



Specializing in open plan design, the firm starts with the kitchen/great room.

# Cynthia Bennett & Associates, beautifying the Pasadena area one house at a time

By Alison Stanton  
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For more than 40 years, Cynthia Bennett & Associates has been a leading residential design firm in the San Gabriel Valley. The South Pasadena-based firm was founded in 1981 by Cynthia Bennett, one of the first female general contractors in the industry. In 2020, her daughter Carolien Fehmers, also a general contractor, took over the firm as the CEO.

“My mother started CBA when I was about 15, so I’ve been around design and construction for most of my life,” Fehmers said.

“I’ve found that it’s very helpful to also have a knowledge of decorating when doing construction. A lot of contractors don’t have that expertise, but if you’re able to visualize the final look you want while space planning earlier on in the design process, you’ll achieve a much better end result.”

Established as a kitchen and bathroom design firm, the company has since evolved into different areas of residential design, such as additions. The firm has rebuilt and remodeled more than 900 homes.

The firm specializes in open plan design, starting with the kitchen/great room, which offers easy access to the outdoors and is the ideal representation of laidback California living.

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Carolien Fehmers took over her mother’s firm, Cynthia Bennett & Associates, in 2020.



After



The firm combines the modern with the old, while still keeping a home's architectural elements in complete alignment with the existing house.



Before

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"By opening walls between rooms, we instantly transform the multiple home spaces into one large kitchen/great room," Fehmers said.

Cynthia Bennett & Associates also emphasizes the architectural integrity of the homes it remodels. One of its biggest talents is the ability to combine the modern with the old, while still keeping a home's architectural elements in complete alignment with the existing house.

Both Bennett's and Fehmers' work have been featured in multiple Pasadena Showcase House projects, as well as several Pasadena ASID Home Tours.

Bennett's own home was built and designed by her firm in 2002 and has been highlighted in numerous publications, home and garden tours.

Fehmers said clients love working with Cynthia Bennett & Associates because of the team's expertise, precise attention to detail, and easygoing style.

To keep clients on track and prevent them from going over their budget, Cynthia Bennett & Associates doesn't start construction until every little detail, including the hardware and paint colors, have been specified and included in the plans so that everything is executed seamlessly.

It can also accommodate eco-friendly, energy-efficient and sustainable green projects.

Fehmers enjoys the fact that Cynthia Bennett & Associates can change lives for the better.

"Decorating and remodeling offer immediate results, and right away people's lives improve," she said, adding that one of their recent projects took an awkward kitchen/family room for a family with four kids to an amazing space to be enjoyed by all.

"It's very gratifying to tear something down, then make something more beautiful and functional that someone is going to live with and share with others. That's what gives me the thrill."

Cynthia Bennett & Associates  
[www.cynthiabennett.com](http://www.cynthiabennett.com)

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