

## 7 Camino Perdido – history and improvements

### History of the house

The house was originally built by a contractor named Tommy Fresquez in the mid to late nineties. We were told he intended to build an “old fashioned” adobe house, with a great deal of style, as he had a deserved reputation as a wood worker. But, he wasn’t able to finish the house and then made some kind of lease / purchase arrangement with the first occupants of the property. They did no work to finish the house, and all physical and circumstantial evidence suggests that they didn’t care for it.

Fresquez had a mortgage on the house, and apparently had an increasingly fraught relationship with the people who he had sold it to. At some point in 2003, he stopped paying the mortgage and the then residents were either unwilling or unable to assume that mortgage themselves.

By that point, the house had no water, the roof was leaking badly, the mud plaster in the living room was starting to collapse, the underfloor heating was nonfunctional and there were no other heating systems present, the plumbing systems were damaged due to frozen pipes in the winter, there were missing light fixtures in all rooms, etc.

When we arrived, the house had been abused and was in need of healing.

### What we have done:

#### House

- Rain catchment water system with 12,000 gallons of storage capacity
- New roof, including significant drain redesign; also painted with a new coat of elastomeric every 10 years. \*(We last did this about five years ago and is currently in good shape.)
- New living room mud plaster, as the original was slumping onto the floor due to a bad roof leak
- New relief sculpture in the living room wall
- New doors for all closets, as there were no doors on any of them
- New doors for hallway, for mechanical room, pantry, laundry room – again, there were none
- New Jotul stoves: 3 propane ones downstairs,
- New wood stove: upstairs (plus tile surround for it)
- New in-floor heating in the living room

- New brick floor in the living room
- Addition of deck railings and metal bird sculptures to complete the deck; the (wooden) railings on the deck were rotten and unsafe
- Refinished earth flooring in three bedrooms, and dining room
- Refinished and completed wood flooring in upstairs office / library
- Significant new blown insulation in roof space (~70 bales of insulation)
- Foam insulation on all exterior walls, as previously there was no wall insulation at all
- Completely new stucco for the entire house, consistently maintained as necessary
- Enhanced insulation panels in all skylights
- Replaced cracked double glazed window panes, where these existed
- Breathable glazed clay paint throughout house
- Redecking of upper deck (old deck material cut up and used as pathway on the land)
- Had new custom flue handles made for 4 fireplaces
- Installed new toilets in all three bathrooms
- Installed new dishwasher in kitchen
- Addition of Boos block as a kitchen island
- Replaced kitchen sink with copper sink and faucets
- Installed new front loading washing machine / dryer in laundry closet, and replaced venting for dryer (old vent was in poor condition)
- All house lighting replaced / upgraded
- Built shelving in pantry, upstairs for books, and in bedroom that was used as office
- Addition of tile baseboard in orange bathroom, as that had been missed during original construction
- Outdoor lighting installed (previously just bare wires in ext. junction boxes)
- Addition of mini fridge upstairs and shelving in the little kitchen/bar area
- Addition of shelving in alcove upstairs and curtain to make storage
- New light plates, toilet holders, etc. - just about anything and everything you can think of that would need to be added in a new house
- Installation of reverse osmosis units in all three bathrooms and in kitchen
- Replaced two hot water tank heaters with on demand propane water heaters
- Replacement of all locks on doors with high security locks.

- Installation of security monitoring system, and cameras.
- Installed wireless Internet connectivity, and expanded connectivity to all rooms (tricky in an adobe house, as adobe is an excellent RF signal suppressor).
- Expanded septic system for house, that's certified for four bedrooms (vs. the three it was certified for previously)
- Increased height of most chimneys in the house to improve draw
- Installed copper spark arrestor assemblies on all chimneys for fire safety
- Installed direct firebox ventilation in two fireplaces (in dining room and small bedroom) to minimize cross drawing from other fireplaces; also built two wooden doors for those two fireplaces, as those two dampers will not fully close
- Installed additional copper baffling on Siamese chimney to reduce cross
- Addition of four radon mitigation fans, and housing of said fans
- On several windows, we added screens and window locks
- Smoke alarms were added throughout the house
- A screen door was added to the main courtyard double door

#### Studio

- Converted dilapidated horse stable into storage room, and built wooden doors for it
- Expanded that into a functional studio building, by building on a large room, and a half bathroom
- Dug new septic system for the studio
- Added new rainwater catchment system for studio, with 3,400 gallons of water storage
- New wood stove in studio
- As part of the new water system, we had well house built
- Extended phone wires from house to studio; also extended Internet connectivity from house to studio
- Addition of radon mitigation fan, and enclosure for it

#### Courtyard, vegetable garden and yard generally

- Addition of small coyote fence panels as screening for exterior utility boxes
- Built raised garden bed boxes in courtyard

- Repaired and improved retaining walls in courtyard; installed much brick and stone work as previously most of the courtyard was weed covered bare dirt
- Built a portal in the courtyard; previously there was no protection in the space from sun or rain
- Installed a French drain in courtyard to improve drainage
- Improved square garden soil (by addition of old horse manure), and built coyote fence to keep out rabbits
- Installed multi-zone Irrigation system and controller
- Put rock all around perimeter of main house for fire safety
- Raised the canopy of all trees within a large radius of the house, and removed trees which were too close to the house, or each other - all to improve fire safety
- Built four Feather Gates for the driveway
- Built and installed wind bell in garden, by the arroyo
- Removed old horse corral which was put in by previous owner, that violated covenants
- Conversion of two structures (dog pen and chicken coop) behind house into sheds
- Built firewood storage structure next to studio
- Installed 1,000 gallon underground propane tank it was more aesthetic than an above ground tank
- Fixed flagstone terracing and steps at the front of the house, and between the driveway and the road
- Added gravel to the driveway, as there was barely any gravel present originally