



250 Beach Road – original architectural rendering

THE HEIDELBERG LEGACY

Belvedere, California

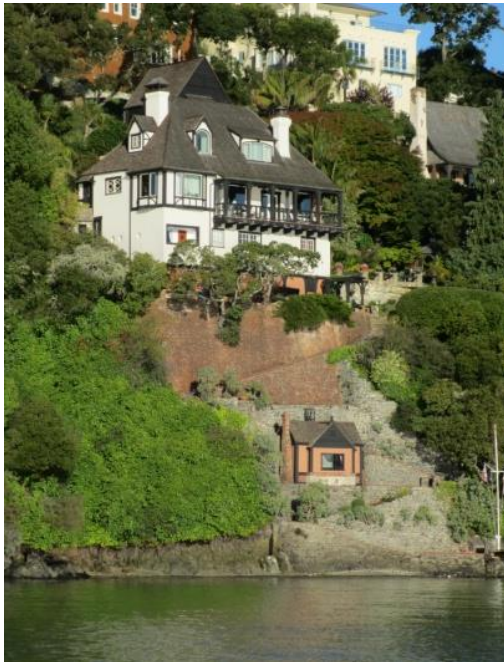


John Colver,
September, 2012

Introduction

Jack Heidelberg had made his mark in the insurance business as an associate of Stewart Hopps, who built a highly profitable business in the early 1930s. Unfortunately some irregularities in the business model caused Mr. Hopps to become a guest of the government for a period of time; and Jack saw this as an opportune time to retire – at the age of 29.

Hopps had also built a spectacular “Japanese/Pacific” style house on the west side of Belvedere, with a Japanese garden designed by the renowned Sam Newsom, and encouraged Jack to do something similar. Accordingly, in 1934 he acquired the vacant double lot at **250 Beach Road**, and commissioned Donnell Jaekle, a fashionable architect of the day, to design a house in the “English Country” style (but with a very Art Deco interior). It was to be a wedding present for his wife Lurline (“Bobbie”). As plans for the new house progressed, Jack started looking over the architect’s shoulder and putting his own fingerprints on the design. The house was completed in May 1935 attracting wide interest, including a feature article in the San Francisco News.



The Heidelberg “theme” parties were legendary for the following two decades, for which Bobbie would obtain all the requisite china and props. A formal dinner was typically served in the greenhouse; and at the end of the pier was a barge serving as a floating dock, filled with white Pismo beach sand and featuring a wet bar and palm trees, and often a band playing. A marine railway adjacent to the pier enabled Jack to haul out his own boats and often bobbing to a mooring in the Cove, was a seaplane he had bought on their honeymoon in Hawaii.



In the late 1930s, the Heidelbergs were able to acquire the three adjacent lots to the north (now 246 Beach Road and 242 Beach Road) on which remained the foundations of a large house, demolished in the late 1920s or early 1930s following a fire. The garden for 250 was extended into the immediately adjacent lot, including a brick terrace and magnificent stone BBQ; and a driveway was added to gain access to the intermediate level of the existing 250 garage, with an electrically powered turntable at the bottom (featured in Sunset magazine).

The Gingerbread Houses



In 1942, Jack Heidelberg built the house with the crooked chimney next, door at **246 Beach**, intended for his mother – but she wouldn't move from the City and so it became a rental property. This fairy tale cottage, a classic example of "Black Forest" architecture, is known locally as the "Hansel and Gretel House" or sometimes the Storybook House. It is quintessential "gingerbread" and was a Belvedere landmark from inception. The Colvers moved there in 1969 and remained until 1992 when they acquired the original Heidelberg house at 250 Beach.

The gardens were (and are) a feature of these properties. A cruciform shaped greenhouse was built into the natural rock below 246 Beach, gas heated and plumbed, and the scene of many spectacular dinner parties in the 1940s. A waterwheel built into the 250 BBQ was normally turned by water piped from an intricate artificial stream bed running through the property, except for "garden parties" – then the water was turned off and the wheel was driven by a built-in electric motor, dispensing an endless supply of Mai Tais. Guests would simply wander over and stick their glasses under the waterwheel for a refill.....

Jack went on to build **242 Beach** around 1950, adjacent to 246 but lower down nearer to the water and not visible from the road. Initially this was intended as a rental property but not long after completion they sold it.

(Photo - right)



People by now were knocking on the Heidelberg's' door asking Jack to design and build similar homes for themselves. Next up was



what became known as the "Redmond" house (*left*) on **Bella Vista** at the intersection of upper Beach – built for Jim Redmond, a contractor!; and after that a cottage very similar to 246 Beach, on the other side of the Island.

The original house at 250 Beach incorporates all of the classic Heidelberg features, but they are expressed more formally. It was in these three picture postcard cottages that Jack shed all restraints and engaged himself in pure whimsy - a thatched roof effect by bundling the shingles into roof edge pockets, reminiscent of Carmel and the thatched cottages of England; wildly random course shake or shingle roofs; eyebrow windows, crooked chimneys; and rubble (mixed stone and brick) garden walls and terraces. This was the architectural legacy he has left us.

Pacifica Architecture

Then in a radical shift of architectural style, he designed and built a 6-unit apartment building at **2200 Paradise Drive** (*to the right*) in Tiburon held as an income property until the 1970s.

This was referred to as "Pacifica" architecture – a blend of Hawaii and California. Jack built two more private residences on Belvedere in the same architectural theme. And all this creative home building was only a hobby.



Jack Heidelberg Dies

The ARK

Feb 19, 1986

By Erin Findlay

On Beach Road in Belvedere, there is a house that looks as if it's been lifted straight from the pages of a fairy tale. The delighted beholder can't help but wonder, did Walt Disney do this?

No, this is the house that Jack built. In fact, before he died on February 8 at the age of 81, Jack Heidelberg designed and built 12 houses in Belvedere and Tiburon. They weren't all "storybook" homes, but all were marvelously imaginative, and all provided rich material for the likes of "Sunset Magazine" editors and Hollywood producers.

If a lot of his homes were like fairy tale cottages, perhaps it was because Jack Heidelberg's life was a little like "The Enchanted Prince." Born in Los Angeles to a strict district attorney father, Jack's ambition to become a musician was hardly encouraged. He was sent to Lowell High School in San Francisco, then to Healds Business College, and, by the age of 27, had become so successful in the insurance industry that he opened his own brokerage business.

