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TRAD WITH A TWIST

With the help of Tom Stringer Design Partners, a Boston couple's San Francisco home combines classic East Coast elements with West Coast flair.

By Laura Eckstein Jones

Photographed by Wittefini

Although it may seem that the opposite is true, having limitations in architecture and design can sometimes lead to some of the most creative and fulfilling solutions. Such is the case with a newly renovated Craftsman home in San Francisco's exclusive Presidio Terrace neighborhood. Located adjacent to the Presidio, the area was one of the first master planned communities built in the western part of the city, and consists of 36 large lots laid around a privately owned street. The eclectic range of architecture—Mediterranean, Victorian, Shaker and more—has remained intact over the years due to historic preservation rules, including a mandate to keep homes' exteriors and anything else seen from the street as is.

John P. Cialone of Chicago-based Tom Stringer Design Partners met these challenges with gusto. A close relationship with the clients—who relocated their primary residence from Boston to be in this home—helped the designer navigate the three-year gut renovation. "The house couldn't be altered from the facade, so we were bound to keep the exterior, in terms of window locations and detailing, relatively similar to when it was originally built," he explains. "We gutted the entire interior and took off a lot of additions on the back that had been done over many years by many different people."

Architecturally, one of the clients' goals was to make the home function well for the couple, as well as for guests: grandchildren, friends and business associates. Another was to make the large space feel intimate and comfortable. "We had to be clever about creating intimate space," Cialone says. "The living room had to seat eight or 10 people, but also feel good for two people." A creative and



Subtle patterns in the drapery, upholstery and rug are balanced beautifully with calming neutrals in this San Francisco living room.

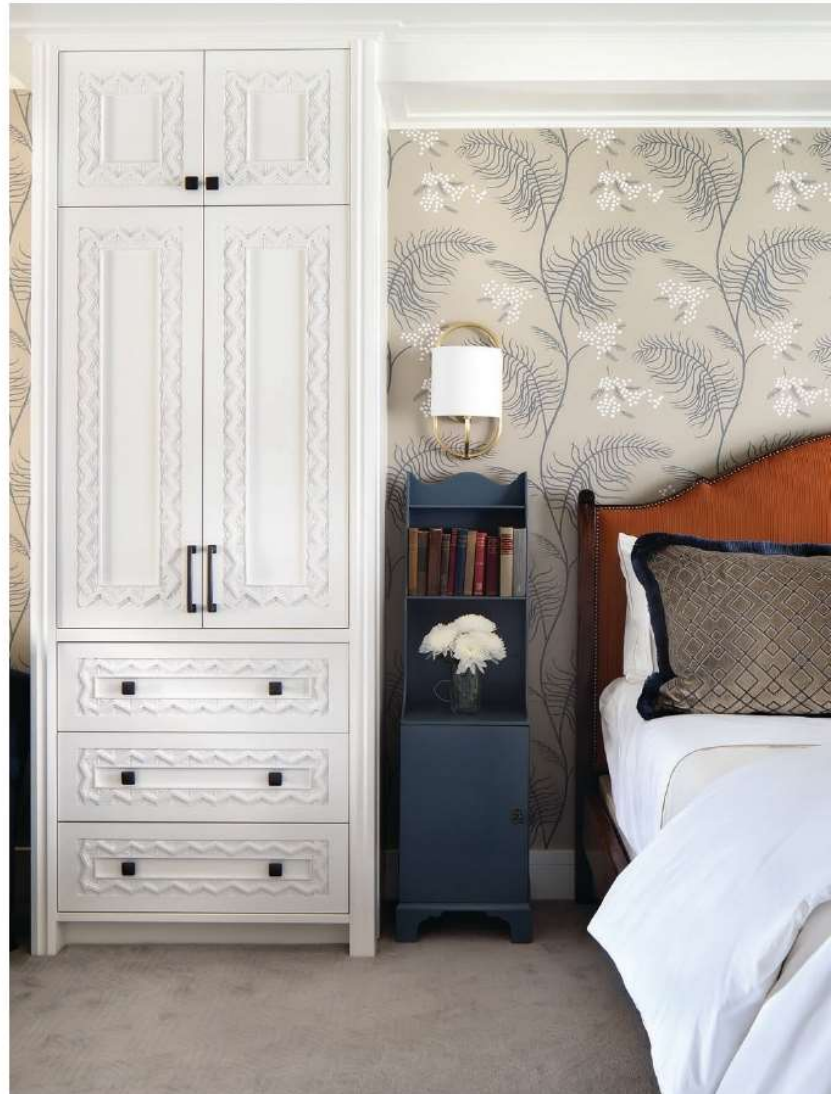


Clockwise from far left: The closet features a fixture from Visual Comfort; lounge chairs in the primary bedroom were reworked to remove the skirt and legs and recovered in Castel Maison fabric; Cole & Son wallcoverings add whimsy in the primary bedroom. Opposite page: The guest bathroom's cabinets, painted in Benjamin Moore's Blue Note shade, stand out.

flexible floor plan throughout—one that works for the way we live today—was essential. “When the house was constructed, the kitchen and other areas were not considered public and were separated from the rest of the house,” says the designer. “In this new iteration, the client lives much more casually, and was looking for a space that flowed way more organically. So that was the key issue of renovating the floor plan: to create a space that could be opened up or closed off when necessary.”

