

california

HOME+DESIGN

BREAK REDEFINING THE TRADITIONAL STYLE RULES

One of San Francisco's painted ladies gets an extreme makeover, p. 96.

CARMEL
A MODERN-DAY
WESTERN

SAN FRANCISCO
THE ULTIMATE
SHOWCASE HOUSE

WEST HOLLYWOOD
PLOTING THE
BIG REVEAL



tudor ROSE

A stately home in Presidio Heights gets the Jay Jeffers treatment: traditional interiors with an insouciant twist.

BY JULIE CARLSON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
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In the foyer, Jeffers had the floor finished in a Danish danmark to complement the oak paneling walls. The pattern was drawn from the custom stair runner.



The living room hosts a lively gathering. Two high-back wing chairs sporting an elaborate turquoise fabric single with a pair of 1940s French armchairs covered in embroidered vinyl.



ABOVE: In the study, a handpainted ceiling adds dimension to the custom woodwork. ABOVE RIGHT: The kitchen's playful combination of yellow and pink stays sophisticated with classic prints.



The English Tudor-style house located on a cul-de-sac bordering the Presidio looks as if it might have traveled back in time. With its formidable brick facade featuring a trio of gables and its walled-in, manicured garden complete with clipped shrubbery, the property recalls an old-world country estate. Built in 1914 by architect Houghton Sawyer, the house served at various times as the residence of the consular general of Belgium and, briefly, as the abode of famed attorney Melvin Bell. In 2005, it was the setting for the San Francisco Decorator Showcase; shortly after, it was purchased by a young couple with three children, and it began a new chapter as a family home.

The couple engaged Carey & Co.—the firm that undertook the restoration of San Francisco's City Hall after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake—to address the house's structural issues, which included crumbling terracotta ornamentation and bricks in need of repair. The restoration team managed to track down the terracotta foundry, and fortunately the company still had the home's original drawings.

The exterior exudes gravitas, but the interiors tell a different story. After a year-and-a-half-long

whirlwind romance with San Francisco interior designer Jay Jeffers of Jeffers Design Group, the house now features an exuberant mix of color, pattern, texture and form. "I love creating the unexpected in expected spaces," Jeffers says.

Indeed, Jeffers doesn't just design interiors—he breathes life and energy into rooms, altering the very DNA of a living space. In the past decade, with his style philosophy of "sophisticated fun and livable luxury," he has become the designer of choice for clients looking to go beyond beige and inject some drama into their domestic lives.

"Both the husband and wife have big personalities," Jeffers says. "They love to entertain; they didn't want any part of the house to feel too formal or off-limits, and they wanted their children to be able to go anywhere."

But their design sensibilities were at odds. Their mandate for Jeffers: reconcile the husband's affinity for modern designs with the wife's love of antiques. Marshaling his team of visionaries, led by senior designer Kelly Hohla, Jeffers tackled the 10,000 square feet of raw space at high speed. The first challenge was how to lighten the mood in the formal, oak-paneled entry hall, along with the living room and dining room, both of which open to the foyer.



To brighten the living room, Jeffers upholstered the mahogany-paneled walls in periwinkle grasscloth. He commissioned a bold carved-wood mantel to maintain the room's original formality.



*"I love mixing materials and patterns.
It makes a room feel alive."*



LEFT: In the former basement-level ballroom, Jeffers created a media room with a madcap mix of patterns. The painting on the wall is by Ed Ruscha. **ABOVE:** The illuminated wine cellar occupies the place where an orchestra used to play during formal dance parties.

Jeffers enlisted decorative painter Willem Backé to stain a damask pattern on the lower floor, modeled after the design on the custom stair runner but larger in scale. The undulating lines soften the effect of the geometric, men's club-style paneling,

while an aqua porcelain umbrella stand shaped like a half-furled umbrella adds a touch of whimsy. Suddenly the reception space seems less serious, and more lighthearted and lyrical.

