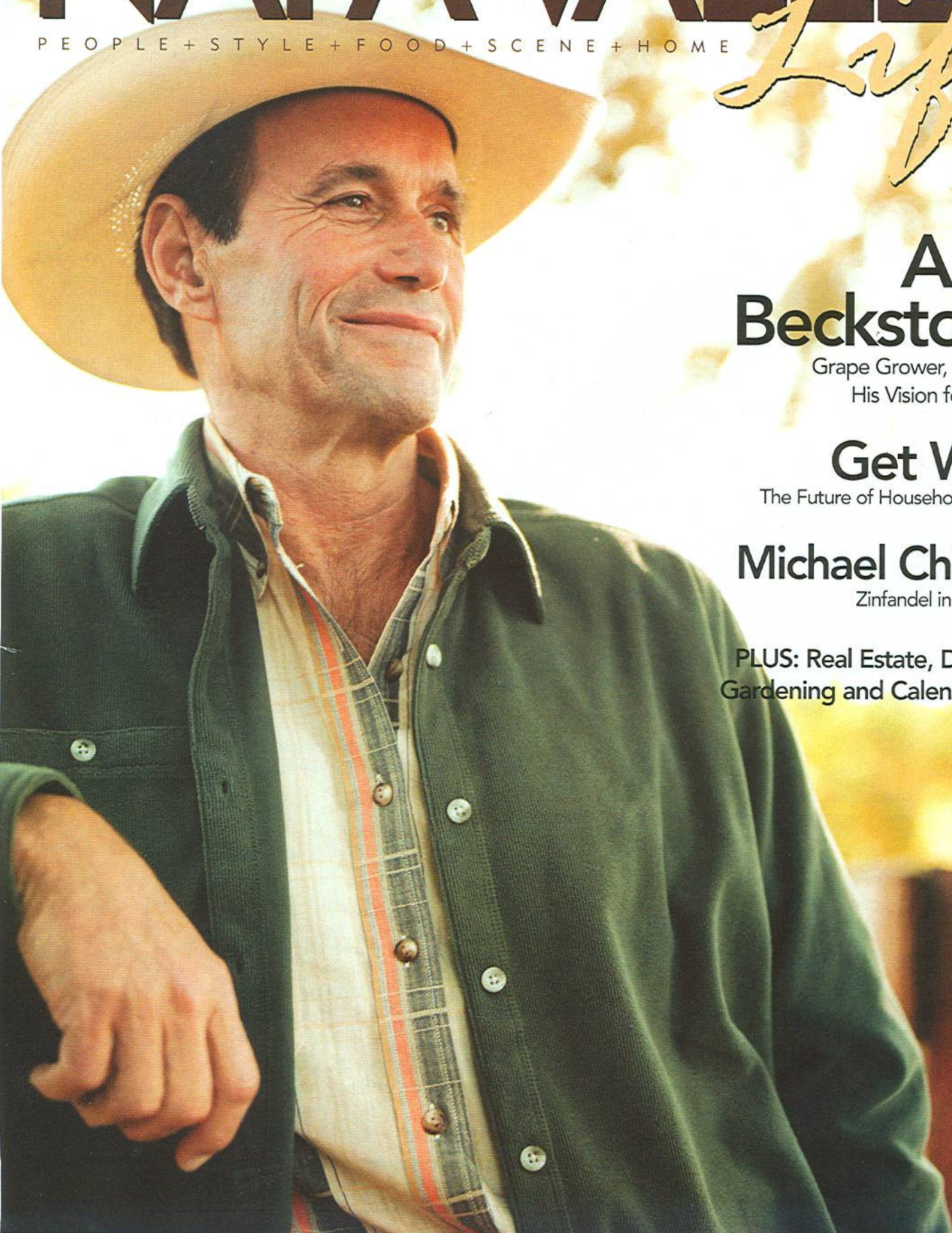


# NAPA VALLEY

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# The Napa Bungalow

■ BY CHARLES BOGUE

**F**rom classic Victorians to the California ranch house, we are blessed in the Napa Valley with a diversity of architecture that meets the needs and taste of a cross section of home buyers. Though its origin dates back to spiritual roots in India, there are few designs that we can claim as more American than the California Bungalow.

In the province of Bengal, India, the British used what was a traditionally a single story home as a comfortable summer retreat. The various rooms were centered around a common living area for open air utility and ease of living. Two California architects, Charles Sumner Green and Henry Mather Green are often credited with designing the first bungalow floor plans. A surge of pattern books began a trend in American architecture that would stretch from Massachusetts to the California coast.

Here in the Napa Valley we are blessed with a number of authentic and derivatives of the California Bungalow. Said to have more homes still standing from the pre-1906 earthquake time than any other Bay Area County, the City of Napa



has in excess of 400 homes that withstood this tragic event at the turn of the century. Centered largely in the Fuller Park area, Napa has a selection of single-level and two-level bungalows constructed anywhere from the early 1900s through 1935.

Likely the heartland for bungalow lovers would be Pasadena, where there is a collection of over 800 vintage homes that meet this classic design criteria. Often credited as the original blueprint was the Gamble House, built by the Green Brothers in 1909 as a large two-story home with a third floor with a room for pool. Traditionalists, however, often argue that the true design was meant to be a single story flowing plan with open spaces and porch living in friendly climates.

As authenticity becomes a more scarce commodity each day, we are indeed fortunate to have right in our own community a California Bungalow experience that will rival any other structure of its kind in the world. Truly a labor of love, The Blackbird Inn, at the corner of First Street and Jefferson, is more of an experience than a building.

Believed to have been built in 1906, a complete restoration was done in 2000 that reached beyond authentic to re-create, with the efforts of local contractors and craftsmen, the Green and Green detail as originally intended. Each of the crafts persons that worked on the project was from Napa and each used the exact materials of the era, handcrafted to the particular need or use within the building. Because of our temperate climate, the bones of similar structures and the redwood that holds them in place have withstood the test of time.

Staying at the Blackbird Inn is more than a place to sleep and eat a sweet roll. It is a walk back in time and a visit down Memory Lane. The opportunity to experience the era where quality mattered, when people had time and visiting was a casual and



essential requirement to the human experience.

Not only an economic value, staying in downtown Napa gets you out of the car, onto the streets and provides a viable alternative to spending a more expensive night among the vines. Taste the wine at downtown wine bars, enjoy local restaurants and partake in evening entertainment options at Copia or The Napa Valley Opera House.

Next time family visits from out of town, or you just want to experience the history of your very own town, this architectural accomplishment is there for you to enjoy and experience with all your senses. Pasadena may have the lock on quantity when it comes to California Bungalows, but right here in Napa we may have the lock on quality.

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