When he moved to Belvedere in 1935, however, it was as if he were "kissed" by a creative muse. The insurance executive became the artist, starting with his own home on Beach Road. Incorporating a 60-foot tall boulder, and cobblestones from the streets of San Francisco, Jack built a fortress-like castle that was so unique it immediately attracted the attention of Hollywood. "Sudden Fear," starring Joan Crawford, was filmed there.

According to his wife, Lurline, "Jack was the original do-it-yourselfer. He didn't have one book that told him how to build anything." But build he did, first in the "Old World" style, then in the "Pacifica," which was a combination of California and Hawaiian architecture, and finally in a very modern style, an example of which can be seen at the corner of Paradise Drive and Solano.

People had begun to seek him out to design their homes, so Jack gave up his insurance business to devote full time to the new houses. "Those were good times," said Lurline. "People can't imagine the fun we had. They don't know how to play like we did then." The couple became famous for their fabulous luaus on "Cleopatra's Barge," a Heidelberg-built 40-foot beach, which was refilled each year with white sand. A catwalk from the Golden Gate Bridge construction served as their pier. Lurline remembered that "at one time we had five boats, not counting the barge."

The Belvedere designer's fame spread and not only because of his charming houses. A steep hillside prevented his building a driveway to the garage, so he invented a "car turntable." The design was so ingenious that "Sunset Magazine" featured it. Telephone calls came from as far away as Hawaii and Alaska, asking for the plans. "But they were all in his head," said Lurline.

Jack Heidelberg may have died with plans still in his head, but he left a treasury to be remembered by. Architects still come by to copy his designs, and as long as the storybook homes are around, so is Jack.

He is also survived by his wife of 50 years, Lurline Matson Heidelberg; and a son, Jack Taber Heidelberg, a concert pianist, presently living in Paraguay.

250 BEACH ROAD



Jack Heidelberg died in 1986 followed by Bobbie in 1992. The estate was liquidated, 246 sold to Leslie Caldwell and Sal Guglielmino; and Rosalind and John Colver acquired the original Heidelberg house at 250 Beach, after 23 years next door in the famous "gingerbread" house. Jack had a magical touch in creating these wonderful homes, handcrafting virtually everything including wrought iron fixtures and fittings, tiles, redwood gutters, gargoyles, spiral staircases, his hallmark "rubble" stone and brick walls and fireplaces – and clever features such as concealed drawers which disappeared on roller skate wheels into cavity walls; high-reach kitchen shelves which were raised and lowered by electric motors, and built in cupboards with false backs which provided concealed access to crawl space between floors.

But as with so many creative people, maintenance was not his strong point ("It will outlast me" was his usual observation). Both properties were in need of serious repairs and upgrading. What started out in 1992 as deferred maintenance and redecorating, quickly turned into gutting virtually the entire interiors and renovating the entire outside of all three buildings at 250 Beach. Art Deco wainscoting, copper banding, copper and mahogany balustrades etc., were all replaced with the classic later "Heidelberg" look - oak and mahogany paneling, exposed hand hewn beams, hand fired floor tiles, custom wrought iron fixtures, raised and coved ceiling in the living room with crown molding and cove lighting, all windows replaced and reframed with hand-adzed redwood and so on.

Every room in every building (excluding only storage space) has a view of the water!



Garage/Office Building
3 Stories + attic

Main Residence
3 Stories + attic & partial
basement.
4 Bedrooms, 3 Bathrooms

Beach House
Single Story. ½ Bath.

Originally Built 1935.

The property comprises three separate structures, descending from Beach Road (elev.100') through magnificent "old world" terraced gardens, to a secluded beach with a 70' pier and "deep water" dock (4.5 feet at MLW). Wood frame construction (all clear heart first growth redwood), all buildings sit on perimeter foundations, with stucco exterior and stone, brick and exposed timber accents.

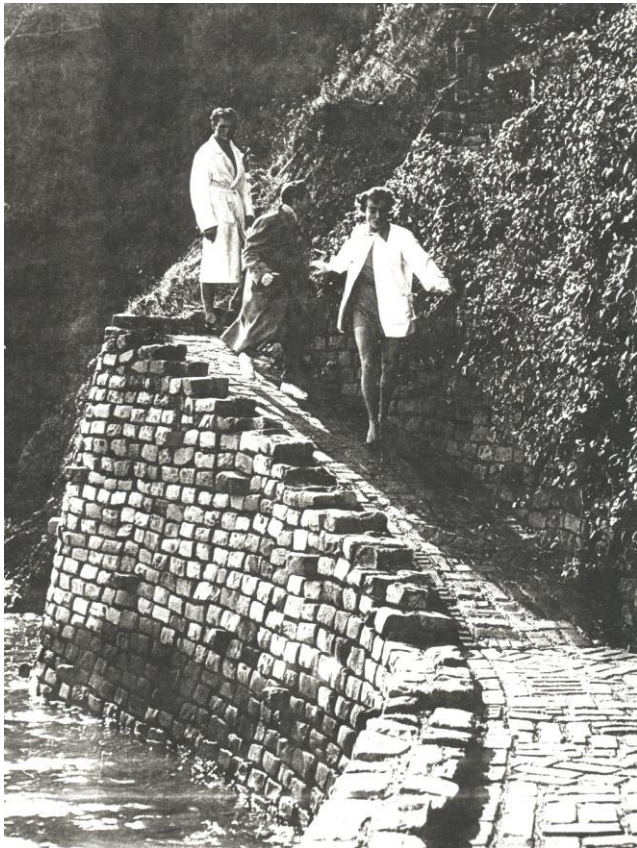
Major Remodeling 1992-93

All buildings were extensively remodeled (approx. 75% to bare studs) and upgraded in 1992-93, with plumbing and electrics upgraded to code where accessible (including new 200 amp service). All structures tied to foundations. All roofs replaced 2007 with "40 year" heavy shake to current fire code.

“SUDDEN FEAR”

The 1952 suspense film starring
Joan Crawford & Jack Palance

- **Filmed on location at 250 Beach Road.**



Produced by RKO Studios in 1952 and starring Joan Crawford and Jack Palance, "Sudden Fear" was a highly acclaimed thriller set in San Francisco, eventually earning Miss Crawford an Oscar Nomination. The September 1, 1952 edition of "Life" magazine contained a feature article on the movie with several film stills. *(The same edition featured on the cover, Ernest Hemingway and printed in full the first publication of his new book "The Old Man And The Sea")*.

