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# House Beautiful

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Punchy patterns and hues turn the library into a kid- and dog-friendly playroom. Shades in Kravet's Teablossom; valances and lampshade in China Seas' Java. Carpet, Beauvais. **OPPOSITE:** Galbraith & Paul's Lotus wallpaper energizes a powder room. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



# A SUNNY FORECAST

FOR A NEW-TO-SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY WITH A HILLTOP PERCH, DESIGNER PALMER WEISS LIFTS THE FOG WITH A CHEERY PALETTE AND ONE MESMERIZING BLUE TO ECHO THE BAY VIEWS.





“From the very beginning, my client and I bonded over color,” says Weiss, who lacquered a luscious green paint, Benjamin Moore’s Seaweed, on the dining room walls. Bielecky Brothers cane chairs, upholstered in Pierre Frey’s Opera-Velours, surround a custom-made table. Vintage sconces from Lucca Antiques flank Julian Chichester’s Hobbs sunburst mirror. **OPPOSITE:** The flame-stitch cotton curtain fabric, Carleton V’s Alexandria, plays up the verdant walls.



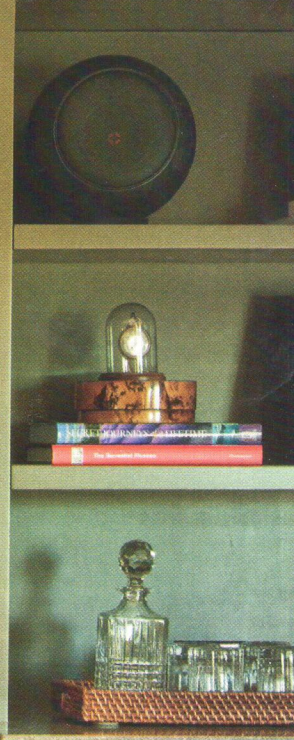
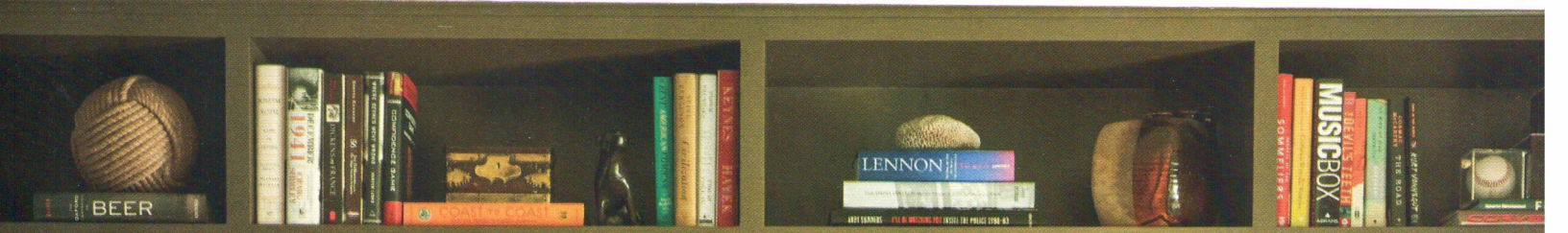






The living room sofa's upholstery, Tamarack Stripe by Carleton V, is "handsome yet casual at the same time," says Weiss. Curtains in Brunschwig & Fils's Mogador taffeta add a formal touch. Travis & Company armchairs in Colefax and Fowler's Thirlmere. Walls painted in Navajo White and trim in White Dove, both by Benjamin Moore.







**ALICE GORDON:** This house suggests that you start a project by asking yourself how much fun you can have.

**PALMER WEISS:** You know, after five seconds on the phone with this client, who's originally from Texas, I could tell she was super-funky and funny. Right off the bat she said, "I love color! I want to have fun!" It's exciting to learn that's how things will go. She left a lot of the choices to me. I should make a book of her e-mail responses to whatever I ran by her: She had so many ways to tell me that she liked things.

**For example?**

Well, once I proposed doing orange trim on a blue pillow, and she wrote back, "Pipe it like it's hot!" Or she would play like Inspector Gadget and write, "Go, Gadget, go!"—not just about a gadget but about almost anything. Durability and family were the overarching themes—she and her husband have two kids and two dogs. Most of the time I showed her one thing, and we went ahead and bought it.

**The colors look straight out of a gelato shop—banana, blueberry, lemon, lime, watermelon, mango, what else? How do you make them all work well together in one house?**

It's intuitive and comfortable for me. That said, a common question I get from clients is, "How are you going to deal with this flow of color and pattern?" It's true, when you're working on large houses such as this one, you don't have to worry so much about it. The thread through rooms is often spun by complementary colors or hints from the previous room. If it all looks good when I lay out the swatches on the sea of sisal carpet in my office, I know it's going to work.

