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CALIFORNIA'S FIRST PERMITTED RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEM FOR RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR USE



San Francisco, CA - July, 2005. Two San Francisco firms delivered to their client his dream of using rainwater for his new home. 450 Architects and Sherwood Design Engineers collaborated on an innovative project inspired by the historically proven technique of collecting rainwater. With rigorous design and extensive interaction with city and municipal officials, the team provided the City of Sausalito with the necessary information to obtain the approval. Although many permitted rainwater harvesting systems exist around the country for other uses, this was a first in California for residential interior use.

The owner of the private residence grew up in Germany where the practice is common. When he began to pursue the idea, he was surprised by the lack of approved systems in the Bay Area. Early in his discussion with 450 Architects - an environmentally conscious architecture firm - the goal of collecting rainwater and minimizing the home's dependence on the municipal water supply was established. With that desire in mind, 450 Architects approached Sherwood Design Engineers - a sustainability minded civil and environmental engineering firm - to help with implementing the client's dream.

The overview of the design is simple: a copper roof collects the rainwater and feeds it into an underground cistern. From the cistern, the water is pumped, filtered and delivered to the clothes washer and landscape irrigation system. At various points, steps are taken to protect water quality to meet environmental and health standards and regulations. In the process of executing the client's dream, the team has paved the way to allow for more California property owners to adopt an important environmentally friendly practice.

