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Open House

*Interior designer
Ann Lowengart transforms
a dated home with a choppy
layout into an airy,
light-filled space.»*

BY TATE GUNNERSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON

Previous page: A trio of polished nickel, caged lantern pendants from Circa Lighting illuminate the bright entry corridor, where new doors open to the pool and outdoor dining area. This page: The living room includes a bubble chandelier from Oly Studio, a sofa from Stoich Designs & Upholstered Furniture and an area rug from Stark Carpet.



Located steps from Mount Tamalpais in Kentfield’s scenic Kent Woodlands area, a 1960s-era house seemed like an ideal spot for a professional couple to raise their two young daughters. The house was on a large lot that overlooked a valley. It soon became clear, however, that the home’s choppy layout and lack of windows didn’t fit with the family’s lifestyle. “We wanted an open floor plan where we could all be in one room and be together more — the way people live today,” the husband says.

He spent hours poring over blueprints, but the solution evaded him. That wasn’t the case for interior designer Ann Lowengart, whose eponymous firm has offices in San Anselmo and Palm Beach, Florida. “Annie is

really thoughtful about spaces,” the husband says. “Her ideas blew us away.”

After the family decamped to a nearby rental property, the builders implemented Lowengart’s vision, gutting the first floor and eliminating several walls to create an open floor plan. To bring in more daylight, they relocated the powder room to a niche underneath the stairs, creating space for an entire wall of south-facing windows. New folding doors in the entry corridor likewise flood the space with natural light.

The builders also installed new hardwood flooring, as well as coffered ceilings, trim work and wainscoting painted in the same crisp white as the walls throughout the main level. The addition of black-framed windows “provides drama against the white walls,”

Lowengart says. After the construction crew departed, the designer and her team descended on the home, installing wallcoverings, window treatments, art and furnishings.

In the living room, a rug with a geometric pattern creates a graphic backdrop for a cozy seating area in front of the fireplace. Carpets with geometric themes likewise elevate the entry corridor and family room, which is furnished with a breakfast table and a sectional sofa covered in a sumptuous mohair. “The husband really loved those transitional motifs,” Lowengart says.

Indeed, accented by black moldings and a coordinating ceiling pendant, a wallcovering with a complementary geometric pattern creates a moment of excitement in the powder room. “Go big or go home,” Lowengart says.

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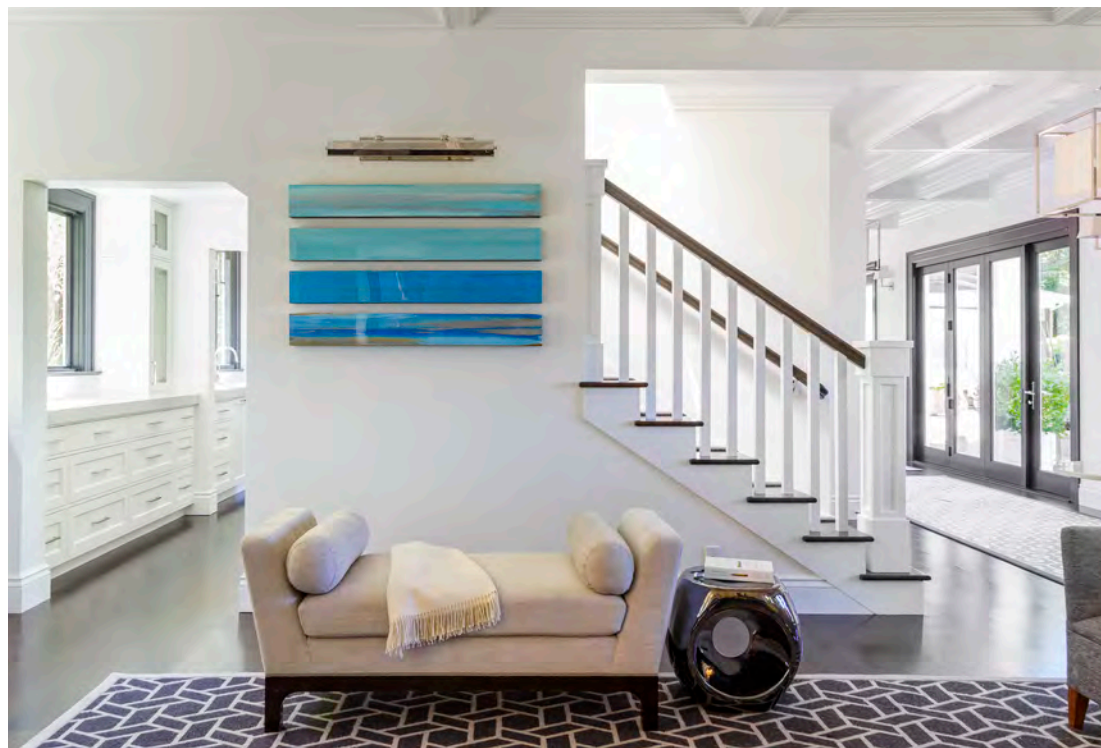
A decidedly more feminine wallcovering with a floral pattern likewise elevates the living room bar, which can be concealed behind two bifold doors when not in use.

Lighting also plays a key role. A glass bubble chandelier introduces a sense of whimsy in the living room. A modern, angular, brass fixture commands attention over the walnut table in the adjacent dining area. “We built the dining room around the chandelier,” she says, pointing out that it can be seen from the front door. “It’s imperative.”

The functional spaces are equally well-appointed. Classic white cabinetry, light countertops and a subway-tile backsplash define the spacious open kitchen, where the teenaged daughters often do their homework at the expansive island while dad prepares dinner. “It’s been wonderful,” he says, noting that he honed his culinary skills during the pandemic.

In contrast, the new mudroom is outfitted with charcoal cabinetry that includes a built-in bench and open shelving. As a result of all the extra storage, there’s far less clutter afoot, adding to the home’s overall sense of serenity.

After Lowengart and her team installed the furnishings, it was time for a big, TV-style reveal, with a party that included floral arrangements, food and music. “I was amazed by the result,” the husband says, adding that he’s already hired Lowengart to revamp the home’s exterior and the upstairs bedrooms. “Annie always has our best interests at heart.”



Clockwise from top left: Visible from the front door and the open living room, a chandelier by Jonathan Browning Studios makes a big statement in the dining room. The dining table has a metal base by Bella Ironworks and a walnut top by George Burkert. Underneath a pendant from Circa Lighting, a Parsons table from RH and leather chairs from Hunt Leather Co. create a spot for informal meals in the family room. Colored panels from Andrzej Michael Karwacki’s “Equanimity Series” add color and texture to the white walls in the formal living room. The day bed is from Kroll Furniture.

Tate Gunnerson is a freelance journalist who has written for numerous publications, including *Architectural Digest*. He is a passionate supporter of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

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