The "beach house" scenes were filmed on location at 250 Beach Road, Belvedere.

The bedroom scenes at the "beach house" in the movie are actually in the living room, converted to a bedroom for the occasion. The fireplace scenes are in the "Indian Room" on the lower level. And the path down to the beach is little changed today from what it was when the movie was made.



Bobbie Heidelberg and guests with front row seats on the balcony during filming,



Hampshire House

NEW YORK CITY

August 9th, 1952

My dear Mrs. Heidelberg:

Mr. Emerson sent me your letter.

This is just to say thank you from the bottom of my grateful heart for all the many things you had to say about me.

Bless you, and thank you for being so sweet to us when we worked there.

I hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,


JOAN CRAWFORD

Mrs. Heidelberg
Belvedere, Calif.

'Sudden Fear' Opens at Golden Gate

The new Joan Crawford movie, "Sudden Fear." apparently was designed to generate, audience suspense to an almost unbearable degree. It is fairly successful, especially if the audience doesn't ask too many questions. (The picture opened on the RKO Golden Gate screen yesterday.)

The idea is: Will Miss Crawford be done in by her sinister, money-hungry bridegroom? Or will the blackguard be done in first by his understandably upset wife?

Joan might well be done in, she finds, upon playing back a recording device in her library at Scott and Green streets, San Francisco. She is a successful playwright who uses the device in her work. But her actor-husband (Jack Palance) and his girl friend (Gloria Graham), during a rendezvous in the library, talk with the darned thing on.

During a long playback of their conversation, Miss Crawford has a film actress' field day in an empty room. Actually, 40 per cent of her part is played without dialogue. She gets the idea across, by use of pantomime and facial gestures, in fashionable Crawford style that makes this more a Joan Crawford vehicle than a top-bracket suspense drama.

The turning of the screw by script writers and director is adroitly brought off. These include a silent chase up and down the hills of Pacific Heights in dark, wet streets: also a nervous, silent scene in Miss Graham's apartment where the sharp ring of a telephone is enough to make Miss Crawford (as well as the audience) skip a heart beat. When is the killer going to strike?

But is tension for tension's sake enough? By the time the house lights go up, an audience may be aware of the tricks and calculation in "Sudden Fear" and feel let down. This almost never happens in the work of the old master of suspense films, Alfred Hitchcock.

For instance, during Miss Crawford's troubles, I wondered why she didn't simply call a cop instead of doing everything the hard way. The answer is there wouldn't have been a melodrama called "Sudden Fear" if she had.

The San Francisco scenes are a neat bit of pictorial dressing by Director David Miller. Marin County gets a once-over-lightly, especially at a house hanging to a Belvedere cliff that Jack Palance eyes with gusto as a fine site for a fatal accident.

Gloria Grahame, as the sexy girl friend, shows up a much more effective actress than when she had an elephant's foot in her face in "The Greatest Show on Earth."

San Francisco Chronicle – 1952

Heidelbergs See Their Private Home Privately in Movie

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Heidelberg went to the movies last week. They saw a new Joan Crawford picture, "Sudden Fear," at a special, private, pre-release screening arranged by RKO officials in San Francisco on authorization of the producer, Mr. Joseph Kaufman of Hollywood.

THE PELICAN is assured by usually reliable sources that the Heidelbergs saw the movie even before the boys at the Net Base. And well they should have, because for two days last winter the Heidelberg home and gardens swarmed with a hundred actors—including Miss Crawford and her leading man, Jack Palance—directors, cameramen, electricians and other technicians, all apparently essential to taking scenes for the movie.

The Heidelbergs loaned their house just for the fun of it, not anticipating how much sand would be tracked in. Six months later, with all the sand swept out and the work involved forgotten, it seemed worthwhile. For the movie company got some magnificent shots of the Heidelberg residence.

The house is seen as the summer home of the playwright whom Joan Crawford portrays in the movie. It isn't located in Belvedere, according to the movie, but in some unidentified resort that you couldn't find on the map. In the picture, the house is kept open only in summer, to the amusement of Mr. and Mrs. Heidelberg, who live in their house the year around and love it.

There is a high wall in the Heidelberg garden, made of cobblestones from old San Francisco streets, and this is highly dramatized in the film. Also shown is the pier, made of saved sections from a catwalk used in building Golden Gate bridge. (It was mighty cold the day Joan and Jack ran down to the pier for a before-breakfast swim—in the movie.) One shot shows sailboats in Belvedere Cove, thanks to five boys who played extra the days the movie company was here - Harland Peterson, Bob McLean, Kim Mitchell, Allen Mitchell and Jim McGuinness. The boys were invited to the screening but none of them could go. Nor could R.B. Randolph of the San Francisco Yacht Club, who recruited them. Mr. and Mrs. Bernon, Mitchell and Mrs. Harold Keaton represented the yacht club at the screening.

Al Williams' speedboat appears in the picture. You can even see the name, "Papagayo II. Oh, yes—the main locale is San Francisco, and the camera boys did very well over there. "Sudden Fear" is a suspense thriller, and Joan Crawford does quite an acting job, in the opinion of the small audience at the special screening. It will be released this month or next.

Attending the pre-preview with the Heidelbergs were several guests: Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Matson of San Francisco (Mrs. Heidelberg's parents), Mr. and Mrs. James Guilder of Mill Valley, Mr and Mrs. George S. Goetze of Paradise Cove, and Mr. and Mrs. R. D. McCrea of San Francisco and Tiburon. And, of course, representatives of the Press.

THE PELICAN-Aug. 8, 1952

She Loved Modern Home, He Loved the Sea— So They Built Their New House Ship-Shape!

1935

*His Quarters Look Like Ocean
Liner; Her Rooms Show
Woman's Ideas*

BY LOUISE WEICK

Perhaps they really did prefer to keep on cruising around the world on an indefinite honeymoon. But Mr. and Mrs. John E. Heidelberg decided that, after all, right here in California they might create a new type of home that would have all the advantages of a perpetual cruise and still enjoy all the comforts of home.

They decided this last summer at the Century of Progress Exposition—the very place to initiate new ideas. This week Mr. and Mrs. Heidelberg are taking possession of their new home in Belvedere, where these ideas have been carried out. Already their home is the newest show place on that side of the bay.

