

Home

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Paul Marto has toiled his custom-built career around distinctive homes that last a lifetime

By NICOLE DeCOSTA
for The Tribune's
Home section

Standing on the back porch of a home in Lake Oswego, Paul Marto breathes in the view.

He rests his hands on the railing, comforted by a career he's proud of, a home he admires and a city that inspires him.

Since 1975, Marto and his team at Paul Marto Building Co. have helped shape neighborhoods, one family at a time.

"Every house has a favorite part that I like," he says. "There are components of each home I build that I just marvel at. I just appreciate a good design."

At this home, owned by Dave and Mary McCulloch, with a vista of four mountains, Marto reflects on its completion two years ago.

"As beautiful as the interior is, I think the exterior also offers so much," he says. "Every-

thing is oriented toward the views."

Striving for the best

The McCulloch's home is an example of what Marto appreciates about his company's commitment to quality homes: accuracy, interest, livability and weatherproofing. In essence, it's a home that's built to last.

"We inspect — and we go beyond the requirements," he says.

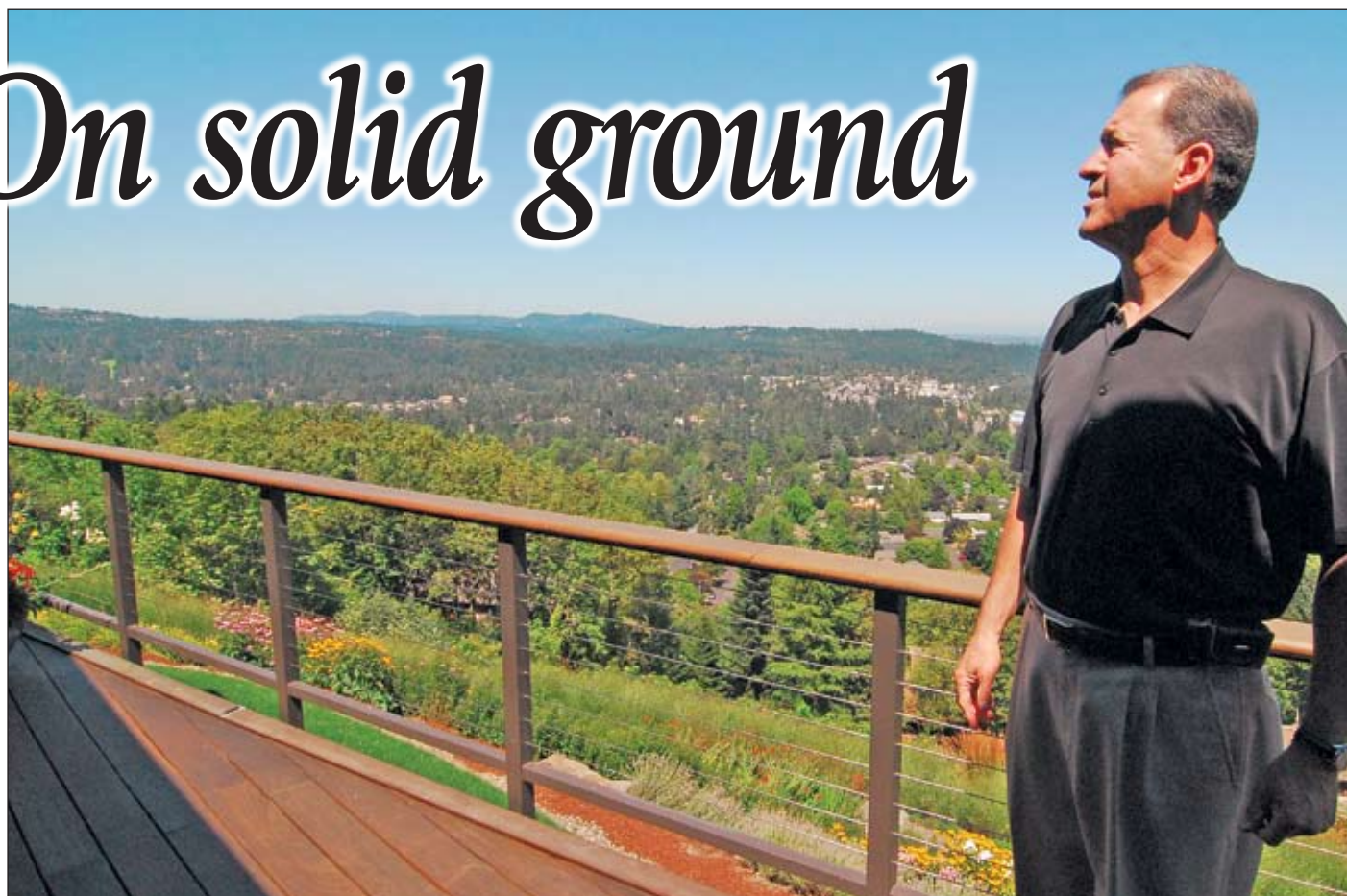
For example, prior to completion, the home's details and its surroundings are documented for future reference.

