



A GARDEN TO HEAL THE SPIRIT

ENCINITAS ARTS RETREAT'S NATURAL SETTING OFFERS INSPIRATION

BY LILLIAN COX

A labyrinth among the gardens at Ellen Speert's home in Encinitas welcomes guests year-round. The 1.5-acre estate, which offers sweeping views of coastal hills, also serves as a spiritual retreat known as the California Center for Creative Renewal.

Speert was working on her master of education degree in art therapy from what is now Lesley University in Boston when she was inspired to start the retreat.

"As a young art therapist in the 1970s, I dreamed of creating a playground for adults," she said, "observing that kids were able to spontaneously express themselves, but we grown-ups somehow lost that birthright in the process of growing up."

After graduating, Speert and her husband, Paul Henry, moved



K.C. ALFRED U-T PHOTOS

Walking the labyrinth (top) is a highlight at California Center for Creative Renewal, full of the beauty of nature (above).

to San Diego where she would work as a therapist and Henry as a furniture maker.

In 1981, they purchased the little house on Crest Drive and she created the Art Therapy Center

of North County. The concept evolved into what is now the California Center for Creative Renewal (artretreats.com).

Speert's vision for the artists' retreat included lush but water-wise gardens, a labyrinth, an indoor studio and two open-air studios. The center also includes an amphitheater for performing yoga and a deck for drumming.

"For 20 years, it was just the land and original house built in the 1940s with railroad ties by the owner who worked for the railroad," she said. "After we bought it, we immediately cleared the trash and revived the property."

In time, Speert began to offer weekly art therapy groups along with individual, couples and family art therapy.

"We also brought in a wide variety of artists and inspirational

SEE **LANDSCAPE 27**



K.C. ALFRED U-T

Pathways meander through Ellen Speert's terraced backyard, which serves as the campus for the eco-art therapy center. The grounds were designed with a sense of discovery in mind.

Landscape

CONTINUED FROM 26

leaders to provide exciting workshops," she said. "It is a 'journey' into self-understanding. Clients who feel confused about their direction often enjoy walking the labyrinth to get a fresh look at their lives and deepen their trust in their own wisdom and intuition."

Her efforts evolved into what she calls "eco-art therapy," with a

retreat center that serves San Diego County.

"I can mostly speak to the transformations people experience from making art and in their relationship to the gardens," she said. "With eco-art therapy, people find their own psyches and struggles reflected in the cycles of nature found here. As they see the cycle of birth and death in the garden, it mirrors their own changes, losses and the finding of new strengths."

SEE **LANDSCAPE** 28

SUNSET CLIFFS/POINT LOMA



View the photo gallery: 1097Alexandria.com

1097 ALEXANDRIA DR. Newly completed, single-story 4BR, 4.5BA open floorplan home in Sunset Cliffs. Gourmet kitchen with high-end appliances and walk-in pantry. Beautiful Fleetwood and La Cantina doors lead to multiple decks. Guest casita with kitchen, bath & private yard. This beautiful custom home has an attached two-car garage on a large corner lot. \$1,975,000.

POINT LOMA HEIGHTS



View the photo gallery: 4407DelMar.com

4407 DEL MAR AVE. Large corner lot with excellent views of ocean, city and bay. Light & bright, highly updated 4BR, 2.5+BA, 3,115 sq ft home with a well designed entertainer's open floor plan. Gourmet kitchen with high end appliances. Spa-like master retreat. \$1,875,000.

POINT LOMA WOODED AREA



View the photo gallery: 665Albion.com

665 ALBION ST. Single-story custom home. Approx. 4,040 Square feet of living space. 4BR, 3.5BA Open floor plan with 11 ft ceilings. Kitchen includes 6-burner range, griddle and convection oven. Herringbone slate tile fireplace. Master suite with spa-like bath. Large laundry room with storage. 3-car garage. Huge lot with room for pool. \$2,950,000



Sal DeMaria 619-813-6400

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

DRE #01788042

www.SalDeMaria.com | SalDeMaria@yahoo.com

IT'S NOT EPOXY, IT'S BETTER. IT'S SPARTAFLEX!

Hate your old, tired, peeling or yellowed epoxy floor? We can remove it and install a new SpartaFlex floor that you will love!



COMMERCIAL

**MENTION THIS AD AND
RECEIVE \$100 OFF!**

**SpartaFlex Floor Coatings
offer so many advantages
over epoxy coatings –
IT'S ALMOST NOT FAIR!**

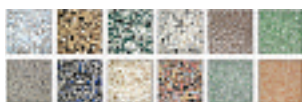
RESIDENTIAL

INDUSTRIAL

Epoxy SpartaFlex

No permanent tire marks or stains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No VOC's or strong odor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Most durable finish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
UV stable – no yellowing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Most slip resistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strongest residential warranty available!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Dozens of colors in stock, hundreds of others available



CALL TODAY FOR A FREE QUOTE

866.408.1448
perkinscustomcoatings.com
Lic. #459148

**SPARTAFLEX
OUTPERFORMS
EPOXY FOR
COMMERCIAL,
INDUSTRIAL
AND
RESTAURANT
APPLICATIONS,
TOO**



K.C. ALFRED U-T

Decorative rock walkways flow through the water-wise garden, which includes an indoor studio, two open-air studios, an amphitheater for yoga and a deck for drumming.

Landscape

CONTINUED FROM 27

The challenge for Speert was maintaining lush gardens in the dry, almost desert climate of San Diego.