It all began with Mr. Heidelberg preferring a home at sea. With a spacious power-boat and two smaller pleasure craft to play with, such an idea seemed feasible. But Mrs. Heidelberg had visited those shining new model homes beside Lake Michigan too often to give up having her idea of a home just like one of them or even considerably better.

They Compromised

So they compromised. The result is so completely fascinating that one wonders that no one ever thought of it before. Mr. Heidelberg has a home that suggests a perpetual cruise. His attractive wife has her home, the smartest thing in modern efficiency imaginable.

The house, to embrace such contrasted ideas, had to be right beside the sea. In fact, it perches over the water to command a view of the bay and Golden Gate.

In Mr. Heidelberg's side of the house everything is ship-shape. His own room is as near like an apartment on a smart ocean liner as art and skill could make it. Upper and lower berths, portholes, dory, ship's lanterns, folding doors with Venetian shutters, and when one steps to the veranda there is a railing exactly like a ship's, with teakwood boards for the floor.

House and Ship

The outside walls of the veranda, like the promenade deck of a liner, are made of plates riveted together. As one leans over this promenade, the perpetual sea is below. Not a suggestion of modern domesticity is in sight, nor is there anything to resemble the cottage idea. Shining copper accessories, polished chromium gadgets—every detail is that of a liner.

But when you go to the upper decks, or rather the other stories of the edifice, which is the domain of Mrs. Heidelberg, there is everything to enchant the most romantic home body. It is a ship and a house in



MRS. JACK S. HEIDELBERG

one, yet each holds its own independence.

California redwood, hand-hewn, is used inside and outside. They said that couldn't be done, either—not for exterior and interior finish. But it was, even if the job did take plenty of time. The heavy beams, extending to expose their faces on the outside of the house, end in carved gargoyles.

"Those grinning, grimacing faces are our creditors," confided Mrs. Heidelberg. When someone suggested that all of them laughed but one, she admitted that that particular face belonged to just that kind of a creditor.

The roof of the house, which stands on a terraced garden whose different levels are held up with Sonoma County limestone, is made of hand-hewn shakes, several times as thick as the commercial kind. They were treated with a fire-resistant chemical to give them the appearance of hand-cut slate.

The exterior of the house has a rough red-brick and cement finish,

contrasting with the brownish redwood whose adze marks harmonize with the peculiar hand-made rough brick used elsewhere. In a general way, the house is of the English country style, with steep roofs of several different levels. Ultra-modern lighting, with concealed lights, floods the house with sunniness, and makes no shadows.

Copper strips, like bright ribbons, divide the living-room walls into parallel sections, the first painted a sun-burnt pink and shading through three tiers to pale sunset gold for the ceiling.

The furniture, which Mr. Heidelberg makes in off moments to rest up after tussling with problems in his Montgomery-st office, is in keeping with the contrasting themes of the home.

"We spent all the time we could at the Century of Progress, picking up ideas, never knowing what in the world we would do with all we learned last summer in Chicago. This home is the result of it all," said Mrs. Heidelberg.

THE HEIDELBERG LEGACY

Beach Road, Belvedere.

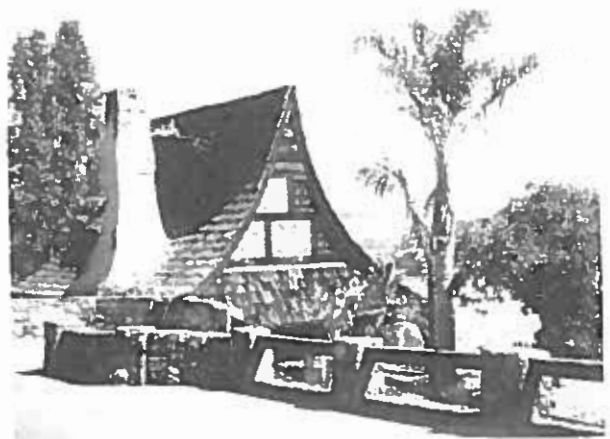


Jack Heidelberg's legacy of picture postcard architecture in Belvedere all started in 1933, when he acquired the vacant double lot at what is now **250 Beach Road**; and commissioned Donnell Jaekle to design a house in the "English Country" style (but curiously with a very Art Deco interior!). It was to be a wedding present for his wife Lurline ("Bobbie"). During construction, Jack started tweaking the plans and putting his own fingerprints on the design, triggering his future interest in construction and architecture. The house was completed in May 1935 and attracted wide interest, including a feature article in the San Francisco News.



Over the following few years, the Heidelbergs were able to acquire the three adjacent lots to the north (now 246 Beach Road and 242 Beach Road) on which had previously existed a large house which apparently burned and had been demolished in the late 1920s or early 1930s. The garden for 250 was extended into the immediately adjacent lot, including a brick terrace and magnificent stone BBQ; and a driveway added to access the intermediate level of the existing 250 garage, with an electrically powered turntable at the bottom (featured in Sunset magazine).

In 1942 on the next lot, Jack Heidelberg built to his own design, on parts of the former foundations, a "guest house" (**246 Beach**) specifically for his mother, but she would not move from the City. And so it became a rental property, known locally as the "Hansel and Gretel" or "Gingerbread" House – and sometimes in the press as the "Storybook House". It really was/is quintessential "gingerbread" and a Belvedere landmark from inception. The Colvers moved there in 1969 and remained until 1992 when they acquired the original Heidelberg house at 250 Beach.



A cruciform shaped greenhouse was built into the natural rock below 246 Beach, heated and plumbed from 250, and was the scene of many spectacular dinner parties, as at that time, 250 and 246 were all part of the same property, integrated by the wonderful landscaping which flowed between them. A waterwheel built into the 250 BBQ was normally turned by water piped from an intricate artificial stream bed running through the property, except when there were parties on the 250 terrace and in the 246 greenhouse – then the water was turned off and the wheel was driven by a built-in electric motor, dispensing an endless supply of Mai Tais. Guests would simply wander over and stick their glasses under the waterwheel for a refill.....

Jack went on to build **242 Beach** around 1950, adjacent to 246 but lower down nearer to the water and not visible from the road. Initially this was intended as a rental property but not long after completion the Heidelbergs sold it.

