

ARCHITECTURAL PROFILES . . .

Tom Ochsner draws the inspiration for his architecture from Greater Santa Barbara. "There are so many unique areas in Santa Barbara County. Topography, vegetation, and historical architectural influences all help add to the diversity and the specific character of each site," he insists. "Rural and agricultural land allows for a relaxed and informal type of architecture, and we are very privileged to have so much inspiration around us.



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Based in Santa Barbara, Tom's company, ON Design Architects, Inc., founded in 1987, includes five partners, Tom, Arthur Anderson, David Elias, Keith Nolan and Eric Heinsohn, with locations

also in San Francisco and Ventura. Three, Tom, Keith and Eric, all graduates from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, operate from Santa Barbara, while David heads the Bay area division and Arthur runs the Ventura office. Each of the five partner architects have carved out a niche in their industry, which includes high-tech facilities, multi-residential housing, hospitality, telecommunications, general commercial, and single-family residential.



Specializing in single family residence, Tom especially enjoys working in the rural areas. "Residential design assumes more than just one structure, and architectural forms can draw from more than neighboring buildings," he explains. "Variations on California's indigenous architectural styles have influenced my work greatly. Large open



spaces allow for interpretations of style, which can be influenced from the surrounding natural setting rather than adjacent buildings."

Because much of Tom's work



became focused on guiding projects through the mounting environmental issues of Santa Barbara County's Land-Use review process and even the most simple projects would take long periods time until they began, Tom's office responded by developing a land-use/ permit processing department to focus on this area of work, leaving the architects with time to

direct their attention to other areas. Run by Justin Van Mullem (planner), the planning department at ON Design Architects has helped both



Architect Tom Ochsner, left, a principal with ON Design, Santa Barbara, designed the tasting room at Bridlewood Winery, above, but mainly focuses his practice on residential projects, such as this guest home in Montecito, left, and this custom home in El Capitan Ranch, below, and a sketch of a home in Woodstock Ranch, also below. (Photos courtesy Tom Ochsner & ON Design, Santa Barbara, CA.)



architects and clients understand and work through this process better.

"Helping my clients understand the uncertainties of this process has been a mounting concern," he states. "Disproportionate amounts of time spent on seemingly trivial topics can leave larger ones begging for attention."

Now Tom is able to concentrate on what he really loves, "Drawing from the inspiration of my clients, and their love for their land, I have had opportunities to help fulfill their dreams. I have been very fortunate with so many clients over the years, allowing me to push our vision to an uncommon level."

Tom and his partners at ON Design can be reached at 805-564-3354.

If you know of an architect who should be nominated to appear in Architectural Profiles, send an e-mail to jonzez@silcom.com with your reasons for the nomination. This is a free column and the editors reserve the right to select architects to be featured in this section from nominees.