

Sotheby's Preview



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Janet Schindler introduces the seminal 'California style' garden design of Thomas Church



ABOVE:

Thomas Church believed that peace and beauty, coupled with ease of maintenance, are the dominant characteristics of the new garden.

OPPOSITE:

In his book *Gardens are for People*, Thomas Church said: 'Never underestimate the value of a handsome tree... for it offers you shade, shadow, pattern against the sky, protection over your house, and a ceiling over your terrace.' The Jacobs Pacific Heights residence is offered for sale through Sotheby's International Realty's San Francisco brokerage.

Thomas Dolliver Church (1902–78) is credited as the originator of the 'California Style', a new approach to landscape architecture in the 20th century. Tommy Church, as he was affectionately known in San Francisco, designed the modern garden to be less horticultural and more social – not merely to be admired, but to be enjoyed as an extension of the home.

In San Francisco's exclusive Pacific Heights, Jay Jacobs' historic Craftsman-style home by prominent bay area architect Albert Farr features a Thomas Church garden that reveals several of his new design principles. The focal point in Jacobs' garden is a towering Monterey cypress. As Church himself said in his book, *Gardens are for People*: 'In the intimate and humanized landscape, trees become the greatest single element linking us visually and emotionally with our surroundings... It is no wonder that when we first think of a garden we think of a tree'. To him, such a tree is a living sculpture that plays a central role in garden design.

Church maintained that a well-designed garden must have unity, which he defined as ease of access and a feeling of intimacy between house and garden. At the Jacobs' residence, French windows open to a series of brick patios that progressively draw one into the garden.

Not only does the terrace add an outdoor room but, according to Church, it provides a transitional stage between the house and garden. Beneath Jacobs' cypress canopy, and enclosed by a rear garden and ivy wall, the patio 'room' becomes the intermediary between the house and the garden. Church utilized the topography to create this 'living room' ideal for entertaining, so guests outdoors can enjoy a view of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Church believed that a garden in harmony with itself and its surroundings would give the viewer an immediate feeling of serenity and peace. In Jacobs' garden, and others like it, Church's design principles and the feelings they inspire, remain timeless.

Janet Feinberg Schindler is a freelance writer & realtor for Sotheby's International Realty's San Francisco office.