Then followed what was known as the "Redmond" house on **Bella Vista** at the intersection of upper Beach – built for Jim Redmond (a contractor!); and after that a cottage almost identical to 246 Beach, on the other side of the Island. All were in the so-called "Black Forest" style which captured Jack's imagination first from a picture post card and then from visiting Germany and reconnecting with his family roots. English Tudor features crept in here and there and

even suggestions of California Mission architecture, but all blended to create a unique style – and with each house, Jack tried to outdo the previous ones with exquisite and mostly whimsical details.



He did not stop there but in a radical shift of architectural style, built a 6-unit apartment building at **2200 Paradise Drive** in Tiburon (held as an income property until the 1970s) referred to as "Pacifica" architecture – a blend of Hawaii and California. Jack built two more private residences on Belvedere in the same architectural theme. And all this creative home building was only a hobby.



Jack made his mark in the insurance business as an associate of Stewart Hopps, who built a spectacular "Japanese/Pacific" style house on the west hillside of Belvedere, with a Japanese garden designed by the renowned Sam Newsom. Unfortunately some irregularities in the running of the business caused Mr. Hopps to become a rent-free guest of the government for a period of time; and Jack saw this as an opportune time to retire – at the age of 29.

The Heidelberg parties until well into the 1950s were legendary, usually "themed" for which Bobbie would obtain all the requisite china and props. At the end of the pier was a barge serving as a floating dock, but with the advantage it could be treated like a boat and accordingly was routinely hauled out for bottom painting etc. It was filled with white Pismo beach sand and replete with a wet bar, palm trees, boats moored alongside and often a band playing. There was also a marine railway alongside the pier so Jack could haul out his own boats; and often bobbing to a mooring in the Cove, was Jack's seaplane he had bought on their honeymoon in Hawaii.



In 1952 the movie "Sudden Fear" starring Joan Crawford and Jack Palance, was filmed on location at 250 Beach.



Jack died in 1986 followed by Bobbie in 1992. The estate was liquidated with 246 being sold to Leslie Caldwell and Sal Guglielmino; and Rosalind and John Colver acquired the original Heidelberg house at 250 Beach. after 23 years next door in the famous "gingerbread" house. Jack had a magical touch in creating these wonderful homes, handcrafting virtually everything including wrought iron fixtures and fittings, tiles, redwood gutters, gargoyles, spiral staircases, his hallmark "rubble" stone and brick walls and fireplaces – and clever features such as concealed drawers

which disappeared on roller skate wheels into cavity walls; high-reach kitchen shelves which were raised and lowered by electric motors, and built in cupboards with false backs which provided concealed access to crawl space between floors.

But as with so many creative people, engineering and maintenance were not Jack's strong points ("It will outlast me" was his famous saying). Both properties were in need of serious repairs and upgrading. The Colvers set about 250 with what classically started as a "refresh" and "refurb"; and equally classically turned into gutting virtually the entire interior and renovating the entire outside. This was the opportunity to replace the Art Deco



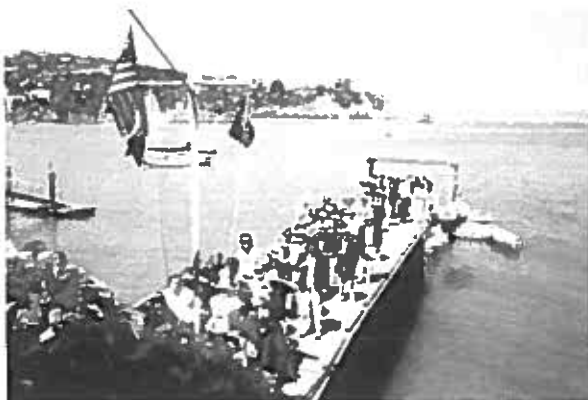
wainscoting, copper banding, copper and mahogany balustrades etc., with a classic "Heidelberg" look - oak and mahogany paneling, exposed hand hewn beams, hand fired floor tiles, custom wrought iron fixtures, raised and coved ceiling in the living room with crown molding and cove lighting, all

windows replaced and reframed with hand-adzed redwood and so on. The only things retained were the magnificent pecan diagonal flooring on the main level; a huge bullet-proof gravity furnace in the basement; part of the mezzanine level in the kitchen with its open balcony; and two exquisite serendipitous rooms: a genuine log cabin den (the "Indian Room") and a paneled ship's cabin ("Jack's Stateroom") with built-in bunks and exterior teak deck.



The derelict beach house, keynoted in the movie "Sudden Fear", was rebuilt by the Colvers in 1986, retaining only the exterior stone and stucco walls (re-framed from the inside) and structural elements of the roof. It re-emerged as the "RJCYC" - Royal John Colver Yacht Club.

And there began a new epoch in the Heidelberg tradition, of parties and entertaining - guests arriving only by water, bands playing, flags flying and champagne flowing. But that is another story.



At 246 Beach next door, Sal and Leslie thought hard for a couple of years on a matter which had defeated the Colvers (and for that matter, Jack Heidelberg) - how to expand the house without compromising the architectural integrity. But Sal, a custom home builder himself, came up with a seamless plan which not only accomplished that, but in fact "out-Heidelberged" Heidelberg. Incorporating a second landmark crooked chimney and roof terrace over an added master suite, with replicated exterior tiles and materials, brick, rock and stonework, it matches and in many instances exceeds the Heidelberg touch with painstaking attention to detail in every handmade aspect.

*John Colver - August 2010.
435-4024*

And

Leisure

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, SUNDAY, NOV. 19, 1950 PAGE 1L

A Design for the Incurably Romantic

When it comes to building a house there are almost as many philosophies as there are people to build them. Two interesting approaches to the problem of putting a roof over your head are contrasted here; both designed and built by the owners themselves and both somewhat removed from the ordinary world of architecture. On the left is a home built near Redwood City by four former students of Frank Lloyd Wright; to the right is the Belvedere retreat of a San Francisco insurance man, right out of Grimm.

Stories by Odeen Tanner.
Photographs by Jim Morley.