"We photograph all the utility lines, the drain lines and all of the power, gas and drainage lines. Every wall and ceiling is photographed before we put in sheetrock," he says.

"For this house there's a disk of over 2,000 pictures. If there's a problem we know where the wires are, where the plumbing and heating ducts are and

As a builder, Dave McCulloch recommends Marto to anyone beginning a project.

On solid ground



Paul Marto, a Lake Oswego homebuilder, stands on the back deck of a house he built that overlooks Hallinan Elementary School and downtown Lake Oswego.

where there's a stud, in case they're hanging pictures."

Trained in the 1960s through a carpenters apprenticeship program in Portland, Marto's workmanship and ethics haven't faltered throughout the years. He visits a building site each day; he has a superintendent that's worked by his side for 18 years.

He says that each new home is an opportunity to showcase the skills of his company.

"Take advantage of every opportunity you're handed to prove yourself worthy of a referral. That applies to all fields of work. It seems to be a common denominator," he says.

Lately, Marto has focused on custom-built homes rather than spec homes, which consumed much of his time in the '80s and early '90s.

"We've pretty much been on a treadmill since. It's very interesting," he says of the past 15 years in Lake Oswego and West Linn. "(When building custom homes) you get to be an important part of people's lives for a little while. You also get to see a lot of different perspectives."

And Marto says he enjoys crafting what his clients envision.

"We execute what they're trying to accomplish. They're going to be living there," he says.

In the McCulloch's home, vaulted ceilings were a must in order to take advantage of the panoramic views of downtown Lake Oswego. But there were height limitations, as his clients didn't want to obstruct the neighbors' views.

Materials unique to Oregon also were important, like

fir ledges and cedar beams, which Marto incorporated into a "polished Northwest look," he says.

An outdoor fountain provides a calming ambience, its flow greeting visitors as it ripples beneath the pathway.

Details are important

The quality and type of materials he uses are critical to the home's longevity, especially the exterior, given the area's long damp winters and summers filled with sunshine.

On the McCulloch's home, a virtually unnoticeable strip of copper sits atop a trellis exposed to the sky.

"We capped the top of the beams on the trellis. That way, they're never going to rot," he says. "It's a lifetime house."

The decks were weatherproofed and the sand-colored wood shingle exterior was stained to preserve its color.

"This way it won't 'silver out,'" he says, referring to shingled homes on the coast that turn gray over time.

Beam connectors that hold the posts of the trellis and deck were constructed with embedded stainless steel for support.

"They'll never have to worry about things rotting or rusting," he says. "Probably the advantages of having my entire career in the Northwest is understanding the advantages of flashing details and waterproofing details for our specific climate."

The roof is vented in a crisscross pattern and the entire house was wrapped in a breathable fabric to keep moisture out.

"(Paul) made it very clear that water is public enemy No. 1," Dave McCulloch says. "One of the first things that he came to was a different kind of wrap (to put) around the house. It has the same properties of Gore-tex — it lets air through, but not water."

Inside, the floor plan and finish work was designed with the present, and future, in mind.

"(The McCullochs) have no intention of moving, so they planned for their future years by putting an elevator in the house," Marto says.

The McCullochs also had him create elegant showers with flat thresholds for wheelchair access.

