



Ken Asano, above, owns a beautiful home on a full acre in Orange County's Nellie Gail Ranch community a few miles from my Lake Forest home. In February of 2009, Ken and Harue invited some friends for dinner. Yoshi and I arrived at dusk, later than we had planned but just in time for me to snap a photo of the Asano Jacuzzi and pool. My photo at upper right, taken in the fading light, only hints at the backyard's secluded spaciousness. The white fence beyond the gazebo does *not* mark the back end of the property. Rather, it fences off a sizable vegetable garden and fruit

Friends at Dinner

By JACKSON SELLERS

orchard. Dinner guests included Yasuhiro and Haruko Nakamura of Dove Canyon. At bottom left, my camera caught Haruko in a moment of hilarity, and then, at bottom right, in a sober moment as she accepted a glass of bubbly from hostess Harue.

At one point, I excused myself to go to the restroom, and discovered that the Asanos's "washlet" toilet is smarter than either of mine. When I opened the bathroom door, the toilet greeted me by raising its lid. I had to lift the seat myself. "Hey, I'm a man who wants to pee, dumbass," I grumbled, but I was just kidding. I was impressed. I searched in vain for a flush lever on the toilet itself, and finally spotted a flush button on its wall-mounted remote control. Upon returning to the dinner table, I learned that the toilet would have flushed itself if I had just walked away. Yes, it was smart. As usual





Photo by Ken Asano

nowadays, I was the oldest at the dinner table, working on age 78 this year. Thus, I was surprised when I saw Ken's photo of me with my arm draped over Yoshi's shoulders. I looked better than I normally do. The plaid shirt was inherited from good buddy Stewart Moore, whose unfair death at age 55 last spring was, for me, the heartbreaking tragedy of the 21st century. Completing the foursome of dinner couples were Mitsuhiro and Junko Yamamoto of Coto de Caza, shown at right. They are longtime friends, as was everybody at the dinner. Junko has an unusual relationship with our youthful selves. She, like Yoshi, is a graduate of Tokyo's Aoyama University, and she enthusiastically sent her daughter to Indiana University, renown for its music school. I graduated from Indiana University a hundred years ago. Well, 55 years ago anyway.

