



a different kind of
**Dangerous
Summit**

Story
David Bolling
Photos
Steven Krause



Jon Reiter has climbed six of the seven summits, but his latest climb involved a friendly bank, a huge loan and a very high limb.

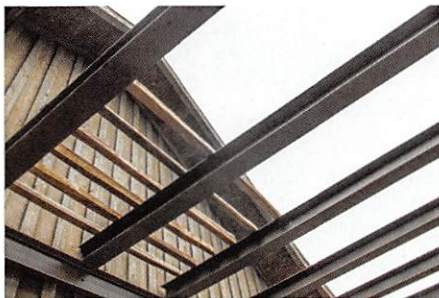
Jon Reiter is accustomed to considerable risk. He has completed six of the seven summits, which entails climbing to the top of the highest mountain on each of the seven continents. That means he has summited Denali in Alaska; Aconcagua in Argentina; Kilimanjaro in Tanzania; Elbrus in Russia; Carstensz Pyramid in Papua, Indonesia; and Vinson Massif in Antarctica.

He is missing only Everest, the top of the world, and it's not for lack of trying. On his first attempt in 2014, he was stopped by a large avalanche in the Khumbu Icefield that almost killed him and took the lives of 16 Sherpa guides.

On his second attempt a year later, Reiter had just arrived at Everest base camp when a massive earthquake rocked Nepal sending an enormous avalanche into and over base camp, killing 22 people.

This year Reiter didn't go to Everest, but he did venture out on the edge of an economic cliff so far off the ground that the slightest tremor in financial markets, a hiccup in China, a sneeze in London could, like the Butterfly Effect, ripple through the economic universe and knock him from his precarious perch.

Jon Reiter's day job is building custom



AN INFINITY POOL overlooks a view to forever, as Jon and right-hand man Francisco Zavaleta, relax after a long day of building.



homes. Very expensive, very beautiful, exceptionally well-built custom homes. He and his wife, Susan, design them, with the appropriate architectural support, and they typically source all the materials from varied and esoteric locales around the world.

Usually he has buyers to take the houses, and the debt load, off his back as soon as he finishes one.

But two years ago, Jon and Susan decided to build their dream home, except that it wouldn't be for them. They would, Jon explains, explore the question of, "What would I build if I could build anything I wanted. If I had done a software startup, and done really well, and could have any house in the Valley, what house would I want?"

That fantasy took root when they found a 16-acre parcel at the end of a rural road, in the hills at the edge of Sonoma, with a three-ridge, two-county view and 360 degrees of solitude.

The first time Jon tried to buy the land, the price was too steep. But he stayed in touch with the owners who, it turned out, had their own private



A WATER TROUGH from the South of France will hold flowers or vegetables and the pool house (at left) will have a full out door kitchen and more than enough room to [arty].

vision of what should happen on the land, what kind of house should be there and where it should be put. Jon's vision matched their vision like a well-calloused hand in a leather glove. In time, they came to an agreement, and that agreement propelled Jon to the Exchange Bank, where he had been doing business long enough to have both credibility and credit. He explained what he wanted to do. "My banker said, 'You're either the smartest guy I know, or the dumbest guy I know.' I said, 'Well, we'll know in a couple of years.'"

What Jon wanted to do was build a spec house meaning, in the parlance of the trade, he was speculating that he could build a house someone else would buy before the burden of the bank debt needed to build it crushed him.

In itself, that's common practice. But Jon Reiter wanted to build an eight-figure spec house. Eight figures has a lot of zeroes, and it presumes a sale price in excess of \$10,000,000. The ballpark Jon was trying to hit a home run out of was, in fact, \$12,000,000. But that was just speculation. First he had to build it. And to his knowledge, no one in the Valley had ever built a spec home that far over the financial abyss.

Jon and Susan are a true partnership,

BELOW THE HOUSE, at the edge of the vineyard, is a bonus barn complete with a relic GMC truck. The windmill wheel in the rafters of the main house (below middle) is from a Texas ranch, now converted to a ceiling fan.





collaborating on shape and style. He says it goes something like this: “Susan has a general idea. I go out and get materials. She says ‘No, no, no, I don’t like it,’ or ‘How about this?’ We usually end up agreeing when she says, ‘I agree.’”

