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FULL CIRCLE

WHEN HER CLIENTS MADE A BIG CHANGE,
A DESIGNER RESPONDS WITH AN ELEGANT
PACIFIC HEIGHTS RESIDENCE.

WRITTEN BY MINDY PANTIEL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON LEITZ



INTERIOR DESIGN / ALISON PICKART, ALISON PICKART
ARCHITECTURE / STEPHEN SUTRO AND KAREN MOY, SUTRO ARCHITECTS
HOME BUILDER / ANDREW MCHALE, DESIGN LINE CONSTRUCTION







A Charles Arnaldi painting is a highlight of this San Francisco living room, where designer Alison Pickart placed a quartet of Holly Hunt swivel chairs around an Atica table by Damian Jones from Coup D'Etat. In the second seating vignette, a pair of Vladimir Kagan sofas flank a Uovo Ice Resin cocktail table, all from Coup D'Etat, and the Innovations raw silk wallcovering is from Sloan Miyasato.

When designer Alison Pickart spied a glass-and-metal fire screen by French artisan Christophe Côme, she knew she had found the design inspiration for a San Francisco condo remodel.

Her clients—who were starting life anew in the city after years spent living in the suburbs—were equally enamored with the round-studded piece, and it set the bar for the furnishings that followed. “We couldn’t just pick any dining room table or sofa,” says Pickart. “Every piece had to be the most special version of what it needed to do.”

But first, Pickart and architect Stephen Sutro needed to reshape the Pacific Heights penthouse into something worthy of that ideal while preserving and enhancing views of the Golden Gate Bridge. Save for the scenery, the residence had little to recommend it. The space was plagued by narrow hallways and low thresholds, so Sutro consolidated all the utilities in one space, allowing for more gracious 9-foot-high doorways and wider passageways. “You couldn’t see many of the north-facing windows because there were walls in the way,” says the architect, who collaborated with project architect Karen Moy. “We introduced a more open, contemporary layout that allows you to see through the entire space.”

And while those refreshed interiors embraced openness, the spaces outside the front door still had smaller, 1920s-era proportions. The task of negotiating furnishings and materials through narrow spaces fell to general contractor Andrew McHale. “The service elevator was 5-by-3 feet, so most items had to be picked up by crane and brought in through the windows,” says McHale. “The delivery of everything had to be timed to perfection.”

