

A Love Letter to Berkeley: Villa Ritiro by Studio Bergtraun Opens to the Public for 2025 East Bay Home Tours

Experience Villa Ritiro—Studio Bergtraun's tribute to Berkeley living—on this year's architect-led East Bay Home Tours.

BERKELEY, CA, UNITED STATES, April 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nestled on a narrow lot in the heart of Berkeley, Villa Ritiro is a home that tells a thousand stories—many of them belonging to the architect couple who designed it for themselves. For one day only, this deeply personal residence on Oregon Street in Berkeley will be open to the public as part of the [2025 East Bay Home Tours](#), presented by [American Institute for Architects East Bay Chapter](#).



Villa Ritiro from back garden

Designed and built from the ground up by longtime Berkeley residents Alex and Michelle

“

We wanted to create a place where we could recharge and continue our creative work—a space that reflects the people, materials, and memories that shaped our lives.”

*Alex Bergtraun,
Owner/Architect*

Bergtraun, Villa Ritiro is a quiet retreat in the city—thoughtfully crafted to support aging in place, sustainability, and a deep connection to community and art. The layout makes the most of the narrow Berkeley lot, with natural light flowing into every corner and seamless transitions between indoor and outdoor living. An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) sits in harmony with the main home, expanding functionality while maintaining privacy and balance.

“The name Villa Ritiro means ‘retreat home’ in Italian,” says Alex Bergtraun, principal of [Studio Bergtraun](#) and

homeowner. “We wanted to create a place where we could recharge and continue our creative work—a space that reflects the people, materials, and memories that shaped our lives.” But the real magic of Villa Ritiro is in the details. Every room offers a glimpse into the lives of its creators: original paintings and sculptures from friends and family, carefully repurposed materials from past architectural projects, and custom finishes full of meaning. There’s even a working artist’s studio—a bright, open space for creativity and reflection.



Villa Ritiro Dining area and Art Wall

“We built this home to honor our past and make room for our future,” adds Bergtraun. “Opening it to the community through the AIA East Bay Home Tours feels like a natural extension of that story.”

Visitors to the home will discover not just architecture, but stories. Alex Bergtraun is known to share them freely—each object, finish, and furnishing comes with a tale of place, collaboration, or memory. Touring Villa Ritiro is like stepping into a living archive of a life spent in design, travel, and community.

“Villa Ritiro is exactly the kind of project we love to highlight—deeply personal, beautifully executed, and full of meaning,” says Michael Wilson, Executive Director of AIA East Bay. “It shows how architecture can enrich daily life and reflect the values of its makers.”

Don’t miss this rare chance to step inside one of Berkeley’s most inspiring new residences. The 2025 East Bay Home Tours will feature Villa Ritiro and five (5) other architecturally significant homes throughout the region.

□ Tickets and full details available at www.aiaeb.org/2025-home-tours

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