WEB-EXCLUSIVE HOME TOUR

An Abandoned Barn Was Replaced With This Stunning Sonoma Valley Home

A San Francisco–based designer eschews rustic clichés and emphasizes a fabulous purple kitchen in this striking project

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Styled by Howard Christian
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Sometimes the best collaborations aren't marked by instant harmony but by welcomed challenges. Such was the case for this compound in Sonoma Valley, California, designed by Palmer Weiss with architecture by Charlie Barnett. As the decorator explains, she'd be able to nail straightforward English country house style any day, but the magic with this project came about thanks to her client's distinct stylistic preferences.

"The clients definitely had a strong point of view that we sort of evolved together over time," Weiss explains. "It wasn't like, 'Oh, Palmer, go do whatever the heck you want.' They wanted it to be reflective of them as people, too, and of them as a family."

The final product is a vacation property that balances the coziness of an English cottage and the material palette of Scandinavian design with the scale of a grand American vacation home. "The wife in particular is very savvy and very stylish, and so there was a lot of influence based on what she was interested in," Weiss adds. "She was particularly taken with the aesthetics of Sweden, which informed some of our designs and proved to be a North Star."

While some homes with high ceilings and abundant windows can feel impersonal, Weiss's skillful use of texture throughout helps ground the abode. The architect, Barnett, relied on architectural details, like beams and tongue and groove details, to add further weight to the structure. This is especially evident in the great room, which includes the dining space, kitchen, and living area. "We didn't want them being sheetrock boxes," Barnett states. He adds that they were able to make the scale of the space approachable "through the use of architectural details, and [by] complementing Palmer's vision with fabrics, textures, and color."

Weiss and Barnett came on the project as soon as the family bought the property in 2017, helping to develop what was then just an abandoned barn and a dirt road. "We had to figure out how we want this to fit into the land, while avoiding cliché and the look of every other barn and textured structure that's in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. It was very much a collaboration," says Palmer. The process took three and a half years in all, with Weiss and her team picking out every detail for the interiors, right down to the garbage cans.

Rugs help define the square footage in the great room, with a Studio Four carpet in the living area and a Mark Nelson rug in the dining zone—both in calming lilac tones—and a Swedish Kilim Runner from Mansour Modern in the kitchen. The eye-catching aubergine kitchen cabinets help to set the tone in the open space, balanced on the other end with a relatively subtle inset bar off of the living area. Just down the hall, Barnett and Weiss designed the family room to be a "cave-y" antidote to the great room. Surrounded by a deep red patterned fabric on the walls and Benjamin Moore's brownish red Beaujolais on the ceiling, the room has east-facing windows, which makes the space brightest in the morning and perfectly moody for the rest of the day.

"I've always tried to pride myself on making a house livable," Weiss says. "I'm interested in people living in their houses, enjoying their houses with their dogs, with their friends who spill red wine, with their kids." The dual living spaces speak to this understanding of how Weiss's clients will really live within their home—at some moments a grand space suits the mood, but at other hours, a place to tuck away is a necessity.

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"There was nothing there," interior designer Palmer Weiss explains of the property at first. "There was an old, sort of falling down barn and a dirt road that made it part of the way up, and that was it, basically." Plath & Co was the project's general contractor.

Art: © Eamon Ore-Giron/James Cohan, New York

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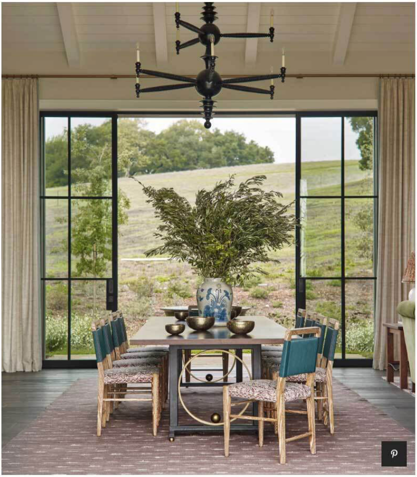
The living room, which is open to the dining room and kitchen, features a custom sofa with Schumacher Rocky Performance Velvet in Moss, a custom olive green leather ottoman with Pavoni Athena leather in Kaki, and a custom tufted lounge chair with Fermoie Plain Cotton with contrast olive green welt and buttons in Dedar Aplomb fabric. All of the pieces were fabricated by Hardesty Dwyer & Co. Bungalow Classic coffee table.



