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A BUSY SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY EMBARK ON A FULL-SCALE REMODEL OF THEIR 1920S SPANISH REVIVAL HOME WITH BREATHTAKING RESULTS.

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY
PHOTOGRAPHED BY LAURE JOLIET

New Life



Architects at Medium Plenty created open spaces that meld perfectly with the outdoors.



A custom-built sofa anchors the light-filled living room, along with an Alexander McQueen rug for The Rug Company.

THE PROJECT

The bones were great, but the spaces? Not so much in this 4,512-square-foot home in a quiet San Francisco neighborhood. The 1920s Spanish Revival needed a top-to-bottom renovation to make each space more functional for a busy family of four.

THE TEAMS

The couple tapped architects Gretchen Krebs and Ian Read from Oakland-based Medium Plenty (mediumplenty.com) to create a new look and feel for the home. They also reached out to San Francisco interior designer Regan Baker, who's the principal at Regan Baker Design (reganbakerdesign.com).



A four-story staircase, designed by the team at Medium Plenty, is the central feature of the home; it creates symmetry on each floor, and its positioning adds plenty of natural light.

“Like all of our projects, we approached design by studying the clients’ sensibilities, their goals and the site itself,” says Krebs. “We found the clients had modern, traditional and eclectic sensibilities, which set up an interesting melding of ideas. Their programmatic goals informed the size of the home and the site—which is larger than most in the area—which provided opportunities for outdoor connections that are rare in the city.”

THE GOALS

The homeowners’ major goal included expanding the living spaces (up, down and out), as well as creating a more fluid connection to the outdoors and maintaining a quiet street presence. By excavating to create a new lower level, Medium Plenty extended the home to four stories and added a new roof deck.

“The design process resulted in a home with a subtle front facade that allows the expansive interior and rear to be a discovery made upon entering,” says Read. “The rear facade was an exercise in openness and composition in order to maximize the family’s connection to the outdoors.”

From an aesthetic standpoint, Baker says the clients love traditional design details and furniture. “We added character through things like custom-paneled details on doors, swooping curves on baseboards and hardware that balances a traditional look with clean profiles,” she says.

THE CHALLENGES

Like most projects in the city, there were permitting hurdles, but Krebs says the biggest challenge—which is common to all projects—was how to integrate discovery into the design.

“When you start a project, you’re just getting to know the clients, and we work to make their voice apparent,”



The dining room is graced by a table from Lawson Fenning, chairs from B&B Italia and art from Sarah Anne Johnson.

says Krebs. “Inevitably, as the process continues, you get to know them better and glean more information about how they aspire to live. This always brings opportunities to further tailor the project and also presents the challenge and opportunity of an ever-evolving design. Our role in this process is to balance what’s possible and aspirational.”

Baker says having an open floor plan—encompassing the living, dining and kitchen areas—meant she and her team had to reimagine the best ways for these spaces to flow seamlessly. Her solution: lots of custom and built-in

furniture, especially pieces that offer exceptional storage.

“Situated above neighboring residences with incredible views of the city, the windows are a signature component of the home, and ensuring their unobstructed views was important,” says Baker. “This inspired our team to design a custom-built cabinet in the living room that could hide away the television when not in use, as well as custom lower cabinets with hidden appliance garages in the kitchen. These design solutions allowed us to leverage the full height of the home and maximize space.”

SPECIAL FEATURES

Krebs and Read are particularly proud of the custom staircase, which they designed after studying staircases from a range of eras. The duo arrived at a modern take on a traditional stair. “A four-story staircase is the central feature of the house, sinuously connecting all levels and delivering natural light throughout,” says Read. “The bronze, steel and wood elements were expertly crafted.” Steel casement windows were added throughout the home; they provide a classic feel and relate visually to the staircase.

While sustainable home systems



An intimate sitting room is bathed in light ushered through steel casement windows used throughout the home. Opposite page: Calacatta Oro countertops, custom cabinetry from Midland Cabinet Company and stools from Nickey Kehoe are featured in the kitchen.



don't produce swooning, the architectural team are proud they implemented a solar PV array, which offsets 70% of the home's electrical usage; solar thermal panels also preheat water for radiant heat and domestic use. "The building envelope was insulated well beyond the code required, and the Jada windows (jadawindows.com) and door systems are thermally broken insulated units," says Read. "There's a 5,000-gallon rainwater collection tank buried in the rear yard that collects all runoff from the building and reuses it for irrigation, toilet flushing and clothes washing."