"We installed rain barrels, which collect thousands of gallons of precious rain water, and that has been a great help," she said. "We are able to keep our water bill low."

A native pepper tree overlooks

the sedum-lined circular meditation path of the labyrinth, with lemonade berry and manzanita in the chaparral below. Visitors will also find a variety of other natural beauties, including mimosa trees, desert rose, Pride of Madeira, aloe vera, Torrey Pines and a mulberry tree.

"Since we do no advertising, word of mouth is a beautiful way the community supports us, yet many on their first visit are surprised that we are such a well-

SEE **LANDSCAPE** 29



K.C. ALFRED U-T

Plants aren't the only things flourishing in Ellen Speert's backyard, which also houses a shaded chicken coop.

Landscape

CONTINUED FROM 28

kept secret," Speert said.

Today, the California Center for Creative Renewal provides emotional support and creative stimulation for those who are struggling with depression or anxiety. The gardens are a source

of solace for those experiencing the loss of a loved one, or life challenges.

"We specialize in helping people move through transitions and beyond their perceived obstacles by providing individualized guidance in the use of art materials," Speert said. "At the same time, we are committed to protecting the

SEE **LANDSCAPE** 31



SOLD | Ocean front Del Mar | Was offered at \$18,750,000

Call today for your complimentary home market analysis!

Local Expertise, VIP Service, Extraordinary Results

Kathy Herington

760.213.9198 | KathyHerington1@gmail.com
www.KathyHerington.com | DRE# 01816194



Pacific

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Sotheby's International Realty® is a registered trademark licensed to Sotheby's International Realty Affiliates LLC. An Equal Opportunity Company. Equal Housing Opportunity. Each Office is Independently Owned And Operated. DRE #01767484

GHIO
PANISSIDI
& ASSOCIATES

ASCENT
REAL ESTATE



DEL MAR MESA

5868 Meadows Del Mar

Only 2 lots in complex boast golf course views from front & back of home! With 5 BR + 2 opt. & 3 balconies, this home provides ample space for all your needs. Interior boasts living, entertainment, & dining rooms, & eat-in kitchen. Backyard oasis incl. entertainment space w/FP & sound system, separate BBQ palapa w/bar, fire pit, & pool w/hot tub, grotto, & slide. Offered at: \$2,795,000.

Joe Ghio (619) 261-3002

DRE# 01308806



PACIFIC BEACH

1311-1315 Pacific Beach Drive

Location!!! Rare opportunity to own entire bldg - all 3 units! Updated Triplex offers bright open floor-plans, oversize windows, designer flooring, & chef's kitchens w/granite counters & SS appliances. Turn-key vacation rental w/condo plan & recorded CC&R's. Units incl. dual-masters w/spa-like baths, garages, private patios + exclusive-use roof decks w/PANORAMIC VIEWS OF SAIL BAY & PB. \$3,195,000

Mike Panissidi (619) 247-2114

DRE# 01969339



NEW LISTING

POINT LOMA

2554 Clove Street

First time on market! Gorgeous, Spanish style, Mills Act Candidate built in 1932, on 5,000 sqft corner lot. Tasteful upgrades of AC, double-pane windows, & insulation through Quieter Homes Program. Charming 4bd/3ba, 2,258 esf. interior is steeped in old-world architectural details of coved ceilings & hardwood floors. Upstairs Master retreat w/balcony views.

Mike Panissidi (619) 247-2114 DRE# 01969339

GhioPanissidi.com

Serving Buyers & Sellers Throughout San Diego County



Joe Ghio (619) 261-3002 | Mike Panissidi (619) 247-2114
Louann Ghio | Maureen McGrath | Carl Lemke
Andrew Spathas | Nicole Panissidi

Broker Associate CAL BRE# 01308806

Realtor® CAL BRE# 01969339

Landscape

CONTINUED FROM 29

environment and bringing awareness to our precious resources.”

Art and music, she said, are effective in treating emotions.

“Anger is well channeled

“As they see the cycle of birth and death in the garden, it mirrors their own changes, losses and the finding of new strengths.”

Ellen Speert

through art making — especially working with resistive media, like clay,” she said. “Painting can be very soothing when dealing with sadness and loss. And drumming can address any of these emo-



K.C. ALFRED U-T

Ellen Speert’s vision for the center, backed by her many years as an art therapist working with children and adults, has created a place of solace and self-discovery for clients struggling with depression or anxiety.

tions and bring a sense of triumphant energy.

“We turn to art when there are no words to describe. We regain a sense of control. Art gives us a voice.”

Her workshops integrate nature into the process of healing.

“I have designed a playground for adults and a retreat center where people can discover their creativity while at the same time

feeling held by nature in a safe and beautiful environment,” Speert said.

Lillian Cox is a freelance writer based in Encinitas.

VICKI DUTCH-JONES
REALTOR®

COMING SOON!



Bay Ho Stunner | 4 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms | 1,924 Square Feet
A/C, 2 Car Garage, Beautifully Landscaped, Rooftop Deck with Spectacular Ocean View!

VICKI DUTCH-JONES

Call for Pricing 619.723.7010

Vicki@VickiDutchJones.com

www.VickiDutchJones.com

DRE #01384539



©2019 Ascent Real Estate® is a registered trademark licensed to Ascent Real Estate, Inc. An Equal Housing/Equal Opportunity Company. Information deemed accurate but not guaranteed. Buyer to verify all before close of escrow. If your property is currently listed for sale, this is not intended as a solicitation.