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The dining space is centered on large doors that open to the sprawling property. The chandelier is custom Paul Marra, the wool rug is by Mark Nelson, and the dining table and chairs are by Harbinger, upholstered in Namay Samay fabric.

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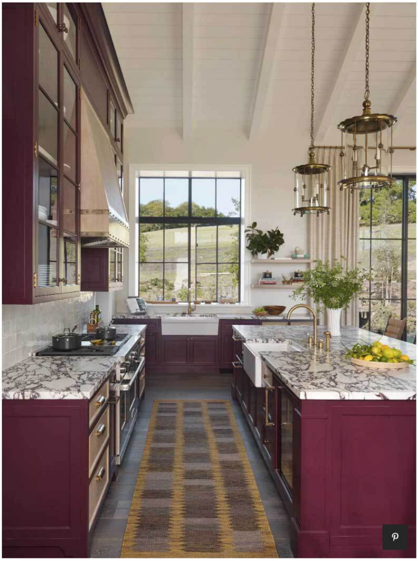
The inset bar area adds depth to the living space. The brass shelving is by Palmer Industries while the bar cabinets were fabricated by Bo Williams. Waterworks faucet.



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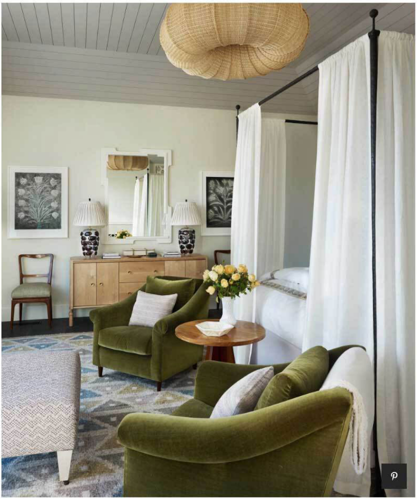
The kitchen is dominated by the aubergine tone of Farrow & Ball's Brinjal paint, which appears almost plum-like when it catches the light. The runner is a Swedish Kilim rug from Mansour Modern. Hanging lanterns by Collier Webb; fittings by Waterworks.

6/22

A Harbinger chair and ottoman sit to the left of the cozy custom sectional that was fabricated by Hardesty Dwyer & Co with Pindler Trianon fabric. The loveseat and wing chairs were fabricated by Lee Industries. Lighting is a favorite element for Weiss. Here Galerie Des Lamps wall lights via Latesta Studio are enlivened with lampshades made out of a pleated Pierre Frey Plumettes fabric.



Art: Adam Fuss/Cheim & Read, New York

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In the bedroom, a rattan hanging light from Soane Britain pairs nicely with the maple credenza. The green armchairs are by Hollywood at Home, upholstered in a George Spencer Design velvet.

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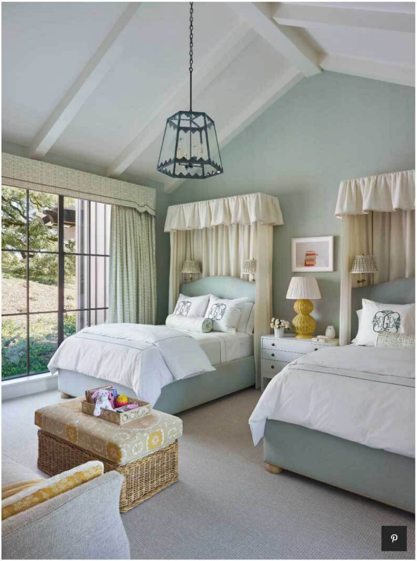
The Julie Neill chandelier and custom vanity chair add a touch of whimsy to the primary bathroom.



