



OUR ROLLING HILLS HAVEN – 2 CHUCKWAGON

A story of nature, innovation, and love

BY AMY JOSEFEK, ROLLING HILLS NEIGHBOR



When my husband and I bought our home during COVID, we were looking for more than just a change of scenery. We were searching for space to breathe, to grow, and to live closer to the earth. Our former home in the Hollywood Riviera was lovely, but it simply couldn't contain my husband's passion for gardening. He had earned his Master Gardener horticulture certification from UCLA, and while he'd done wonders in our small yard there, he dreamed of something bigger.

This property in Rolling Hills was the answer. It allowed him to flourish, to truly farm, and to create an edible landscape that became both his passion and our joy. It was especially meaningful during the isolation of COVID. While so much of the



world felt constrained, this home gave him freedom, purpose, and peace.

We lived here together for two and a half years until he passed away. They were precious years, filled with beauty, creativity, and an abundance that I'll always cherish.

A Home with a Vision

What first fascinated us about the house was its story. The renovation in 2014 had transformed it into one of the most forward-thinking homes on the West Coast. It was actually the first house here to use fire-resistant hempcrete for its walls, an innovative, eco-friendly material. The previous owners were deeply committed to sustainability, building what's known as a Passive House, a design that uses insulation and ventilation systems to maintain constant comfort while consuming very little energy.

I loved learning about the Black Forest lumber waste used as insulation and the six extra inches of high R-value material that now wrap the home. The Lunos ductless ventilation keeps fresh air circulating quietly and continuously, and the natural American clay wall finishes make the air feel alive and clean.

Inside, the beauty is subtle but striking. The Venetian plaster walls, colored in soft sage green and pale blue mineral pigments, give the rooms a tranquil, timeless quality. The polished concrete floors, high wooden ceilings, and original cedar-lined closets all add warmth and authenticity. It's not a flashy house, it's a soulful one.

A Garden that Fed Our Lives

The heart of our home was always the kitchen. My husband was an extraordinary cook who made fresh

pizza and pasta every week, and his homemade ice cream was legendary, especially when infused with lemon verbena and mint from our garden.

We had become plant-based eaters several years earlier, so being able to walk into the garden each day and pick ingredients for dinner was a gift. Our raised beds overflowed with zucchini, tomatoes, Swiss chard, broccoli, cauliflower, and so much more. We also have over sixty fruit trees, including apricot, Asian pear, fig, pomegranate, loquat, cherry, and even macadamia nuts. The property is a Certified Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation, and we've always seen that as part of its charm. Instead of pouring water into a manicured lawn, we chose to nurture life, plants, pollinators, and people alike.

CONTINUED ►

What We Changed

When we first toured the house, we each had our own reactions. I walked in and instantly felt like I had stepped back into summer camp in Upstate New York, one of my happiest childhood memories. My husband, meanwhile, was practically giddy about the property's potential. It was already being farmed, but he took it to the next level, designing and building four raised garden beds complete with critter-proofing from the bottom up and installing an irrigation system throughout the property. Hand-watering sixty trees every day wasn't exactly sustainable.

The combined living room and sunroom became our great room, a place for everything from TV nights to workout sessions to simply sitting and listening to the rain on the skylights. It was the coziest spot in the house, and we loved it.

We had plans to eventually convert the original garage into a guest house or office and to build a new three-car garage on the Eastfield side. But honestly, we were so content with the home as it was that we didn't feel rushed.

Life on Chuckwagon

Living here during COVID was a blessing. We explored the nearby hiking trails and our own property daily, finding peace in small discoveries, a new bloom, a visiting bird, or a hidden cherry tree we hadn't noticed before. From one corner of the property, I can see the ocean; from another, the harbor. It's a home full of perspectives, both literal and emotional.



Not long ago I checked on our enormous macadamia nut tree and noticed the apricot and Asian pear trees were producing again. I smiled thinking about how much he would have loved that.

This home is unlike any other I've ever seen, unique, creative, and alive. It's not a cookie-cutter house, and that's exactly why we loved it. It's a reflection of who we were together, grounded, curious, and grateful. Living here has been a journey of connection to the land, to our community, and to each other.

Editor's note: This beautiful home is currently listed for sale. For more information or to view it, please contact one of the REALTORS® who help sponsor this publication. (see page 6)

Do you have a beautiful home? Email rollinghills@strollmag.com to learn how your house could be the next featured Home of the Month!