

*creative & inspiring*



**EVERY HOME REVEALS A DISTINCT STORY**  
**28<sup>TH</sup> CSL TOUR**

**h**HEART  
OF THE  
**H**OME TOUR  
APRIL 29-30



## Pride and Craftsmanship Shine Through

Springtime is the season when our homes are at their prettiest—charming us with surprising overnight arrivals: sprays of fragrant flowering shrubs and rich, abundant greens. Spring is a fine season for budding creativity and a perfect time to lay down plans for a new home project—or just to get inspired.

The last days of April bring the Children’s Support League (CSL) of the East Bay’s Heart of the Home Tour, a lively and well-planned East Bay event now in its 28th year. The general tour ticket is an invitation to visit five wonderful homes, spanning 100 years, with homes from the early 20th century to a brand-new contemporary.

The five homes are located in Piedmont and the neighboring Oakland hills, and include an Italianate built for a concert pianist in 1914, a whip-smart contemporary, a resourcefully reconfigured Prairie-style home, a classic 1920s English Tudor of beautiful proportions, and a Tudor Revival well-fashioned in the 1930s decorative arts style. The homes reflect a diversity of styles and an unyieldingly high level of craftsmanship, pride, and individuality.

Walking through a family’s crafted spaces reveals a distinct story. We relate to what speaks to us personally about color, groupings, art, lighting, materials, presentation, and an array of details from minute to major. A tour is a chance to peek into other people’s homes—and allows visitors to imagine living in an especially well-styled home. It’s inspirational for ideas on how to make one’s own home sweet home ever more attractive and functional.

Ticket sales benefit nonprofits that help at-risk children in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and CSL awards a remarkable 96 percent of proceeds to nonprofits. Tour days are abuzz with excitement, with the homes, a boutique, and more. And there’s ample opportunity to get help with your next home project. Read Get Inspired on the following page to find resources for tour days.

These premiere homes in Piedmont and the neighboring Oakland hills will be on tour for two days: Friday and Saturday, April 29–30. Ticket details appear on the next pages. ➔



BY PATRICIA FORSYTH  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TREVE JOHNSON



VIP ticket-holders attend events at two additional Piedmont homes: a kickoff party at a magnificent estate and a speaker breakfast at the historic Duck House, pictured here. VIP ticket is \$125.

## The Morse House Upper Rockridge



The landmark Morse House, an English Tudor Revival, is a majestic custom home designed and built in 1936 for Charles Morse, a prosperous rice miller from West Sacramento. Sited on an ideal perch, the home enjoys sweeping views of the San Francisco Bay, and it fronts the later-developed Claremont Country Club. Flagstone steps rise gently along plantings of citrus and tall grasses to reach the front entry, which is surrounded by an immense stone deck that's perfect for gazing at the nonstop views. The house exhibits much of the best Tudor style: half-timbering, slate roof, small-paned leaded glass windows, and copper gutters, along with iron, brick, and wood decorative work. Owners John Bliss and Kim Thompson spent 15 years seeking a 1930s-era grand home they could restore, and then spent the next six years doing much of the restoration themselves. They furnished the home in delightful Hollywood Regency style, a throwback to 1950s glamour that well-complements their striking contemporary art collection. Also, "The new kitchen is compatible with the original style—with some latitude to modernize," says Bliss.



### GET INSPIRED!

Every year, visitors say CSL has the "best East Bay home tour." A major reason is that CSL prepares a wealth of information about architectural details, decor, furnishings, and art that's included in a professionally published tour book. The keepsake tour book is both informational in taking the reader through each home and serves as a directory of contractors, designers, landscapers, and others who participated in remodeling or preparing the homes. Tour docents are informed about their specifically assigned home, and they are trained to be an additional source to visitors who ask about decor, art, and furnishings. Room alterations shown in before-and-after photos or drawings are made available where notable, and often the lead designer or contractor is on hand to talk with tourgoers. The tour day affords an opportunity to question and learn from experienced professionals, in addition to just being a day of fun and excitement.

### LUNCH & SHOP

CSL is renowned for its pop-up boutique at Piedmont's beautiful central park. Shoppers find traditional, trendy, and just-for-fun well-made goods at attractive prices from artisans who show fresh merchandise lines. Expect to find home decor and fashion accessories; unique, collectible, and fine jewelry; and textiles and decorative arts. The timing is ideal for buying a Mother's Day gift or a thank-you memento for a favorite teacher. For lunch, freshly made food is served! Crowd-pleasing food trucks Doc's Classics serves sandwiches and salads, and El Sur makes empanadas. Lunch is from 11 to 2; \$10 in advance or \$12 on tour days.

CSL expresses enormous appreciation to the very generous families who make the yearly tour possible by opening their homes to benefit the charitable event. CSL is very grateful and thanks our media partner, *Diablo*, underwriters, advertisers, and our platoons of volunteers.