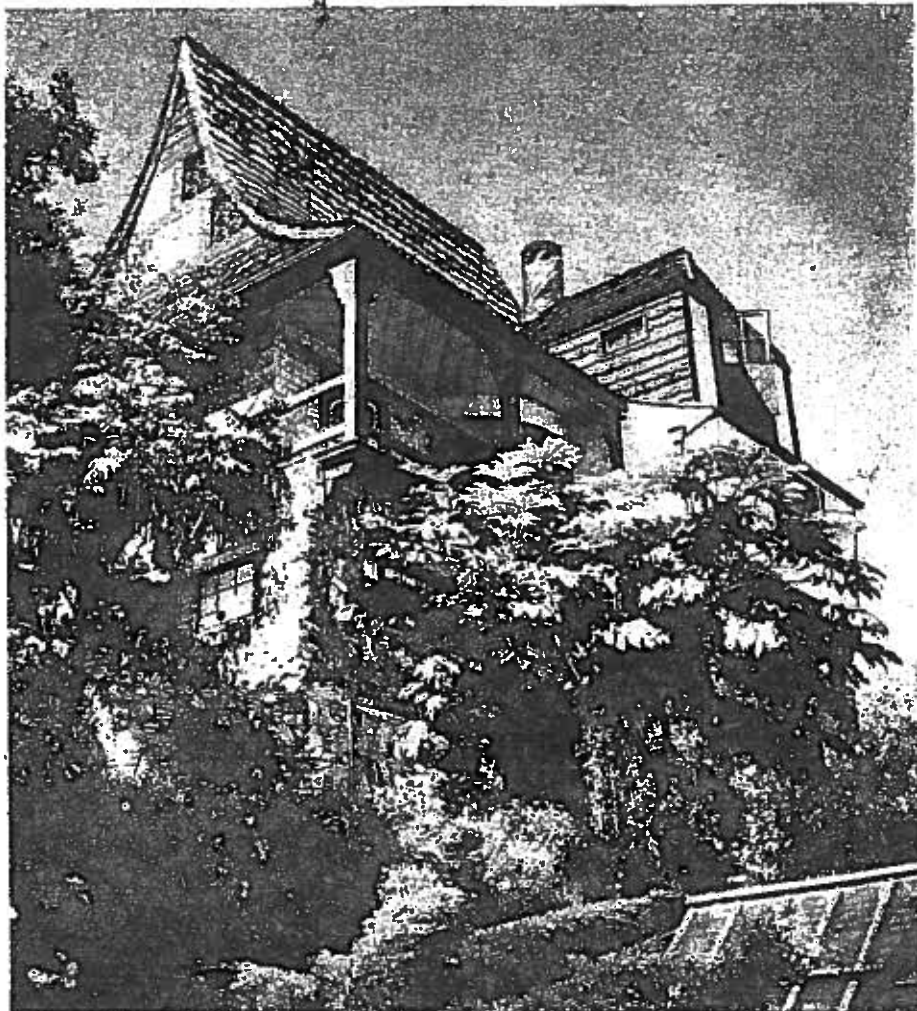
IF YOU'VE EVER driven along the narrow, winding road on the east side of Belvedere island, you might have noticed a couple of curved roofs and crooked chimneys sticking up from the sheer slope below you. And if you stopped to wonder what those quaint architectural earmarks were doing in a land of flat roofs and plate glass, you would have discovered Heidelberg.

More accurately, you would have run across the family Heidelberg—Jack, Lurline, Zipper and Button—who have been building themselves a gingerbread empire on the steep cliffs that go down to the cove.

Jack, who doubles as a San Francisco insurance broker, is the architect—and the carpenter and the mason. His wife Lurline, more often called Bobbie, supplies the ideas for the frilly fringes and the lush landscaping. Zipper and Button, twin Pomeralans, keep up a shrill, enthusiastic running commentary on every stone that goes into place.

The first house the Heidelbergs built took form back in 1933, when spirits and pocketbooks were depressed. A trip to the more picturesque parts of the Carmel area convinced them that to escape into the slightly unreal world of their youth was one way of beating the times, so the Heidelbergs built an imaginative version of an English country house and began to embellish it.

Continued on Page 6, Col. 1



GINGERBREAD HOUSE of the Jack Heidelberg sits high on a steep hill overlooking

Belvedere cove, surrounded by dense and colorful plantings along myriad paths.

A Romanticist Takes His Plan From Never-Never Land

Continued from Page 1
with sleighbells, old lanterns, miniature waterfalls and a confusion of vines and tuberous begonias. Gradually they laced the hillside with little paths, rustic bridges and tropical foliage, and about four years ago began to work on a second picture-book chalet near by.

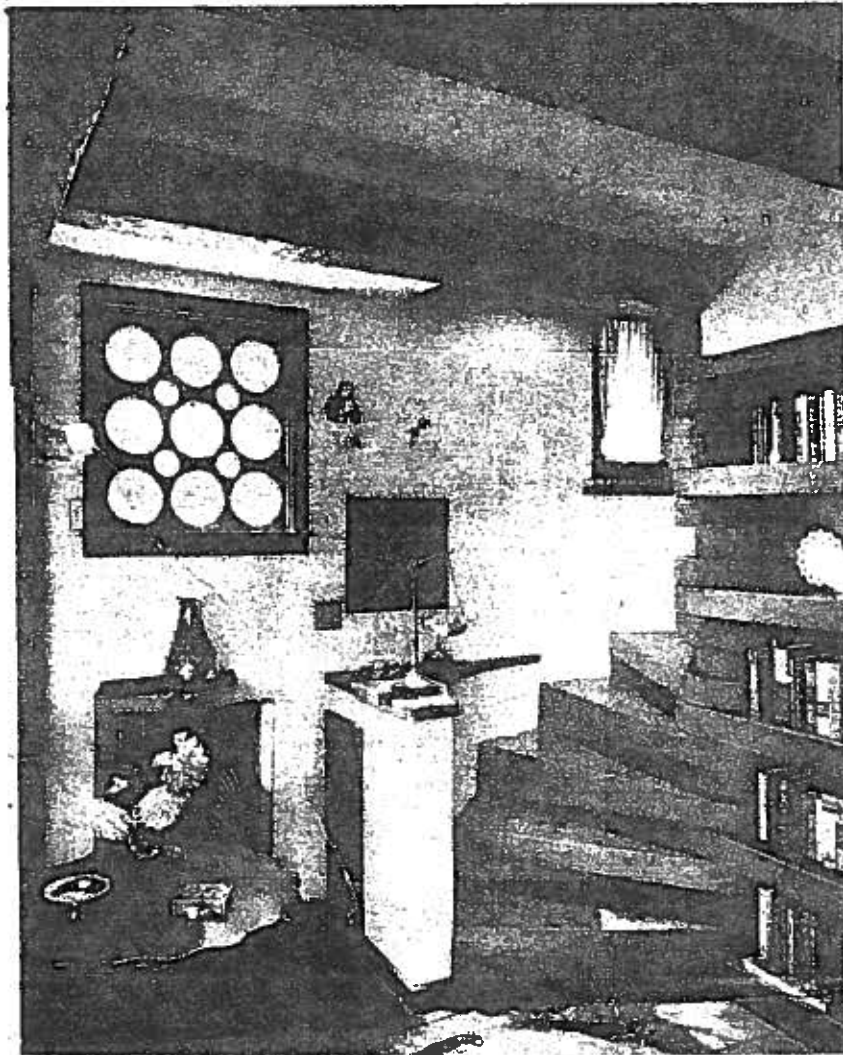
On the second effort, the Heidelbergs really let themselves go. The result looks as though they had used a copy of Grimm's Fairy Tales in preference to the