**How did you arrive at the astonishing green walls in the dining room?**

It took 20 people practically living there, painting and sanding and wiping down dust, then doing it over and over again until the walls were like green mirrors. The color came from the curtain fabric. My mom [Charleston, South Carolina, designer Kathleen Rivers] likes to build a room around an antique rug, but for me, the launching pad is usually a fabric. This one walks the line between old-school bargello and modern. The client is young, and she didn't bat an eye when I suggested lacquered green walls and bright yellow chairs. We wanted to balance the formality of tradition with the fresher, more relaxed approach appropriate for California.



**The Pacific clearly influenced the family room. That blue!**

One thing that drove this house was the practicality of living with two small children. Trampoline parties on the sofa stretch the limits. This is the media room, too, so going dark allowed it to be both kid-proof and cozy. You see blue water and blue sky out the bay window. I love playing with different saturation levels of the same color. Blue has so much depth. With red you can quickly get too orange or pink, but with blue you can turn the dial 45 times and it will still be blue. For a shocking contrast, the orange pillow and trim could have been yellow or any warm color. I didn't want to go overboard, just play a little bit. There's more orange across the hall, in the Prozac room.

**The Prozac room? Please explain!**

That's what we call the sunroom. It opens onto the roof deck, which, by the way, is never used because the temperature rarely rises above 60 degrees. I warned my client that she didn't know what she was getting into by moving to San Francisco. I love this city, but the fog is a drag, and I've spent the last 13 years trying to dispel the gloom through design. This is the only room she

ever shot me down on. At first the palette was going to be black and yellow—shades of black and yellow, not bumblebee. But when I showed her my idea, she said, "No. You sold me on Prozac, and I want the Prozac."

**The husband's more muted study seems calming in a completely different way. Does he go there to disappear?**

No, he'll shut the door to be on the phone, but when it's open the kids will come in and work at their teeny schoolhouse table while he sits at the computer or hangs out with them. The study sofa is a pullout, and a daybed in

the massive bay window is big enough to sleep two kids. There's not a ton of guest space in San Francisco.

**You've said you picked up interior design from your mother "by osmosis," but studying art and your own life experiences must have sent you down your own path. Do you have a best lesson from her? Has your work informed hers?**

My greatest achievement in life was when my mom started calling me to ask design questions. If you lined up our work side by side, you wouldn't know we were in the same family. She's a classicist at heart and works mostly with earth tones. I use more color. Our house was meant to be lived in, so I learned accessibility from her. She loves working with crafts- and tradespeople, and it's my favorite part of the job too. Even now, visiting studios is like walking into Narnia. One important, counter-intuitive thing my mother taught me is that decoration is exhausting. It's wonderful, but the temptation is to poop out at the 25th mile. My mom won't let you go home until your hands are bleeding from hanging pictures. You can work on a project for two years, but you're only as good as the last picture you hang.

**ABOVE:** A plush custom-made settee lends an inviting tone to the entry. Vintage Oushak rug. **OPPOSITE:** "With bright colors in other rooms, we wanted the husband's study to feel more serious and masculine," says Weiss. Charles Stewart Company sofa in Dorian Bahr's Royal mohair. Walls painted in Benjamin Moore's Durango. Pillows in Jed Johnson's L'Africain. Marlow drum stool, HD Buttercup. Carpet, Stark.









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—PALMER WEISS  
BENJAMIN MOORE'S  
NAPLES BLUE

The family room sofa, in Schumacher's Midnight Blue Cotton Club velvet, is piped in the same cerulean blue as the painted bookcase. Weiss pulled the hue from the pair of pillows in Muriel Brandolini's Blue 2 print. Bryant Street coffee table, Crate & Barrel.





**ABOVE:** Calacatta marble walls and a gleaming Rêve tub by Kohler brighten the master bath. Fittings by Harrington Brass Works. Wall hanging, L'Aviva Home. **RIGHT:** In the daughter's room, Soane Britain's Petal swing-arm light glows above a West Elm side table. The walls are painted in Benjamin Moore's Sail Cloth.



**ABOVE:** San Francisco designer Palmer Weiss. **LEFT:** "The daughter's room is very feminine," says Weiss, who used Pindler's Mayer stripe for the canopy and bed skirt, and Raoul Textiles' Amijao for the headboard and curtains. **OPPOSITE:** "Even in the fog, the sunroom always seems cheery, and we wanted to echo that in the Palm Beach decor," Weiss says. Wicker chair and sofa, Mainly Baskets. Rug, Dash & Albert. Curtains and pillows in Gastón y Daniela's Paradiso. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