The owners of the property—Philip Paine and Jim Dunford—had independently come to the conclusion that the right place for a home on the hilly, rolling property was on the top of a high ridge overseeing a sloping hillside on which they had already cleared space for a vineyard. Jon picked the same spot,

after examining the contour and geology of the granite formation.

Jon and his right-hand man, Francisco Zavaleta, surveyed the property and set to work. Zavaleta has been with the Reiters for almost a decade, starting as an unskilled laborer, and working up each rung of the construction ladder as he methodically, meticulously mastered English and one building skill after another. Jon considers him invaluable. “You go through 100 guys to find a Francisco. His thought process is something you can’t teach. One of the hardest parts

of a project is the foundation... where do I start. We put him on the foundation, I said, ‘Have at it,’ and he started drilling holes in the rock, driving posts. He’s always saying, ‘Let me do this. I got this.’ Basically, two of us did most of the work. Two of us on a 12 million dollar house.”

A year and a half before the foundation went in and the walls went up, Reiter ordered massive trusses of Douglas fir from Washington state to frame the two-story ceiling in the great room of the house. They were too big to be



kiln dried, so they dried naturally for 18 months.

Then they had to be cut and hoisted into place, each weighing more than 400 pounds. “I said, here’s the picture of what we want. What do we do? Francisco used car jacks and rolled them on pipes to move them. He has common sense you only get from experience.” They did the rest with a crane.

The trusses reflect the mass of the home, which sits imbedded in the ridge of solid rock. Materials for the floors and walls and ceilings came from all over, including lots of salvaged materials.

“We look at every junkyard there is. I grew up on Sanford and Son,” says Jon.

There’s a water trough from the south of France, custom light fixtures pieced together from industrial warehouses. Jon found flooring wood from 100-year-old French train cars, also in the south of France outside Avignon. Black lines in the wood are soot from a coal locomotive.

In the immense ceiling, nestled in among all those trusses, is an old and rusted windmill wheel from a ranch in Texas converted into a ceiling fan by a company in Dallas.

A downstairs bedroom has a corrugated steel ceiling from an old chicken coop on Lawndale Road in Kenwood.

The open kitchen boasts a \$40,000,



A House To Fit the Place

Phillip Paine and Jim Dunford stand at the bottom of the long slope leading up to the ridge where Jon Reiter has built a dream house.

“I lived here many years, since the early 1970s,” says Paine, with affection but no regret. “I always thought I’d build on the lot, but at first it looked too hard to build on top.”

He says, when the decision to sell finally hardened, prospective buyers looked at the land and “everyone wanted to build down there, at the bottom.” Paine, who is Australian, has what he calls “a small agricultural business” raising various game birds for high-end restaurants just outside Sonoma. He is particularly sensitive to what happens on the land he knows so well.

So when Reiter showed up with an idea for the top of the property, the pieces seemed to drop in place.

“Jon’s design fell into what I’d always dreamed about. It utilizes the site so well,” says Paine. And he thinks it would please Charles Lindström too, who originally owned the land. Lindström and his wife were co-curators of the De Young Museum in San Francisco until 1966. When they left they turned their house on an adjacent piece of property into an artist’s salon, rich with culture and cultured people, and that spirit persists in Paine’s feeling for the land, which he eventually inherited. “What Jon has done here is capture the feel of the place. I know Charles would be comfortable with what Jon has done. He’s done something that really fits the place.”

A GLASS ATRIUM (above left) connects the main house with the master suite, which appears to be floating on air.

custom-built Lacanche range from France, two steps from a floor-to-ceiling humidified wine closet to store bottles closer to the dinner table than the walk-in wine cellar downstairs.

The main house has three downstairs bedrooms, five bathrooms, and a master wing that appears to be cantilevered off the great room through a glass-enclosed atrium. "We don't want to go over the top," says Jon, "but I've just always wanted to do a covered walkway. It's like an accordion, from the public space to the private space, you pass through the glass atrium into the private suite, like floating in space."

