

Neo-Victorian

One of San Francisco's Painted Ladies is liberated from lacy and starched formality, rather '30s glamour and Parisian polish bask in a yellow glow

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STROLL BY SAN FRANCISCO'S PAINTED LADIES and it's easy to imagine interiors bedecked with bric-a-brac, as scrupulously true to the Victorian period as their fabulously colorful exteriors. While some homeowners have undoubtedly gone that route, for Howard and Springer Teich, a taste for 1930s glamour endows their 1887 home with a cosmopolitan, and considerably Parisian, flair



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Situated in fashionable Presidio Heights, the Teich’s three-story property comprises a retail space on the first floor, Howard’s therapy practice on the second, and the couple’s two bedroom home on the top story. When it came time to spruce up their quarters, Springer, a real estate developer who’d always done her own remodeling, turned to local architect and designer Jerry Jacobs. Initially, Jacobs was charged with simply upping the appeal and functionality of the unit’s two tiny bathrooms. But the homeowners were so taken by the sleek sophistication—and minimal yet invigorating palette that he brought to that task—that they let him tackle the rest of the apartment.

“I really love yellow and black,” recalls Springer, “but Jerry thought that combination was too much like a bumblebee. But because we’re in a Victorian, I really wanted to have a happiness in here, so I really wanted yellow. And I really love dark floors.”

Jacobs is at a point in his life and career where being honest is healthier than being purely politic. “I spent practically a third of my time for six months in there, and there were times when they wanted to kill me,” he laughs. “But by the end, [Springer] was so satisfied that she said, ‘Well, all you have to do now is buy my new clothes.’”

Together, Jacobs and his client achieved what he calls an eclectic mix of neo-French and California classic contemporary. “You’re always looking for clues as to what your client likes,” relates Jacobs, “and in our first few meetings, she mentioned Paris several times. As for the California style, it’s a casual way of living—high-end, comfortable, good-looking things that aren’t too stuffy.”

Lacking loads of period detail, the flat was a blank canvas on which to create a uniquely urbane ambiance. Jacobs restored the bookshelves in the

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study, surrounded the fireplace with Portoro marble, and painted the flue black. The Portoro veining is yellow and orange—in keeping with the overall color scheme—and the dark flue is the perfect backdrop for the large, black-framed television. In the sunny living room, a welcoming sectional sofa from Century Furniture keeps company with a club chair from Brueton, whose reserved profile is decidedly French. And there’s something in the thrust of the sconces that spring from either side of the painting by Susan Spies that somehow reminds one of the human arms bearing torches in Jean Cocteau’s surrealist film *Beauty and the Beast*.

In the dining room, Jacobs specified a round table from Michael Taylor Designs. “Most of the time I prefer round tables,” he says. “There’s no hierarchy, no corners and in tight spots like this—you pass through the dining room to get to the deck that overlooks the garden—the shape works better with the traffic flow.” A pair of old theater panels depicting massive urns lends the room a certain formality. While they

look like something Jacobs might have picked up at a Paris flea market, he actually found them right down the street at Urban Chateau, which specializes in European antiques.

Space was at a premium in the 1,600 square foot residence, but Jacobs managed to add much needed storage in the guest room with a built-in closet along one wall. In the living room, he backed the bookcases with mirror to give the space the illusion of greater depth. And he added a skylight above the stairwell to brighten the entryway. “The cabinetry Jerry built in the guest bedroom looks like it’s always been there,” observes Springer. “And the guest bathroom has a mirror wall that pops open to reveal cabinets. The extra attention paid to such a small space really paid off. Jerry really pulled through and really brought my vision together. You know, when you have a place and you walk in and every single day you’re happy because everything is just right? That’s how it is for me here”

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