

Letter of Recommendation for Builders of Marin

In the summer of 2008, we bought a new house that was almost perfect for us. With a house to sell, a four year old, a two year old, a baby on the way (very soon), and in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, we somehow made the crazy decision (probably the hormones) to embark on a huge remodel project. Our time was precious and our money was tight. We did a great deal of research, interviewed carefully, and selected the person we felt would do the best job for us – David Mulligan with Builders of Marin. Lucky for us, David turned out to be exactly the professional, focused, money-conscious, fair, and friendly contractor we were hoping to find.

Every contractor we interviewed gave us a list of recommendations with contact information for previous clients (which was very helpful). We found that in order to fairly assess whether the recommendation was a good one, we needed to have a sense of the scope, duration and cost of that client's project. As such, here is a summary of ours: (1) We added a new bedroom and bathroom where none existed before (approximately 250 SF); (2) Converted the third bay of the garage into an office (approximately 150 SF); (3) Gutted the existing kitchen and then moved walls around to create a bigger kitchen (with detail finishes); (4) Reconfigured an office and converted it into a bedroom; (5) Moved and created a new powder room; and (6) Added various finishing touches such as hardware, lighting, flooring, sliding glass doors, etc. throughout the house. The project took approximately four months from start to finish and cost approximately \$350,000.

We chose to work with David because we needed someone who would work with us. Despite our carefully drafted architectural plans, we knew (because everyone told us) that we would have many changes on site. We did. David was always very patient with and incredibly helpful to us as we explored different options along the way. He did a great job of helping us visualize these options as well by taking the time to walk us through them and even, in some instances, create some mock frame-ups (for example, where to put a door or closet). We also needed a contractor with great flexibility in terms of hiring subs and purchasing materials because we had to control these costs. For these reasons, David's time and materials bid (which at first greatly concerned us because we were on a fixed budget) ultimately worked best for us. As it turned out, David's bid was dead-on with respect to time (four months almost to the day) and cost. Although David had fantastic sub-contractor suggestions for every trade, he was supportive of our insistence upon interviewing multiple people to get the best price and product and he was very patient, even when our methods slowed down progress. Most important, we wanted a contractor that was focused, responsive and detail-oriented. We are incredibly detailed people and needed someone who would execute all of our work with a goal close to perfection. We met our match in David. His craftsmanship was impeccable and he delivers a product that he stands behind.

Like any construction job, ours ran into a fair number of obstacles along the way. For example, a couple of the kitchen cabinets we had ordered ourselves were slightly off-square and would not fit into the space designated for them. Also, a tile contractor that we had hired ourselves (we hired him against David's advice because he was significantly less expensive than others we had interviewed) took off on a ski vacation without telling us and set us off schedule by a couple weeks. We also made a last minute

decision to replace all of the flooring on the first floor with wood (rather than just one room of flooring). We are sure David was frustrated by our delays but rather than complain or threaten to charge more (as most contractors would have done), David simply adjusted his project schedule and worked on other things while we waited. Our biggest obstacle occurred when the store from which we had purchased most of our appliances (and waited months for them to come in) went bankrupt and failed to notify anyone. Once again, David was incredibly patient and greatly assisted us in securing new appliances quickly and cost-effectively. Needless to say, we faced many hurdles during our project. At the end of the day, however, we can honestly say that David was not the cause of any of them. He was always the solution.

In addition to addressing problems when they arose, David proactively addressed potential problems. For example, when construction could potentially disrupt the neighborhood, David would visit with the neighbors to keep them abreast of the situation and would do his best to accommodate any requests for noise or material locations. In fact, David got to know our neighbors very well and even provided some introductions as we had not yet moved into the neighborhood. Additionally, David contacted us every single day to keep us abreast of everything going on with our project. Although David encouraged us to check in on him on site every day, we could not always make that happen. We could, however, always rely on David to email us with real-time questions/decisions and would even send us photos via email to help make real-time decisions. David took the time at night (after his kids and ours were in bed) to talk with us about choices, keep us focused on time-line, update us on the project, and just to check in and see how we were doing.

David cares. He is always available and always looked out for our best interests. We believe he did provide the best quality product for the best price, but what he threw in for free is a great friendship. We will hire Builders of Marin without any hesitation when we do the second phase of our home renovation and we strongly recommend David Mulligan as the best contractor in Marin.

Erin and Judd Sher