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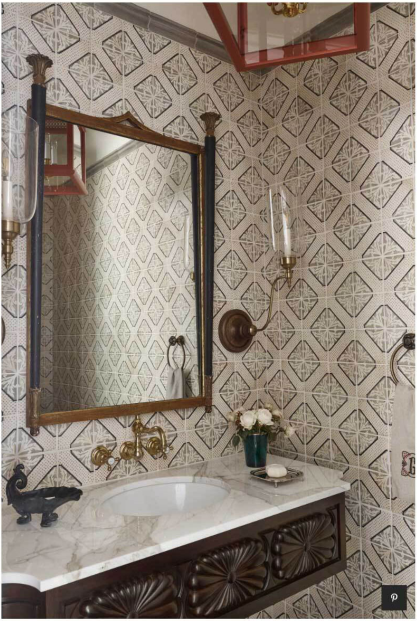
The tester canopies were fabricated by Malatesta O'Brien with Katie Leede Mummy Cloth and Passementerie Verrier fringe. Artwork by Mary Ellen Bartley.



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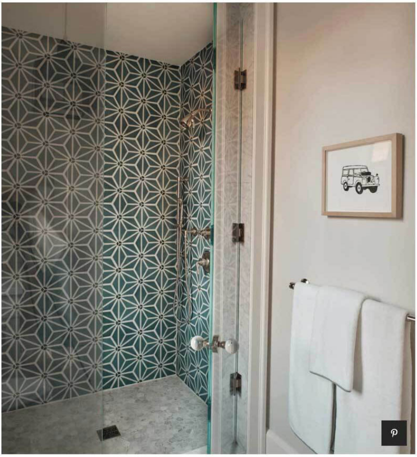
“I love [to use] antique pieces as vanities, but while that’s great in theory, it doesn’t always work in practicality,” explains Weiss, who adds that C. Mariani in San Francisco made the example at hand. The hanging light is by the Urban Electric Co. while the hurricane sconces are by Chameleon Fine Lighting.

11/22

A Lawson-Fenning bed upholstered in Claremont Clarence fabric sets the tone in this bedroom, which is painted in Benjamin Moore's Tarrytown Green. The swing arm sconces are by Visual Comfort and the pendant is by Urban Electric.



Art: Hugo Guinness

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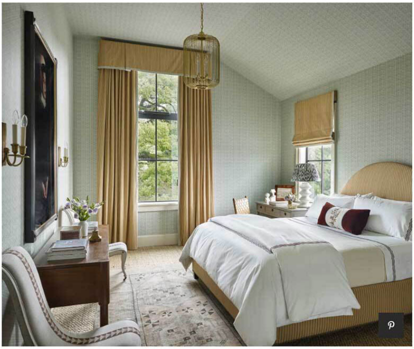
“While an all-white bathroom is totally fine, I really prefer not to have all-white bathrooms,” Weiss says. “When it's a second home, people become a little bit more fearless. You're not going to see this every single day of your life, so you're not going to get sick of it.” The tiles are by Ann Sacks.



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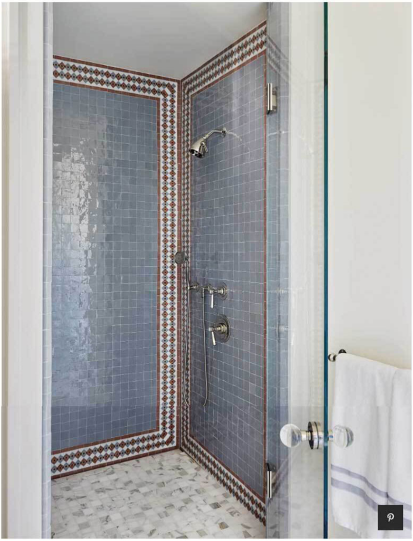
The camel-tone headboard and draperies, both in Carleton V fabric, contrast with the Robert Kime wallpaper in this guest bedroom. The bedframe was fabricated by Hardwyer & Co. and the draperies are by Malatesta O'Brien.