LIVING, DINING ROOMS AND KITCHEN

For the large living space, Baker incorporated a custom-built sofa that hugs the perimeter of the room; a custom rug by Alexander McQueen via The Rug Company (therugcompany.com) fits the contours of the large piece. Standout elements include a Philippe Malouin sconce from Roll & Hill (rollandhill.com), a Kelly Wearstler lamp from Circa Lighting (circalighting.com) and a coffee table from Nickey Kehoe (nickeykehoe.com).

In the dining room, the interior design team added a table from Lawson Fenning

(lawsonfenning.com), a 1960s chandelier (in the style of Jean Perzel) from 1stDibs (1stdibs.com), chairs from B&B Italia (bebitalia.com) and art from Sarah Anne Johnson (sarahannejohnson.ca).

Calacatta Oro countertops from DaVinci Marble (davincimarble.com) grace the highly functional kitchen. Custom cabinetry includes a hidden appliance garage from Midland Cabinet Company (midlandcabinet.com) in San Carlos. The room's stools are from Nickey Kehoe, and the pendant is from Douglas and Bec, which is now Snelling Studio (snellingstudio.com).

OWNER'S SUITE

"The neutral bedding allows an antique, muted rose-colored rug to stand out," says Baker. The team built a customized cabinet for laundry hampers and pajamas, and introduced texture through lighting: vintage Italian Bitossi brass lamps from 1stDibs with RH (rh.com) lampshades and an effervescent crystal chandelier from Crystorama (crystorama.com).

"The white- and gray-patterned wall tile in the primary bathroom recalls the home's original Spanish style, and the custom

vanity looks like a traditional dresser outfitted with a marble top and sinks," says Baker. "To allow for more natural light, the shower is topped with a frameless skylight, giving the illusion of being in open air."

Other standout pieces include a Tara Shaw (tarashaw.com) headboard, Morris & Co (morriscandco.sandersondesigngroup.com) wallpaper, a Coup d'Etat (coupdetatsf.com) chair and art from Kiki Smith via Berggruen Gallery (berggruen.com).

HOW THE HOME IS LIVING

"There's always an adjustment period while people get used to their new home and how it works," says Read. "This is especially true for modern homes that integrate so much technology, so we always have ongoing check-ins and site visits to review issues and help fine-tune things."

The real success, says Read, is typically a year or two down the line when clients have settled in and are experiencing the home daily. "We're happy to say that, in this case, the clients seem to be enjoying all that the space has to offer. They love their home."

Baker says the couple is equally thrilled with the interior design, as her team delivered on their vision of creating a home tailored for entertaining and visiting family while also serving as a personal retreat. "The design is exceptionally personal and reflects the clients' amazing taste, and we were successful in designing a modern home infused with unique transitions and vintage elements. Understanding and being inspired by our clients' unique vision for their homes is something we're incredibly passionate about." ■



The custom vanity in the owner's suite bathroom resembles a traditional dresser outfitted with a marble top and sinks. Opposite page: The neutral bedding allows the rose-colored rug in the owner's suite to pop.

Home Details

Home Type
Single family

Location
San Francisco

Architectural Design
Gretchen Krebs and Ian Read
Medium Plenty
mediumplenty.com

Interior Design
Regan Baker
Regan Baker Design
reganbakerdesign.com

Landscape Design
Terremoto
terremoto.la

General Contractor
Jelton Construction
jeltonconstruction.com

Resources

1stDibs
Chandelier, dining room; brass lamps, owner's suite
1stdibs.com

B&B Italia
Chairs, dining room
bebitalia.com

Berggruen Gallery
Kiki Smith art, owner's suite
berggruen.com

Circa Lighting
Kelly Wearstler lamp, living room
kellywearstler.com, circalighting.com

Coup d'Etat
Chair, owner's suite
coupdetatsf.com

Crystorama
Chandelier, owner's suite
crystorama.com

DaVinci Marble
Calacatta Oro countertops, kitchen
davincimable.com

Lawson Fenning
Table, dining room
lawsonfenning.com

Midland Cabinet Company
Millwork, kitchen
midlandcabinet.com

Morris & Co
Wallpaper, owner's suite
morriscandco.sandersondesigngroup.com

Nickey Kehoe
Coffee table, living room
nickeykehoe.com

Roll & Hill
Phillippe Malouin sconce, living room
phillipemalouin.com, rollandhill.com

The Rug Company
Alexander McQueen rug, living room
alexandermcqueen.com, therugcompany.com

Sarah Anne Johnson
Art, dining room
sarahannejohnson.ca

Tara Shaw
Headboard, owner's suite
tarashaw.com