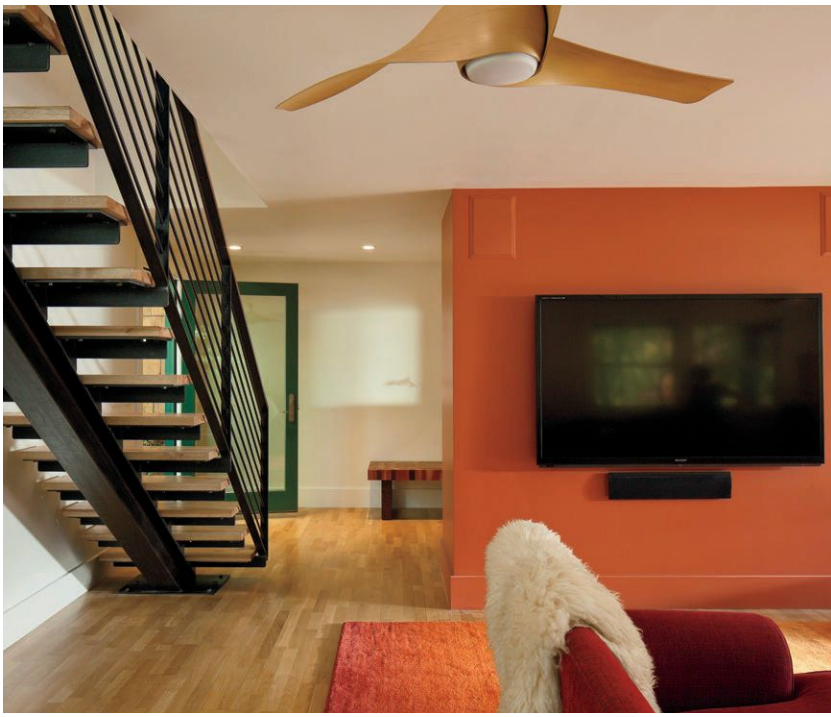


Clockwise from left:

A large central island with sculptural range hood becomes an integral area for entertaining and casual dining.

Bright colors and dark finishes create a contemporary feel.

The house blends together modern aesthetic and rustic charm.



Both owners were employed at a creative animation studio, and each focused on differing aspects of their home's design. The sculptor husband was drawn to a spatial steel stair concept, and the home-chef wife focused on kitchen pragmatics. The challenge then became meeting their individual design wishes while addressing and unifying their collective creative input.

Luckily, Eisenmann and her clients found the answer within the existing home. Rustic elements were enhanced and expanded, and the use of minimalism provided the needed contrast. With interior walls removed, the size of the open space allowed for the wide variation found in the hickory flooring. To minimize glare from the amount of light and also to contribute to the overall palette, lower Sheetrock ceilings were replaced with vaulted white-washed cedar decking. Walnut millwork and railings pulled darker tones within the hickory floor forward while avocado green cabinetry brought in the necessary punch of color to offset the wood tones. Copper and cold-rolled steel added metallic textures that complemented the inviting and soothing use of hickory, cedar and walnut.

Eisenmann Architecture was able to keep the originality of this Crockett house while adding functionality and applying design aesthetics. Also, both homeowners were able to show off their own style, which really turned this house into their home.

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