As a builder, Dave McCulloch recommends Marto to anyone beginning a project. He says



A stream flows beneath a pathway leading to the front door of the Lake Oswego home owned by Dave and Mary McCulloch. The stream pump is located along the side of the house, so that noise from the water pump doesn't drown out the babbling brook.

that Marto was involved with every meeting with the architect and planners, from day one.

"He's very easy to get along with. He's very calm. He doesn't have an ego in this thing. There's no, 'This is going to be a monument to my craftsmanship.' No, that's not him," McCulloch says.

Not slowing down

"I don't see myself retiring, as long as I'm able to play a round of golf now and then and go on a little trip," Marto says. "I like what I do."

He says he's continuing to build upon the firm foundation he laid years ago. He raised his family of four in several Mar-

to-built homes.

"I want people to enjoy (their homes) for generations," he says. "At some time in the future, when I'm long gone, I'd like for people to say, 'It's a Paul Marto house.' It's very important to us to have a legacy. We have to build something that's worthy of that type of recognition."

For information, visit the Web site www.paulmarto.com.



The kitchen boasts festive colors and stainless steel appliances. The home also has a mini-kitchen downstairs for guests and easy entertaining on the patio.

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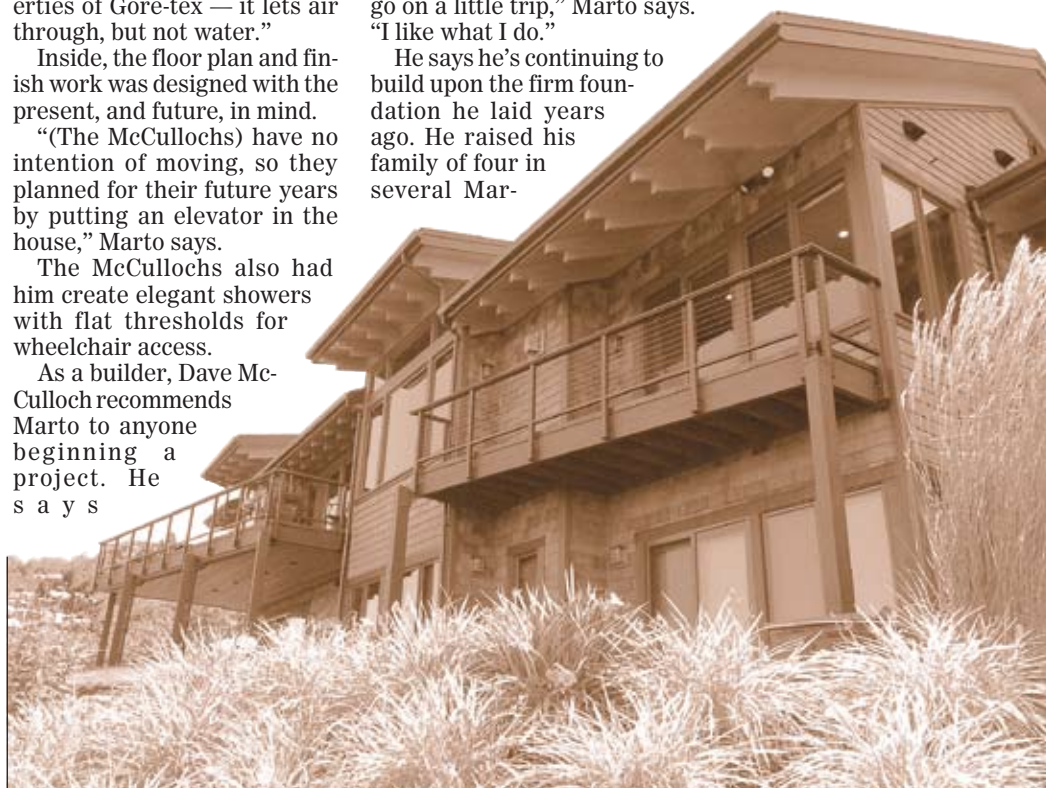
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The deck was designed so that neighbors didn't lose their view. Notice how the deck is angled and sticks out further and further toward the left.