To make that happen, things like pocket doors were implemented throughout the home. “You can easily walk from the living room to the back of the house in a few seconds,” Cialone explains of the flexible open layout. “But between the family room and the living room, the library space, which is the middle space, has pocket doors that close, so you can literally close it off.” There are also embrasure doors in the front hall that blend into the paneling when open and can close when needed. “That room becomes a great space for an office, for reading and for taking a phone call,” says Cialone. “It can be turned from a sitting room to the dining room really easily. There’s a lot of possibility.”

For the interiors, Cialone pulled much of the furniture, accessories and art from the clients’ other residences, something that helped achieve a collected and comfortable look and feel. “This house has a great mix of antiques and traditional furniture with cleaner pieces,” he says. “We were very conscious about layering pieces. And although there’s a mix of styles, like Georgian, art deco and others, the lines had to be really clean,” he adds. “So





if we were using antiques or pieces that are brown wood, they had to be clean without an abundance of detail.”

Along with clean lines, a clear and consistent color story makes the interiors sing. “Stone gray, beige, gray, blue and red are used across the board,” says Cialone. “That helps pull the design scheme from room to room, even with the play of modernity next to traditional.” Cialone and his team worked in a variety of wallpaper, upholstery and window treatments, and although some rooms have several

patterns at play, everything is symbiotic. “I love the sense of subtle pattern,” he says. “Some of them read like solids, so it allowed us to mix multiple patterns in one room without it feeling overwhelming. If you saw them together on a board you might think they look crazy,” he continues, “but because of the amounts of them in the room, they work. It all feels very layered.”

As always, communication was key in making this project a success. “The relationship between the client, myself, the architect and the builder was very strong,” says Cialone. “It was a great collaboration.” ■

DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE

Single-family home

LOCATION

San Francisco

INTERIOR DESIGN

John P. Cialone, FASID, IIDA,
Tom Stringer Design Partners
tomstringer.com

ARCHITECT

Doug DeChant, AIA, NCARB,
Principal, Shepherd Resources Inc.
sriarchitect.com

BUILDER

Glenn Goodman, GGD Inc.
ggd-inc.com

RESOURCES

BENJAMIN MOORE

Paint throughout
benjaminmoore.com

BILLY BALDWIN STUDIO

Living room cocktail table
billybaldwinstudio.com

COLE & SON

Primary bedroom wallcovering
cole-and-son.com

COLEFAX AND FOWLER

Living room window treatment
and ottoman fabric
cofax.com

MATOUK

Primary bedroom bedding
matouk.com

PHILLIP JEFFRIES

Guest bathroom wallcovering
phillipjeffries.com

THE URBAN ELECTRIC CO.

Living room chandelier and
primary bedroom sconces
urbanelectric.com

BEST of DESIGN

From top: The greens of Lincoln Park and blues of Lake Michigan inspired the fresh color palette of this Chicago co-op by Tom Stringer Design Partners; founder and President Tom Stringer.



Tom Stringer



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For some, travel is an escape. For Chicago design impresario Tom Stringer, it's at the very core of his work. From childhood trips to Jamaica to more recent jaunts to far-flung destinations like Marrakech, Kenya, Polynesia and Myanmar (all stunningly documented in his 2017 monograph, *An Adventurous Life: Global Interiors by Tom Stringer*), the designer's lifelong wanderlust has provided endless inspiration for residential and commercial projects as varied as contemporary lakeside estates, world-renowned restaurant Alinea and his own showpiece Chicago home with partner Scott—all in his signature style of "curated eclecticism." "I enjoy working with clients who have an aesthetic point of view that I can use as a basis for the direction of my work for them," notes Stringer, "and I feel my best work refines, amplifies and reflects that in a way that keeps clients saying, 'Yes, this feels right and feels like my best me.'" That strategy translates to highly personal, meaningful spaces and have led to 17 design excellence awards from the American Society of Interior Designers, among numerous other laurels. In 2021, Stringer sees clients gearing up to improve and expand their current spaces ("I think it will be the year of the home office," he predicts), and he's excited about getting back to travel, hoping to fit in a monthlong trip to India. In the meantime, you can be certain he'll be working to create memorable, magical spaces like one of his favorite recent projects: "We finished a new beach house in the Santa Barbara area last year that I really adore. It's charming and a bit quirky, and it fits my clients, who are in the entertainment industry, just perfectly. I'd be happy to move right in if they asked."