

Giardini del Paradiso



Giardini del Paradiso is designed to provide sequential experiences. While strollers might glimpse other areas as they wander, the paths are orchestrated to enhance the immediate impact of each garden.

The Pool House Garden
- a recreation and entertainment area.

The Belvedere
- a place to view the Bay's activities and the East Bay's hills and towns.

The English Garden
- a smaller-scale garden with perennials, annual flowers, and statuary.

The Rose Garden
- a place to enjoy a variety of fragrant roses while sitting in the pergola with its elevated view over the Bay.

The Vegetable Garden
- a source of fresh food for the family.

The North Knoll Garden
- a grove of young fruit trees surrounded by lavender.

"The eye or rather the mind is never long delighted with that which it surveys without effort, at a single glance, and therefore sees without exciting curiosity or interest."

- Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening, Humphrey Repton, 1795.

Giardini del Paradiso is a series of gardens, each with its own character and purpose.

Situated on the San Francisco Bay, the site features twisted oak trees and alternating knolls and valleys that create separate areas for different uses and activities.

Landscape architect Leffingwell Associates and Garden Manager Eduardo Minero's team started working on the property in 1997. For the next two years, a full-time arborist pruned over 250 oak trees and shrubs, and directed a crew to cull volunteer trees, bushes, and plants. Maintaining and protecting the oak forest has been a task of great importance.

The first new project on the site was the Pool Area. A recreation building, with a trellised outdoor kitchen and pergola, was designed with architect Herb Kosovitz. The pergola - with its fireplace, overhead heaters, and view of the pool, lawn, volleyball area, and Bay - provides an inviting setting for entertaining.

A new, customized Amedga Conservatory from England with state-of-the-art climate control, lighting, and misters was added to the Main House for growing orchids and carnivorous plants. A hydroponics bed was also installed for plant propagation.

Sculptures collected by the owner have been placed throughout the garden to surprise viewers. Tucked into the lee of the Pool House pergola, for example, is a whimsical Albert Guibara frog fountain. Strollers will also encounter figures from Zimbabwe, cranes and a warthog from Kenya, and replicas of the terracotta warriors from Xian near one of the old cannons above the English Garden.

The Rose Garden, which lies to the west of the Main House, features over 300 roses and other complementary plants.

Above the Rose Garden is the Vegetable Garden, which uses the French Intensive Method to yield the most produce in the least area. Vegetables are planted in a raised bed enriched with humus. The soil is kept light and fluffy to promote accelerated root growth.

The Palm Garden, which is next to the Rose Garden, has a recirculating creek and small ponds for water lilies and fish. Five Canary Island Date Palms define the space and complement the existing palm trees below the Main House.

The North Knoll features raised beds that contain kiwi, olallieberries, blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries. Ornamental plants and vegetables have been added as well.

Down-slope of the berries are plum, pear, persimmon, and apple trees. The owner has also grafted Apache Apricots onto native plum trees. (This species was developed at U.C. Davis for areas lacking the normal heat required for apricots.) In addition, over 2,000 lavender cuttings started in the Conservatory have been planted on the North Knoll.

The nautical character of the Boat House and waterfront area is enhanced by six capstans mounted on the seawall, antique and contemporary rowing sculls, a cannon, and statues of cranes. A hot tub and barbecue are also featured.

The entire site is served by two wells and irrigated by a computerized system that uses sensors to measure air temperature in the soil. This system, which has reduced water usage by nearly 50%, is one of the most efficient systems of its type in the area and has been featured in a Marin Municipal Water District publication.



Landscape Architecture Leffingwell Associates CA License No. 1148
413 Litho Street Sausalito, CA 94965 • 415.332.5354 / 415.332.3629

DESIGN & MAINTENANCE TEAM - Leffingwell Associates: Landscape Architect Eduardo Minero: Garden Manager Mauricio Chavez: General Garden Maintenance
Horticulture: Irrigation design, installation and special planting, and maintenance Chris Robinson: Construction Karel Suchel: Arborist Hamilton Orchids: Orchid Specialist.