There's a giant stone mill wheel from Mexico next to the pool house, which fronts an infinity pool that sits on the edge of empty space, the property falling down hill in front and the view stretching across three ranges of hills to the southwest.

The patio surrounding the house is cantera, a light and soft volcanic rock from Mexico that can be shaped by hand and looks like it has been sitting

around this house for at least a hundred years.

Gnarled olive trees stand around the house and in a grove down the driveway, past the garage which is built into the back side of the ridge with a downstairs guest apartment and a unique outside wall Jon likes to demonstrate with gleeful, almost adolescent delight. Set into the wall, at the foot of space where two beds will be positioned, are twin garage doors.

"Cool, huh?" says Jon. "You're lying in bed in the morning sun. You pick up the remote and roll up the wall."

Maurice Tegelaar, the Pacific Union real estate broker who, with associate Matt Sevenau, has represented the property, says Reiter's creation represents a new threshold in the Sonoma market, representing a level of interest and desirability that may even be eclipsing the cache of Napa.

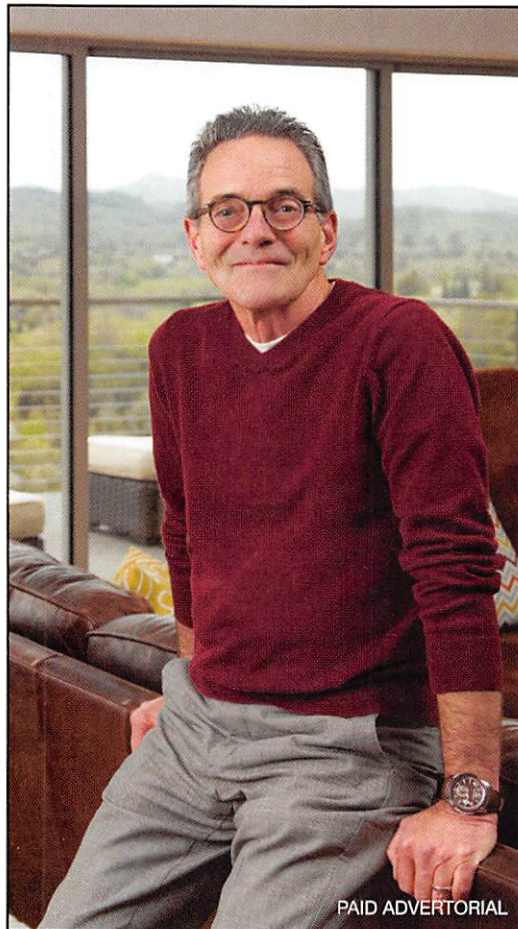
"I think it says something significant about Sonoma," Tegelaar says. "It speaks to the desirability of living here, it speaks to how special this community

is, and how much people appreciate what we have here."

Sevenau echoes Tegelaar, adding that the quality and originality of Reiter's work further demonstrates a unique Sonoma quality. "This is a work of art," he says. "It's truly a masterpiece."

That's not a solo sentiment. At the end of October, the first interested buyer walked through the door, looked around and told Reiter, "Don't change anything. I'll take it."

The price? Reiter won't exactly say, but he allows that, "We put it on the market for \$12 million, everyone is happy and there are no contingencies."



MEET MARK L. TEVEBAUGH of Tevebaugh & Associates

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"Our representatives are our most valuable resource, and we are excited to reward their dedication to their clients with this program," said Norm Grant, CEO of NEXT Financial Holdings, Inc. "The advisors who qualify for the program are a representation of what it means to provide quality service."

Tevebaugh & Associates reached a diverse array of clients due to their commitment to help their customers make sound financial decisions based on their specific needs.

"Tevebaugh has been an influential representative due to his hard work throughout the year and first-Class customer service," said Barry Knight, President of NEXT

Mark has been in the financial industry for 30 years and an advisor with NEXT for 2. Since joining the company in 2014, Tevebaugh has been a driving force in maintaining the independent broker-dealer's excellence.

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Tevebaugh & Associates 255 Richards Blvd. Sonoma, CA. Ph: 707-934-8521
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