With its mahogany-paneled walls and walnut floors, the 22-by-50-foot living room presented a similarly somber mood. To lighten the space while preserving its essential character, Jeffers covered the paneling with persimmon-colored grasscloth from Schumacher and added a pair of curvaceous vintage chairs upholstered in a fanciful aqua, persimmon and beesen fabric. The print provided an aesthetic jumping-off point for the palette of the room (and, indeed, for the whole house). Jeffers created intimate seating areas by installing built-in window seats and a nine-foot round tufted ottoman at one end of the room. The windows are swathed in billowing embroidered silk drapes, and a pair of

A delicate vitreous piece
by K&L Smith from the John
Berggrun Gallery adds
a note of modernity
over the mantel.





French 1940s chairs covered in embroidered vinyl adds to the mix of textures. Finally, Jeffers commissioned a new, larger-scale carved walnut mantel from C. Mariani to anchor the room.

Across the hall in the dining room, Jeffers called on Baeké to cover the walls in Venetian plaster accented with a metallic copper stencil. A 1930s Murano glass chandelier hovers over the table, adding to the shimmer; in the evening, the room is suffused with a golden glow. "When I sit back after dinner and look around me, I feel like I'm living in a piece of art," the husband says.

Jeffers revisited the aqua-and-persimmon motif in the family room and kitchen, where the countertops are Volvic lava stone from France glazed in an oceanic shade. The fabrics and textures include

embossed shagreen upholstery on the bar stools, gold damask fabric for the window coverings and a geometric-patterned rug from De Sousa Hughes. "I love mixing materials and patterns," Jeffers says. "It makes a room feel alive."

Jeffers got a chance to let loose in the media room, which was formerly a bathroom, as well as in the husband's study. "I wanted to go 100 percent modern in those rooms," the husband says. "Jay is such a talented designer. I just said, 'Fun with it.'"

In the media room, Jeffers sourced a vintage light fixture encrusted with tiny mirrors to create a mod disco ball. He upholstered the walls in hand-painted indoor/outdoor fabric and covered a suite of club chairs with bold floral fabric by Osborne & Little. He also pulled together all the details in order

In the daughter's room, Jeffers eschewed an all-pink color scheme in favor of a more sophisticated palette inspired by a Branchswig & Ellis wallpaper.

"The wife wanted the space to be a restful, calming oasis. It's dressy but easy."



to produce a certain ambiance in the husband's study. "I had a vision of creating a swanky men's smoking den, with a collected, eclectic feel—the kind of room where guys go after dinner to smoke cigars and drink Scotch," Jeffers says. The floor is covered in black alligator-embossed tiles, while the contents of a cabinet of curiosities—lacquered ostrich eggs, antique seltzer bottles, old trophies—are displayed on persimmon-painted glass shelves. The space is anchored by a pair of Smoke chairs from Dutch designer Martin Baas for Moooi (the frames are actually charred wood)—an edgy design move that plays on the theme of "smoking room." The husband's verdict? "I don't think I'm as cool as this room," he says.

In the couple's master suite, a more feminine atmosphere prevails. "The wife wanted the space to be a restful, calming oasis," Jeffers says. "It's dressy but easy." Luxurious fabrics, such as mohair velvet and silk on the custom headboard, are paired with glamorous alabaster lamps and a dramatic starburst mirror from Monument. Black-glazed the walls using three different shades of blue with cream borders, creating a "wonderful sense of depth," says Jeffers.

When the project began, the husband confesses, he was filled with trepidation. "This was our first big decorating project, and I had heard horror stories about the process. But Jay was so professional, so focused. After a week, we knew it was going to work out. Plus, he's just fun to work with." ■



A starburst mirror from Montclair and a custom headboard upholstered in mohair and silk add to the glamour of the master suite. **OPPOSITE** The suite's serene seating area has a painting by Stephen Blinnock over an 18th-century stone mantel.