

# New meaning to 'custom'

## Local builder Steve Sutton creates a stockbroker's gem

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A number of exceptional custom homes are being built in Vacaville this summer, and one is local builder Steve Sutton's latest project.

Sutton completed work last month on a 2,700-square-foot home for stockbroker Larry Santaella.

The home was designed by Vacaville architect Thomas Sampson and has numerous angles, which make it appear multi-level, although it has only one floor.

The home has three bedrooms, each with a full bath. Two additional half baths are also included in the floor plan.

Adjacent to the master bedroom, Sutton's plan calls for a sitting room. Other features include a three-car garage and an entertainment room with a bar hidden behind an 8-foot door, which slides into the wall.

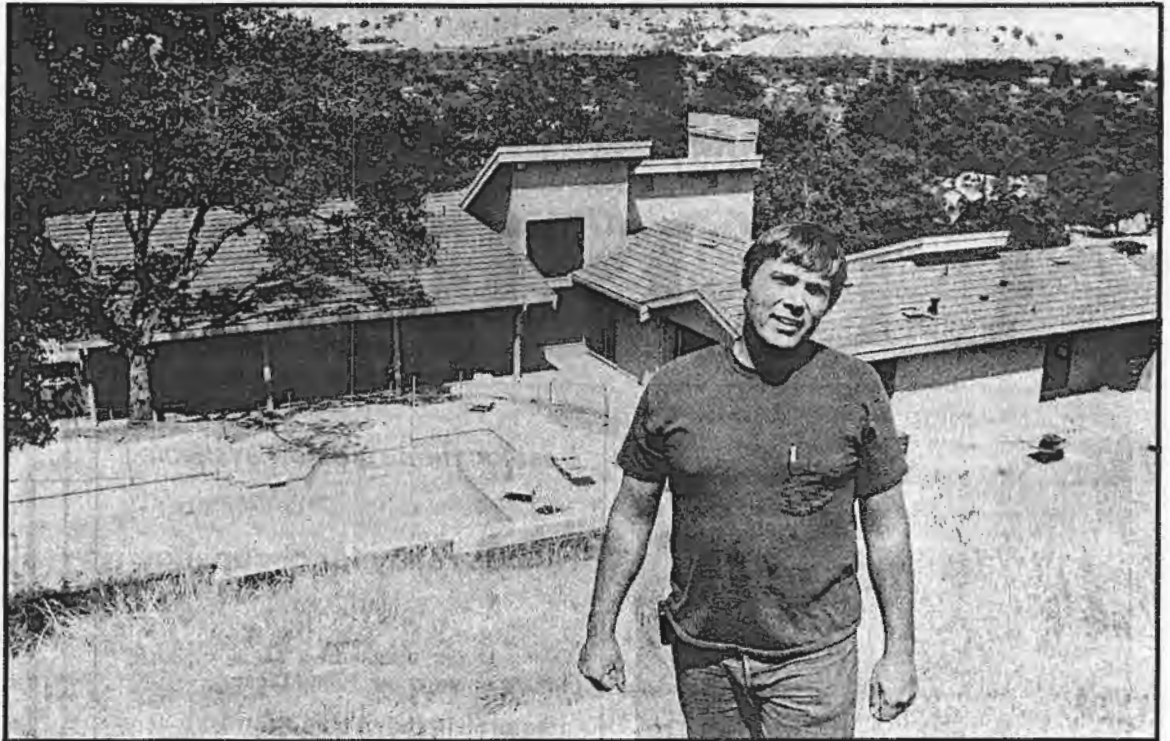
The entryway and kitchen have parquet floors. Windows also received a lot of attention. There are 28 Pella windows and seven sliding glass doors, all with mini-blinds between two panes of glass. Sealed between the panes, the blinds never need to be dusted.

The floor plan is divided into two basic wings, one housing the master bedroom and kitchen area, the other with rooms for the Santaella's two college-aged children. Each wing has its own air conditioning and heating system. The home also has two cedar decks.

The exterior has sections of 4-inch wood planking and stucco. The roof has special tiles made in the shape of shakes.

Behind the home is a swimming pool and spa. The lot also features a number of native scrub oak trees, which have been incorporated into the landscaping design.

Sutton said the project was among the most difficult he has undertaken.



The Reporter/Teresa Willis

Local builder Steve Sutton says the custom house he recently completed in Vacaville's Hidden Valley Estates is among the most challenging he has taken on. The home was built on a 22 degree slope.

The lot, which has a 22 percent grade, created a number of special problems during construction.

To ensure the home will not slip during winter rains, Sutton built two retaining walls into the foundation and a third wall adjacent to the pool. More than 600 steel bars were used in the retaining walls for additional strength.

Sutton then anchored the foundation with 250 12-inch diameter piers, all sinking eight to 10 feet into the ground.

Even with a solid base to work from, Sutton and his carpenters faced problems. The architect died before construction was completed and the builders had to resort to a number of skills to finish the project.

"As I was finishing things I had to roll with the punches and see pictures in my mind," Sutton said.

The lot is high enough on the hillside to give the Santaellas exceptional

views, and a 13-acre open space behind the home ensures privacy.

Santaella said he invested \$350,000 in the project. He said \$100,000 went into lot improvements, including the cost of permits, grading, the pool and foundation.

The home is only the Santaella's second. For the past 22 years they have lived in a Stanley Davis home, which they purchased in 1964 for \$15,000.