



In the living room, Young grounded the space with a Swedish mid-century rug by Märta Måås-Fjetterström. He selected a vintage Dutch Gerard van den Berg sofa and a classic Ray and Charles Eames rocking chair for seating.

a Balanced Life

DESIGNER MARTIN
YOUNG LIVES AND
WORKS IN HIS RUSSIAN
HILL COTTAGE

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MILLMAN



UNLIKE MOST OF US, San Francisco designer Martin Young did not have to adapt to WFH; his renovated 1907 Russian Hill cottage already included an office. The previous owner of the shingle-style house, historic preservationist Dorothy Orrick, suspected the property was one of the original refugee shacks for survivors of the 1906 earthquake and fire. In 1972, Orrick commissioned the renowned landscape

architect Thomas Church to design a rear garden around a 100-year-old redwood tree. Young's sublevel workspace looks out onto this serene setting.

The designer, a trained architect, oversaw the building's restoration after he and his partner purchased it a decade ago. Retaining the cottage's footprint, Young selected a classic white and ivory backdrop throughout the interiors to showcase original crown molding, baseboards, doors, hardware, and fireplace surround. In the open-plan living and dining room, he mixed classic 20th-century furniture with antiques.

ABOVE A massive sectional from B&B Italia mixes with a diminutive Eames LTR table. Artwork from Jan Schoonhoven, Janis Cornelis, and Christo and Jeanne-Claude flanks the bookcase.

OPPOSITE LEFT TO RIGHT Young engaged Dijean Poage Construction for the renovation of the cottage. The designer found the antique architectural book with drawings of stairs in Amsterdam. A glass vessel designed by Alvar Aalto holds Limelight Hydrangeas. The minimalist white kitchen peaks through the dining area; before the renovation, it had dark cabinetry and counters.





Young mixed a mid-century Eugenio Gerli and Mario Cristiani table with an antique crystal chandelier that he converted from electrified to candles for the dining area. The photograph is by contemporary artist Zhang Xianyong.



Dutch lithographs enliven the utilitarian area of the multi-tasking office, laundry, and party prep room; Jan Cremer's Blue Hearts and Jan Sierhuis' Figures both from 1994.

Young flanked the marble fireplace with built-in floor to ceiling bookshelves and hung a whimsical painting by German artist Martin Assig over the mantel. The abstracted contemporary figure appears to interact with a classic Chinese sculpture from the Northern Wei Dynasty displayed on a mid-century teak coffee table designed by Jürg Bally.

While one of the two bedrooms functioned as the master, the other initially was the home office. An entry hall acted as a separation between work and play, "I am a big believer in transitional spaces - as a spatial tool that moves us from room to room in any home. Architecturally, this could be a vestibule, a hallway, or a stairway," Young said. The arrangement succeeded for a while until the designer noticed he worked 24/7 and needed to find another solution. "I realized that the transitional space which separated the two

areas needed to be more transformational than a single hallway," the designer observed.

Going outside, Young felt his garden offered possibilities. Underneath the house next to the garage was a former potting room. The designer converted the space into a multi-tasking office, laundry, and party prep area behind the expanse of windows and French doors. Removing a wall between the room and garage, Young delineated the two areas with a tall double-sided bookcase. He lined the walls with utilitarian cabinetry and floated an island that doubles for work or entertainment. The garden office provides the perfect work-life balance, "I find that the movement from indoor to outdoor, to indoor is a delightful welcome and departure of every day," Young concluded. **CH**