



# FalconHouse:

Soaring with Style





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*By Michael Chatfield*

*Photography Kodiak Greenwood*

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“This piece of land was overlooked by a lot of people,” recalls Mike Kobrinsky. “It was hard for them to envision a house here.” But he and his wife Jolie were able to see what others couldn’t; their vision has proven to be 20/20. They bought the parcel in 1999 and set about conjuring up their dream home.

Sited on a sloped, three-acre plot at the eastern edge of Markham Ranch in Corral de Tierra, the Kobrinsky’s contemporary home took several years to come to fruition. Architect Steve Camp and then-associate Dion McCarthy were brought on board in 2000 and presented with a binder full of ideas the couple had gathered.

Camp was the lead on the project: “What we liked about the site is that it seemed isolated even though it was in a fairly densely populated development,” he recalls. The San Clemente-based architect spent a lot of time on the site. “We specialize in projects in which we have to be creative in solving siting problems.” The team achieved an ultra-sensitive design—the structures feel like they were meant to be there.

Mike and Jolie finally decided on this contemporary design after much deliberation. “We were wide open to the entire spectrum of design,” Mike recalls. One thing was certain: “Whatever we did, it was going to be authentic. If it was going to be Spanish Mission, it was going to be Spanish Mission to the bones.” In the end, this industrial feel struck just the right chord with the couple. “The whole spirit of the project—a completely modern, quasi-industrial structure set among a neighborhood of more traditional homes—was new territory. That’s part of the energy of the experience,” says Jolie.

The initial plans were for a 6,000-square-foot home with an underground garage. Three revisions later, Groza Construction began building the 3,500-square-foot, three-bedroom, three-and-one-half-bath masterpiece that graces the cover of this issue of *HomeStyle*. “We simplified the initial design,” recalls Camp. Adhering to the adage “less is more,” he and his partners condensed the home to its essentials. “The stronger, most effective designs are those that are simple and uncomplicated,” he avers.

The construction process was greatly smoothed by the guiding hand of Groza Construction foreman Michael Owens. “The house is what it is because of this guy,” says Mike, adding that the two men forged a friendship through their constant consultation during the process.





Care was taken to minimize the home's impact on the environment. Many components, like the central environmental control system—including radiant heat throughout the home—and the materials used were chosen with an eye toward how they would help reduce the family's ecological "footprint." "We were very concerned," says Jolie. "We tried to be green as much as possible." The couple adds that Michael Owens is highly knowledgeable in this realm and was helpful in pointing out options.

Although Mike works in commercial real estate and has supervised construction, this was his and Jolie's first take on building a home from the ground up—this time it was personal. "The top differences between building your own home and putting up a commercial building are the aesthetic and stylistic concerns," opines Mike. "You can look at the drawings forever and not get the vision." With construction underway and the structure framed, the Kobrinskys stood in their future bedroom and were amazed by the view of Castle Rock, one of the iconic panoramas of Monterey County. "We honestly didn't know it was there." But the architect did, testament to the care Steve Camp and his colleagues put into the site planning for this home.

Camp believes that clients should contribute as much as possible to the final design of their home. After all, they will be the ones living in it. "I really don't have a 'signature style,'" the architect points out. He doesn't want to be recognized for a specific "look" but for quality and special, unique work.

And this home certainly qualifies as special and unique. Soaring ceilings in the main space lead the eye to a wall of windows that open the full length of the living room, framing a sublime panorama of the hills beyond. A visitor is struck by a sense of superb isolation. From the beginning, this home had a name: "FalconHouse," in large part because of the presence overhead of those magnificent birds. The surrounding hills are also home to coyotes, buzzards, hawks, wild turkeys, skunks, at least one cougar and "a ton of deer." "The architects were so conscientious about location and as a result we can't see any other homes," Mike marvels. "We feel like we're wonderfully, completely isolated."





Jolie and Mike couldn't be happier with the results of their team's hard work. "Our breath gets taken away on a regular basis," Mike says. "We'll be sitting around and say 'Wow! Look how great that looks!' We're often overwhelmed by how well this all came out."

For this young family, FalconHouse truly is a wish come true. ■

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