

the Gustavian bed L4

Meet the  
'edimentals' L2

# Home & Garden

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The remodeled Noe Valley home features floor-to-ceiling glass doors, above, and a semi-covered loggia extending outside. The central stairway with skylight, below, connects and illuminates three floors.

## Hip to be square

Two brothers mix modernism and outdoors in a boxy Noe Valley home

By **Zahid Sardar**  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

As children, Ivan Terry and Alexander Terry teamed up to design and create offbeat tree forts and Lego houses. Years later, working together as architects, the brothers still find pleasure toying with boxy structures. "We always built things. Ivan had an interest and I learned from him," Alexander Terry says of his older brother.

The transformation of an ordinary, squarish 1960s home in Noe Valley into an airy abode with skylight, canted glass partitions and wood-clad walls is this Berkeley team's



Michael Macor / The Chronicle

**Alexander (left) and Ivan Terry are brothers and architects.**

latest achievement.

It was designed for Chris Choy, an interior designer and self-described "serial remodeler," who knew their work in the neighborhood and contacted them two years ago to convert

*Terry continues on L4*

HOME

# From boxy to beautiful

Terrys from page L1

his nondescript but large 3,000-square-foot three-story home into something more distinctive.

"I really did not want finite spaces that had one use only," said Choy, who is originally from Hawaii. He wanted to replace conventional rooms with free-flowing spaces on each floor that could be opened up, like a lanai, to enjoy the neighborhood's temperate climate.

The Terry brothers understood. They hollowed out the interior to form a double-walled structure covered with hard ipé wood, inside and out, and trimmed with brushed stainless steel at the ends.

Its solid west wall protects it from the wind. In the center of the building, they cut a hole through the middle floor to form a skylit stairway that links all three floors and brings light to the expanded basement, which now contains two bedrooms with garden access. Living spaces, a den and a master suite are on the top two floors.

The Terry brothers, in their mid-40s, honed their skills at UC Berkeley under the tutelage of architects such as Swedish author Lars Lerup, who is now dean at Rice School of Architecture in Houston, and Stanley Saitowitz, whose avant-garde glass-and-concrete lofts on Folsom Street in San Francisco have garnered praise.

While still in college, and with their parents' help, the Terrys bought an old bungalow in the Berkeley hills near Tilden Park and transformed it (several years and many experiments later) into their office, where they run the 14-year-old architecture and building practice. They alternate their time between designing and managing projects and sometimes even wield a hammer.

They met Choy in 1999 when he happened by the construction site of Alexander Terry's Noe Valley home. Both brothers could be seen on-site some days nudging concrete into the corners of a form or devising an effective skylight.



Terry & Terry Architecture

The back of the home before the remodel.

Such hands-on involvement makes even this latest project unique. New wiring, radiant heating and in-wall systems will allow rainwater caches for backyard irrigation and solar power generated by panels on the roof. But it's the rear facade that offers the best evidence of Terry & Terry Architecture's individualistic design approach. They have discovered a way to reduce a home's square footage that somehow makes it seem larger.

"The existing structure was quite large for what our client needed," Alexander Terry said.

"So we took away some space from the living areas to achieve special effects."

They relocated the living room and kitchen from the front of the house to a new loftlike space on the top floor looking north toward postcard views of the valley and the back garden.

They also eliminated the solid back wall and installed floor-to-ceiling glass doors several feet into the living room to form a semi-covered loggia that projects 8 feet beyond the new glass wall.

It reduces the size of interior living space, but the new view-facing deck provides valuable outdoor space on the top floor.

"It is usually hard for clients to give up square footage like that," Ivan Terry said. "But we were able to convince our client that intelligent square footage is better than just a big number."

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Photos by Ethan Kaplan / Terry & Terry Architecture

The remodeled back of the Noe Valley home. The fascia is stainless steel, and the rest of the building is clad with ipé wood, inside and out.



The living room of Chris Choy, originally from Hawaii: "I really did not want finite spaces that had one use only."



A stylish corner of the open-plan kitchen with stainless-steel backsplash.