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MARCH 2021



SUNNY DISPOSITION

Luminous colour, lively patterns and an abundance of light lend this grand 1930s home a relaxed and happy spirit

FEATURE JULIET BENNING PHOTOGRAPHY AARON LEITZ



ENTRANCE HALL
The beguiling hand-painted wallpaper runs up to the top of the house and sets a joyful tone.

Traditional Plum Blossom wallpaper, de Gournay. Champion pendant light, The Urban Electric Co

INFORMAL SITTING ROOM

Traditional pieces honour the period of the property, while bold colour and designs add modernity.

Sofas in Ikat in Ocean; curtains in Fig Leaf, both Peter Dunham Textiles. Ottomans in Great Plains Mohair at Holly Hunt

FORMAL SITTING ROOM

Alison created an accessible, bright and comfortable scheme. The large format plaid is an irreverent twist on the classic check motif.

Oversize plaid wallpaper by David Bonk. Vintage bamboo Chippendale chairs, Chairish. Hamilton lantern, The Urban Electric Co



Brilliant was one of the first things designer Alison Pickart thought when she took on this San Francisco project. ‘The clients are such an upbeat family that the typical pale, bleached out and neutral palette in San Francisco wouldn’t have suited them,’ she says. ‘Driven by their personalities, I wanted to bring in a fun sense of colour and pattern, all blending with an underlying preppy vibe.’

Alison’s clients, who are both entrepreneurs, were undeterred by the fact that this corner house in San Francisco’s Presidio Heights neighbourhood had been in the same family for around 40 years and untouched for decades. ‘The house has exposure to natural light and a grand facade with quadruple frontage. My clients, who have four children, also wanted to move closer to their school, and imagined loving the house back to life and making it their forever home.’

With the house in need of a full renovation, Stephen Sutro of Sutro Architects was enlisted to add a vast basement level with media room, gym, mudroom, laundry and extra guest bedroom suite. ‘It was one of the last projects to get approved before the regulations became tighter, but we still had to adhere to seismic guidelines. The amount of engineering that went into the basement was intense,’ Alison explains. ‘The 12-foot ceilings of the gym are so cavernous, the family jokingly refer to it as the racquet ball court. It’s breathtaking.’ On the ground floor, a new corridor with bar, WC and pantry connected the main reception rooms. ‘This addition gave the house a pleasing circular flow that didn’t previously exist,’ Alison adds. ‘It’s a compressed yet intimate section of the house where I used the blue that’s running through the house but took it to a deeper level of saturation, combining it with the lovely Jardin d’Osier print by Hermès.’

The identity of many of the rooms comes from the wallpaper choices – nowhere more prominent than in the foyer hall and staircase. Beguiling guests from the moment of entry, it’s dressed seductively in a traditional plum blossom hand-painted de Gournay wallpaper. ‘It’s a robin’s egg blue shade with white blossom and the skylight above means the colour graduates from lighter to darker the lower down the house you get,’ says Alison. ‘It’s the central point from which everything else plays off,’ she adds.

Eager to preserve the home’s handsome proportions and architectural details, Alison was also aware that the house shouldn’t become too formal or stuffy. ‘Although it is a grand property we wanted it to feel homey and accessible,’ she explains. This has been achieved through a series of twists on more traditional interior motifs. The oversized plaid wallpaper in the sitting room is as unexpected as it is bold. Riffing with the joyful and naive floral fabric of the club chairs, in combination, the pairing summons an irreverent mood. The main reception rooms are united by the chartreuse of the wallpaper and curtains, and have a cohesive identity despite a host of differing prints and fabrics. ‘Turquoise, camel and green blend with pops of orange and pink. Patterns are mixed in with Uzbek tapestry pillows and art collected from their travels,’ Alison adds.

‘As a family with adopted children, the heritage and culture of their Ethiopian twins was a huge inspiration,’ she elaborates. ‘I took great pleasure in planning how to showcase all the treasures they have accumulated over the years and these details are what really made it feel like a home.’ With so much colour and life, the vitality and joy Alison’s interiors have brought to the home matches the family perfectly. 🍷

■ Alison Pickart, alisonpickart.com;
Sutro Architects, sutroarchitects.com

INSPIRATION



DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM

One modern print used throughout – on the bed, blind and walls – delivers a striking look, while the upper bunk is perfect for slumber parties.

Wallpaper, bed and blinds in Tuk Tuk Sunflower, Kerri Rosenthal. Blanche ruched **duvet cover**, La Redoute, is similar

GUEST EN SUITE

The rooms in the basement have a more modern feel. Here, a saturated blue tone pairs beautifully with the bronze tap fittings.

Henry **taps**, Waterworks. **Tiles**, Popham Design. Source a large round **mirror** at Cox & Cox



INSIDER INSIGHT

Alison Pickart shares her style inspiration and loves **SECRET SOURCE** Kerri Rosenthal, the artist who designed some of the wallpaper we used.

BIGGEST INDULGENCE The de Gournay wallpaper. My client hesitated due to the price but her husband said, 'As you love it you should have it. It will make you happy.'

GO-TO COLOUR Farrow & Ball's Pointing. It's so perfect and creamy – a good complement to many palettes.

SMALL CHANG, BIG IMPACT Opening the connecting thoroughfare on the ground floor. It's been critical to creating a modern flow.

FAVOURITE BUILDING The Milwaukee Art Museum in Wisconsin. It has a moveable component so the 'ribcage' sits over glass and can open like a bird.

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KITCHEN

Pale yet interesting with panelling on the ceiling, tiles up to the ceiling and a mix of unit styles. Ravenspoint wall lantern, The Urban Electric Co. Wall tiles, Ann Sacks. Calacatta marble countertop, similar from Marble City