usual blueprints. Actually, Jack didn't believe in blueprints, building instead a beautifully detailed scale model complete to the last curved rafter. Then he hired a handful of elfin helpers from Local 204 and went to work reproducing his castle at full size.

House No. 2 is all, hand-hewn beams and casement windows, with hardly a piece of wood cut on a straight line. Its peak roof is lit on the inside by a pair of "wind's-eye" windows set under

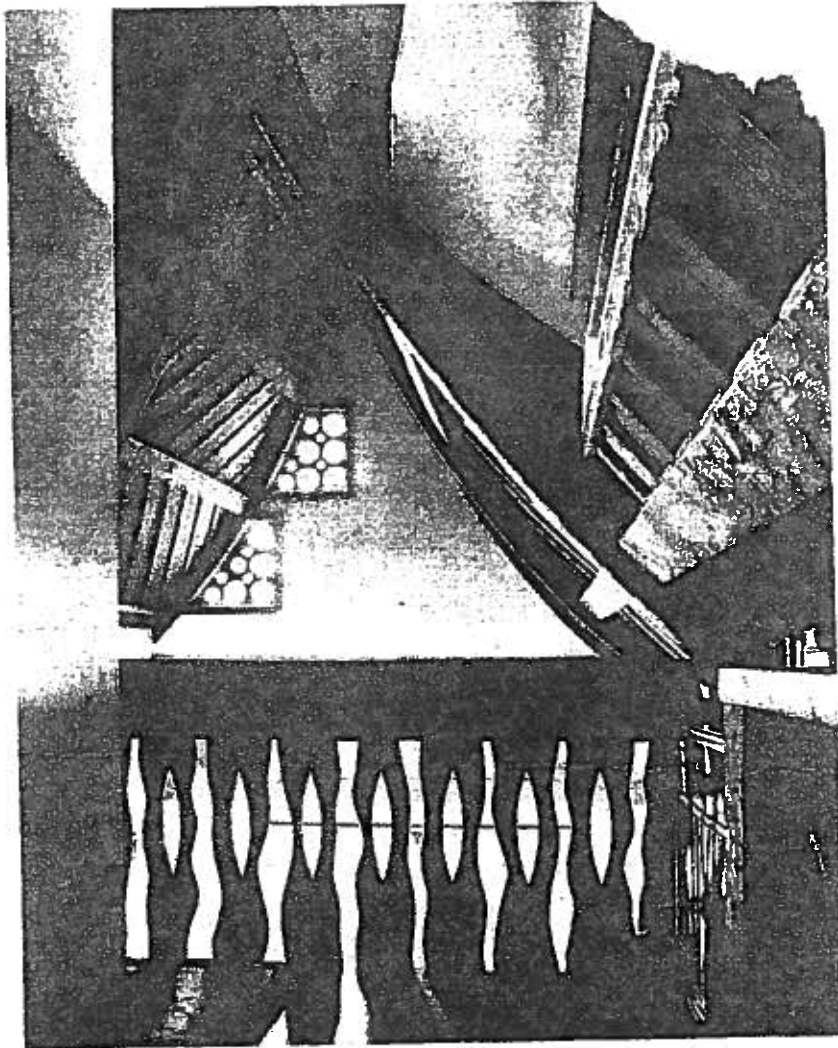
the eaves—Mexican plates of colored glass set in wood frames.

When the second house was finished, the only severe disappointment was the old-fashioned oaken floor. The carpenter had been carefully instructed to make sure there would be a nice rich, satisfying squeak right near the front door. Considerable time and expense produced a blood-chilling built-in groan, but when the caulking was put in between the planks, it vanished forever.



CIRCULAR STAIR, rough-hewn and keyed to central pillar, leads to balcony and bed-

room above, from which Enchanted Cottage No. 3 can be seen under construction.



BALCONY of gingerbread house looks down on living room. None of the wood-work was cut on a straight line if possible;

curved rafters required careful planning from scale-model stage to final construction. Note "wind's-eye" windows.

Trapped Air Is the Best Insulator

The best insulating material against temperature extremes is air. It is six times as good as wood, 29 times as good as brick, 39 times better than concrete, 44 times better than glass and has 1600 times the insulating properties of copper. Insulating is simply a matter of trapping air; many materials will do, as long as they are fluffy, with many little fibers or bubbles for holding a maximum of air.

Insulating against noise is best done by isolating the source of the

noise from the structure of the house, which acts as a sounding board to distribute vibrations. A noisy washing machine or refrigerator, for example, can be quieted by laying a rubber or felt pad under it. Soft furniture, draperies and rugs absorb sound; in rooms where furnishings can't do the job, acoustical tile or plaster will cut down noise. If the heating plant or blower is noisy, a flexible canvas link between blower and main

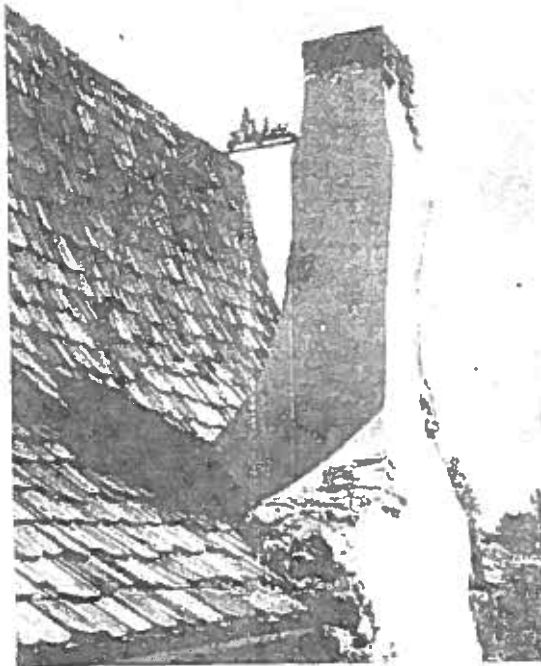
air duct helps. Mounting parts in contact with the floor on rubber supports is also recommended. If air whistles through the ducts themselves, dampers may be out of adjustment or outlet grills may be too small.

