

CALIFORNIA



PASTORAL



IN SAN FRANCISCO, DESIGNER **PALMER WEISS** CREATES AN ATMOSPHERIC, ENGLISH-INSPIRED HAVEN FOR HER FAMILY, MINGLING RICH, UPDATED CLASSICISM WITH CONTEMPORARY ART.



BENEATH CONSTABLE'S SKIES with their ever-present clouds, English country life unfolds in traditional scenes the artist charged with modern energy. Under similar cover of cloud in one of San Francisco's foggiest neighborhoods, designer Palmer Weiss has channeled that spirit, injecting vivacity and color into her Edwardian home. In creating the atmosphere for the 2,400-square-foot 1911 house, Weiss notes, "I wanted to embrace the fact that it's a smaller house and that it's in a darker part of the city. I was very inspired by how things feel in London and how certain rooms in Charleston [, South Carolina,] feel."

Though California has been her home for the better part of the past 30 years, she was raised in that living trove of historic architecture. "Charleston is in my bones aesthetically. Even large homes have small, quirky spaces—galley kitchens, dark powder rooms tucked under a stair, a top-floor bedroom in the eaves," she notes. "I love the feeling these spaces evoke—character, history, lack of perfection." Known for synthesizing the historical and modern into a vibrant classicism, Weiss's mastery of merging antiques and contemporary pieces, bold pattern and color, is nowhere more evident than in her living room. Here, a dramatic wall of wine-dark curtains and pelmet is the backdrop for a pair of canary yellow club chairs. "I love that pop of color," notes Weiss. The salon-style seating—more drawing room than living room with its intimate vignettes—also suits both family gatherings and entertaining. It's a favorite refuge for her husband and two daughters (Lewis the Lab also claims a spot), and Weiss shares, "If a friend comes over to have a drink, we'll perch in a little corner together."

PREVIOUS SPREAD, FROM LEFT: In the living room, an Alexander Calder lithograph hangs above an heirloom piano embellished by decorative artist Katherine Jacobus. Dining table fabric, Jim Thompson Fabrics; trim, Clarence House. THIS SPREAD, FROM LEFT: Portrait, Mario Robinson. The pelmet and drapery fabric is by Logan Montgomery Textiles. Ottoman, Lee Industries





In the dining room, Weiss conjures another quintessentially English space: the conservatory. Bathed in light yet drawing on the color of fog, the room is washed in Sea Froth gray (Benjamin Moore). Weiss notes that the color, like mist, is wonderfully elusive. “In one light it looks gray; in another, lilac. Ambiguous colors are my favorite,” she says. “I like things that can’t be nailed down.” Here, the family gathers around Weiss’s mother’s English Regency table, the same one she sat at as a child.

For Weiss, who holds a degree in history of art and architecture from Brown, art is always priority. In the living room, the brass rail picture frames are an homage to English decorating icon Robert Kime, “a huge personal influence,” notes Weiss, and provide the added facility of hanging art on upholstered walls. Next to the fireplace Weiss placed one of her most beloved pieces, a Pat Steir waterfall, below an antique portrait of a woman dressed in bright plum. Above a chest of drawers that belonged

to Weiss’s grandmother is another treasured work, an exquisite portrait by contemporary American painter Mario Robinson. “That portrait is one of the first pieces that I ever bought for myself,” says Weiss. “I love images of strong women, and she’s just got such a grace and power to her.”

The primary bedroom is Weiss’s sanctuary, and she notes, “I wanted it to feel serene and calm.” From the window the prospect is a greenway extending from nearby Park Presidio and, Weiss notes, “you do feel like you’re in the treetops.” She evokes that pastoral with a range of greens and blues and a foliar wallpaper, Scrolling Acanthus, by Soane Britain. “I love feeling enveloped in that wallpaper—you feel very cocooned,” she says. And against this sea of green, a tiny landscape painting by contemporary artist Paula Rubino hovers above the bed like a cloud. The quirky placement of a diminutive piece on a large wall, as Weiss observes, “feels very English countryside.” ♦

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Artist Willem Racké hand-painted the kitchen’s geometric floors. ♦ Deep green sculptural metal chairs (Century) flank the porch’s antique French marble-top patisserie table. ♦ A floating marble sink and antique Spanish gilt mirror punctuate a harlequin-inspired wallcovering (Adelphi Paper Hangings). ♦ An ochre floral fabric (Pierre Frey) covers a skirted bench and pillow. Bed linens, Matouk. Sconces, Hinson



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—DESIGNER AND HOMEOWNER PALMER WEISS