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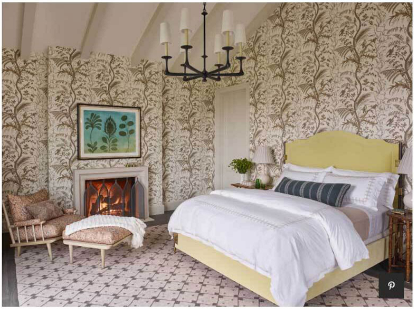
Each bathroom has its own distinct color palette and set of tilework. Here, the wall tiles are by Mosaic House and the floors are Da Vinci Marble.



Art: Mary Maguire

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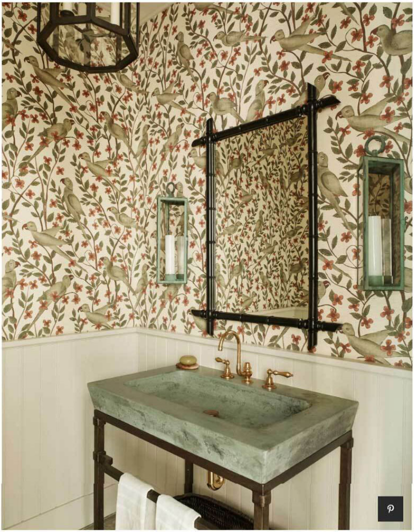
Brunswig & Fils's Bird and Thistle wallpaper envelopes this guest bedroom, which features a Nickey Kehoe chair upholstered in a Robert Kime fabric and a Century bed. The artwork above the fireplace is by Mary Maguire and the firescreen is by Avrett.



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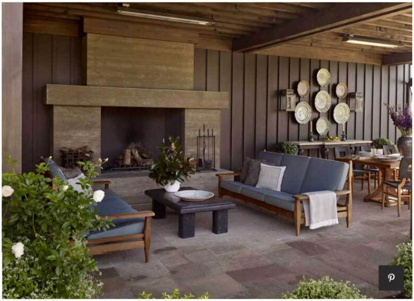
“I love verdigris as a finish, which is what drew me to those Urban Electric sconces,” Weiss states. “I was glad to be able to pick the finish up in the green concrete and the green leaves in the wallpaper.” The concrete sink was custom colored. The wall covering is by John Robshaw.



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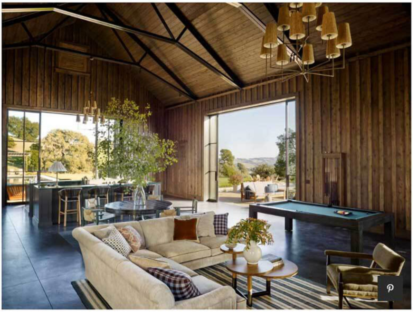
“You’re limited in options for what you can put up in decor for outside, but I always love pottery,” Weiss states. “I grew up going to the mountains in North Carolina and there’s a lot of pottery used as decor there.” The talavera plates are from Get the Gusto. The teak sofas are from Hollywood at Home with cushions fabricated by Malatesta O'Brien in a Nomi fabric.

18/22

A glimpse into the property's "party barn."



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"The party barn needed to be able to seat 100 for dinner or have raucous kids," Weiss explains. "There are dart boards in here, there's a shuffleboard table that's a mile long that weighs like 3,000 pounds—it's never moving."

20/22

Weiss prefers to keep color and pattern inside, allowing the natural beauty to do the talking outdoors.

21/22

A pair of lounge chairs sit next to the pool. Blasen Landscape Architecture worked on the exterior.

22/22

“This land was landscaped and grazed by cattle since probably the Gold Rush, so it was just these wide open grasslands with live oaks,” says architect Charlie Barnett. “The idea was to create something where the family could run, hike, and enjoy the outdoors with their family and friends, but also still come back and enjoy the elegance of this beautiful house.”