Tough Spar

Spar varnish serves admirably wherever an elastic, tough, weather and water-resistant varnish is required—especially for exterior wood surfaces.



RAFTER END projection from under the eaves is carved like an old Gothic parson. Tortured pose represents agony of owner-builder after ordering shipment of wrong grade of lumber for the house.



BULGE IN CHIMNEY, neighbors' children explain, is where Santa got stuck one year, had to leave by the door.

Heidelberg House Tells a Unique Tale

By DIANE SMITH

Anyone passing 246 Beach Road in Belvedere can't help but notice the "Hansel and Gretel" cottage, with its pointed roof and crooked chimney peeking up from a steep hillside overlooking Belvedere Cove.

This is the house that Jack built. In 1942, while living in the home next door at 250 Beach Road, Jack Heidelberg designed and built the dwelling for his mother — who didn't want to move out of San Francisco. Using a postcard of a house in Bavaria as a model, Jack built the home with hand-hewn beams and casement windows with colored glass Mexican dinner plates set in wooden frames. His wife Bobbie planned and planted the extensive garden.

The steps of a circular stairway lead to a loft bedroom and bath. Made of rough-hewn redwood planks, they are keyed to a central pillar, which in turn supports a sturdy bookshelf. Throughout the home, cupboards are built into every small space available.

A very innovative man, Jack added little touches that were unheard of at the time. For instance, in the kitchen, he put in small "pull-outs" similar to breadboards for his short mother to stand on to reach the high cupboards. And next door, at his own home, he installed an electric car turnaround at the bottom of the steep and narrow driveway. This idea was so unique that "Sunset Magazine" did a feature article on it.

Jack handcrafted almost everything in his houses, including wrought iron fixtures and fittings, tiles, redwood gutters and fireplaces. The loft's railing is hand-cut in irregular shapes, and along many of the beams he carved fairy tale scenes. At the end of a rafter is a hand-carved Gothic gargoyle, and the chimney bulges at one point.

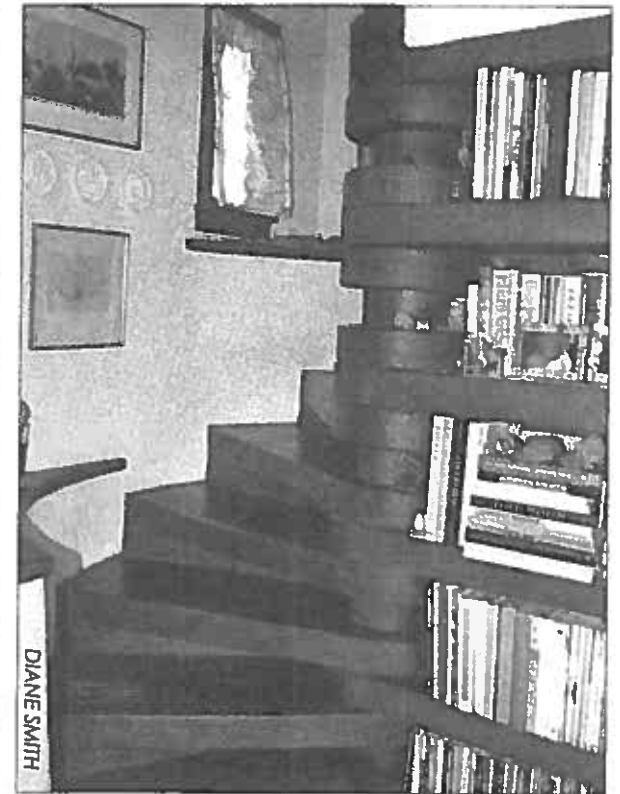
The story that neighborhood children hear is that Santa got stuck there one year, so he had to resort to using the front door.

Jack and Bobbie were the quintessential hosts, known for spectacular themed dinner parties, complete with china and props to match. Water piped from an intricate, artificial streambed running through the property at 250 Beach normally turned a waterwheel that was built into a barbecue, but when the Heidelbergs threw a party, they turned off the water, and a built-in electric motor drove the wheel, dispensing an endless supply of Mai Tais. When the guests wanted a refill, they simply held their glasses under the waterfall.

Below the two homes was a pier, and at its end sat the Heidelbergs' 40-foot-long "Cleopatra's Barge," which they refilled each year with white sand, palm trees and stock for the wet bar. Nearby Jack kept his seaplane and up to five boats. In 1952, 250 Beach became a movie set for the filming of "Sudden Fear" starring Joan Crawford and Jack Palance.

Jack died in 1986 at age 81, and Bobbie followed in 1992. The estate was liquidated, and Sal Guglielmino and Leslie Caldwell bought 246 Beach, while Rosalind and John Colver bought 250 Beach after living next door for 23 years.

Although Jack was very creative, he was not into maintenance, and by the time he died, both properties were in need of major repairs. The Colvers completely upgraded their home and Sal, an experienced custom-homebuilder, added a bedroom, bath and patio to 246 Beach while replicating exterior tiles, brick, rock and stonework. So skillful is his work that no one can tell where the original home ends and the addition begins — a huge compli-



The rough-hewn redwood planks of the spiral staircase in the Heidelberg House add a rustic touch to the home's unique character.

ment to his expertise.

Whatever you call it — the Heidelberg House, Storybook House, Black Forest Home, Fairy Tale House, Gingerbread House or Hansel and Gretel House — 246 Beach is one of the most unique homes on the Tiburon Peninsula. *Peninsula*