



Philip vanderToolen

vanderToolen Associates

After years of designing spectacular landscapes in the bay area, as well as the Middle East and Far East, Philip vanderToolen brings unique perspectives and themes to model homes and production housing for Northern California home builders.

Born in Holland in 1956, he immigrated to the U.S. with his parents the following year and grew up in the Bay Area. Always intrigued by design, building and construction, vanderToolen's childhood dream was to be an architect. At the College of San Mateo he was introduced to landscape architecture and later transferred to California Polytechnic University at Pomona where he earned his B.S. degree in landscape architecture in 1982.

He initially began his professional career working for a Tustin firm as a project manager on smaller projects and then moved to a large national company in Irvine, handling large-scale hotel, master-planned developments and commercial properties.

In 1992, he formed his own firm with a partner that designed hotel projects in the Middle East and commercial and hotel properties in Taiwan and Spain. "Out of economic necessity we expanded our horizons beyond national markets to broaden our design experience, which provided an opportunity to experience cultures and expectations of other countries under tremendously different environmental conditions," he recounts.

Tired of foreign travel, he established vanderToolen Associates in 1995. His overseas expertise led him to be one of three principal landscape architects spending 18 months designing the spectacular Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. The key to success of the project was lavish landscaping around the hotels signature wave, swimming and river pools.

The 34-person Napa-based firm is currently designing model and production homes in the Bay Area and Central Valley, where it operates a Sacramento office. Current projects include neighborhoods within master-planned communities at Windemere, Dublin Ranch, Mountain House and communities in the greater Sacramento Valley area.

vanderToolen also continues designing hotel projects, as they have three projects underway in the Napa Valley—plus single-family home developments and high-density urban infill in the Bay Area. He envisions the firm will soon go international again with hotel and residential developments in the Pacific Basin, including high-density housing in Asian markets.

He lives with his wife, Marcia, in Vacaville. They have two grown daughters attending college.

Q&A

Q: *What role does your broader experience play?*

A: Our model designs rely heavily on themed concepts some of which comes from our Las Vegas, international and regional experience. We incorporate those themes in an attempt to create unique and memorable projects.

Q: *What is your Bay Area concentration?*

A: We've had increased growth in high-density infill development during the last two years. We are presently working on four such projects, in Rohnert Park, Dublin, Palo Alto, and San Mateo.

Q: *Is urban infill different?*

A: There is a different design process between our single-family housing and urban infill projects and we have become quite adept at creating landscape environments for mid-rise high-density podium projects—landscape on architectural structures. These projects reflect the trend with new urbanism communities some of which include a town center, or retail core surrounded by high-density housing.

Q: *How does belonging to HBANC help?*

A: Through active participation with HBANC we keep up to date on what our clients are doing and keep ourselves informed with future trend and areas of anticipated growth. In addition, it is also a great marketing opportunity, with constant exposure to our clients. Also through the HBANC we strive to give back to the community. Last year we participated in a Habitat for Humanity project and this year we're working through HomeAid on the Mission Solano shelter for transitionally homeless people in Fairfield.