### VIP TICKET PACKAGE

The VIP tour ticket at \$125 has lots more to offer than just the fabulous home tour. Be an insider, starting with an invitation to CSL's Kickoff, a pre-tour party at a Piedmont estate. On tour day, join the Continental breakfast with speaker Nicolas Bernadi, VP for Food for meal start-up Munchery, at Piedmont's historical Duck House, which only VIPs get to tour. Additional amenities included.



### A HANDSOME PRAIRIE STYLE EMERGES

The terrifying Oakland Fire destroyed the home originally built on this plot of land, and according to neighborhood lore, nothing survived the firestorm except for the stone pillars that stand in the rear yard. The stricken owner rebuilt the home in 1994 to its original footprint and layout. But the present owners had different ideas, and they spent the last two years ripping back to the studs and then extensively rebuilding on three floors of interior space. Prairie-style structures originated with Frank Lloyd Wright in the early 20th century and feature a broad house with overhanging eaves and gently sloping rooflines. This home shows off many of these beautiful and enduring qualities. One of the owners is a glass and metal artist who forged door handles and cabinetry hardware. Hands-on for the entire remodel, she was chief designer and overseer of construction. The lower level is a clever private apartment while the main floor, stairway, and upstairs bedrooms were reworked, making room at the top for a charming study.

## + AN ELEGANT ITALIANATE



On a main thoroughfare in Piedmont, where the Key Route commuter line railway used to operate, a beautiful Italianate home was custom built for a concert pianist to stage recitals. In 1914, it was unquestionably a music hall. A brass ballroom placard graced the dark wood, glass-paneled doorway that led into a grandly proportioned room. Today, the piano stage in the living room's cove is a home office, where the owners outfitted the walls with the same cabinetry as the home's original. The family has stewarded the 100-year-old home's overhaul since about 1990. "We worked bottom to top," they explain. "The brick foundation was first because it needed an earthquake-worthy foundation. Then, when you're already doing major work, you may as well excavate to make overhead space." They continue, "For years, we lived with a boiler and radiators cranking whenever it's quiet." Furnaces were a later project. The family is thrilled with the just-completed kitchen remodel that shows off polished granite countertops and stainless steel beauties. So why not build an even larger, more beautiful deck to the yard? Of course, they did.



## + A VERY FINE ENGLISH TUDOR

This is a classic English Tudor located on a street of fine homes in Piedmont and designed by the famous 1920s-era firm of Chester Miller and Carl Warnecke, who created magnificent Tudors. This handsome home features spacious formal rooms, archways, and leaded glass windows. The family's travels in Asia have yielded many distinguished art pieces, a mix of authentic and reproductions that are on display in the main-floor rooms. From either the kitchen or family room, visitors reach the lovely blooming courtyard created when a breezeway and garage were built in 1995. The remnant of an original garage was just remodeled into a backyard cottage equipped with a utility kitchen, Murphy bed, and modern spa shower. The owner is a mah-jongg enthusiast who enjoys hosting games—hence, she set up double game tables and nicknamed the place The House of Clicking Tiles. (When the game's on, all you hear is tile clicking: Game play is fast, and concentration is fierce.)



## + A SERENE NEW CONTEMPORARY

Just completed in 2014 on a lot that sat empty since the 1991 Oakland Fire, this stylish contemporary with energy-efficient systems and sustainable-use materials is a smart-home addition to the Upper Rockridge neighborhood. The exterior's exposed concrete, colored stucco, and wood cladding coordinate with the indoor spaces' great wall-size expanses of glass and stacked glass doors. The interior's open floor plan of living, dining, and kitchen opens to the outdoors, allowing the newly married couple, Adam and Amy Dornbusch, to entertain frequently. Their style is California–New York City hip with minimalist furnishings and walls studded with arresting New Wave contemporary art. Amy loves to discover emerging artists while heading up a family-owned Yountville vineyard and investing in a number of Bay Area start-ups. The couple also customized the master bathroom with a glass-enclosed walk-in shower and a one-of-a-kind, live-edge makeup table for Amy, which make their home suit the couple perfectly.

### TOUR INFO

ChildrensSupportLeague.org

### DATES

Home Tour  
Friday, April 29  
Saturday, April 30  
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

### TICKETS

*In advance:*  
\$45 Tour Only  
\$55 Tour + Lunch

*On tour days:*  
\$50 Tour Only  
\$62 Tour + Lunch

### VIP TOUR PACKAGE

\$125 VIP Package includes  
Tour + Lunch

Kickoff Party  
Thursday, April 28  
Piedmont Estate

Speaker Breakfast  
Piedmont's Historic  
Duck House

Special Raffle  
Program Book

### BOUTIQUE & RAFFLE

Open free to public  
Friday, April 29  
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 30  
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Piedmont Community Center  
711 Highland Avenue

### ABOUT CSL

CSL is a voluntary 501(c)(3) nonprofit that is exclusively charitable.

CSL invites underwriters, new members, and tour docents.

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