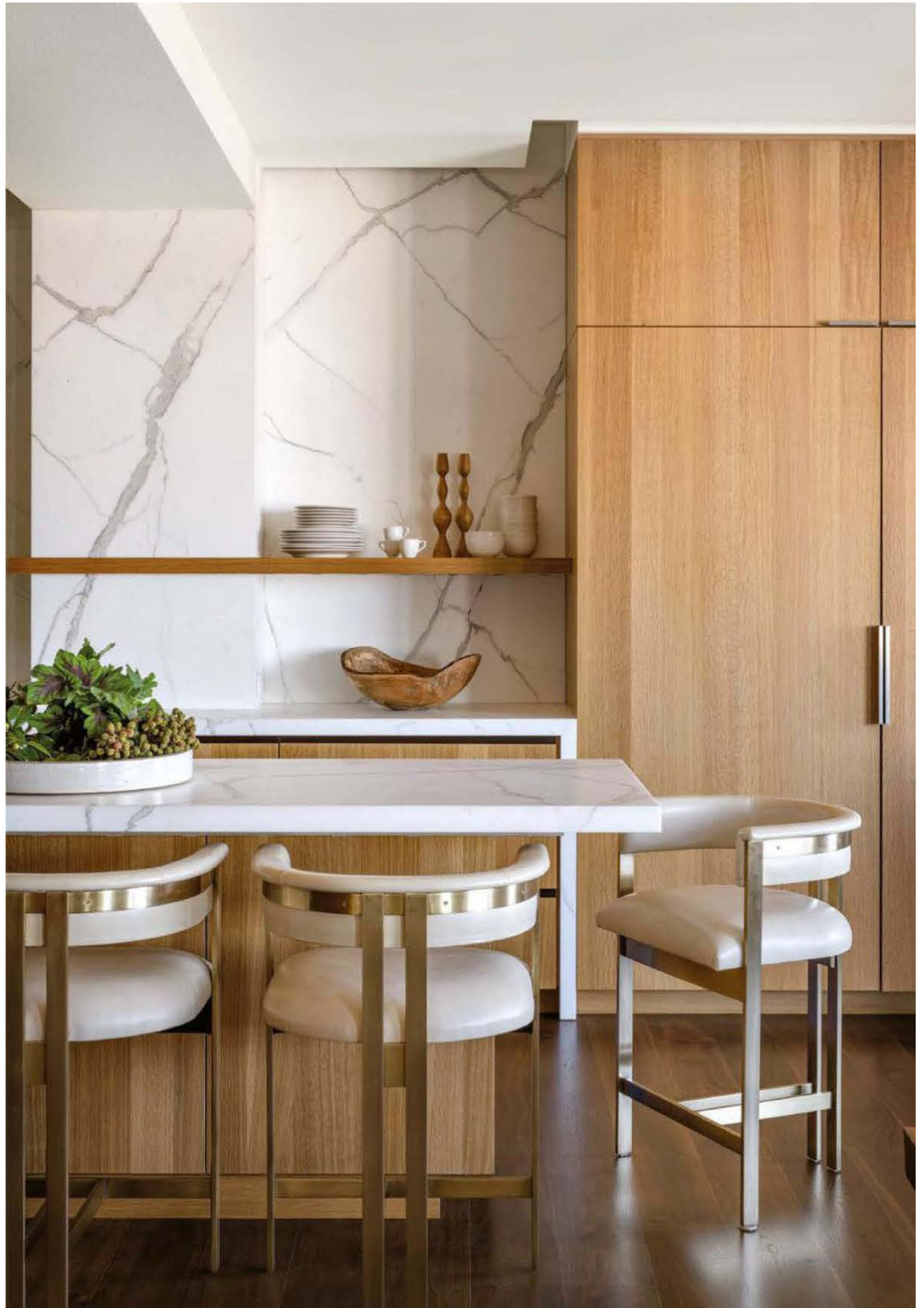


Glittering elements in the living and dining areas include the brass panels on the Gateau console by Scala Luxury, the sculptural legs on the Hudson Furniture live-edge dining table and the hand-rolled brass on the Aquitaine Two-Tier chandelier by Coup Studio. The Holly Hunt chairs also have brass bases as well as Great Plains upholstery. A painting by Charles Arnould hangs to the right of the window, which frames views of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Along with the designer, architect Stephen Sutro helped place every piece of artwork, including the painting of oranges in the breakfast nook. A custom banquette covered in Manuel Canovas fabric is positioned at an ideal vantage point for enjoying sweeping city vistas. The sculptural Hélène Aumont table is from Hewn, and the Halo pendant is by John Liston.



In the kitchen, the design team book-matched the veining of the Calacatta Royale marble from Integrated Resources Group so it travels up the walls and over the waterfall edge of the island. "We templated every inch of surface that was to be covered in slab and mapped out how the vein would move around the kitchen," says Pickart, who placed stools by Kelly Wearstler along the counter.





For the owners, who started married life in a New York City apartment before moving to a traditional Mill Valley home, returning to the city was a full circle moment. "For our next chapter, we wanted a grown-up space that was fun and with a strong urban feel," says the wife who, along with her husband, is a patron of several local arts organizations. "But I was concerned that contemporary could feel cold," she adds.

She needn't have worried. "I took my cues from her aesthetic," says Pickart, who was determined to create a modern interior with elegant finishes that didn't feel austere or untouchable. Raw ivory silk on the walls in the majority of the common spaces and a butter-colored faux suede in the master bedroom handily set a welcoming stage. Vertical grain fumed-oak cabinets provide another layer of warmth along with visual consistency in the revised

open floor plan. "The cabinet design is modern but the wood itself is a soft natural element," says Pickart who, in collaboration with the architect, also placed the artwork as they were developing the interiors. Flanking the spare marble fireplace wall, for example, the architect-designed recessed bronze mirrored walls that allow paintings by Russian artist Ilya Zomb to pop. Similarly, the intentionally blank fireplace surround allows the Côme fire screen to be the star.

Ever mindful of keeping the bar high when it came to furnishings, Pickart led with serpentine Vladimir Kagan sofas, a bronze mirrored coffee table and a live-edge dining room table perched on four bangles of polished brass. "Metals became part of the program," she says, pointing to the zinc stove hood, recessed bronze cabinet pulls and the bronze door in the bar area.

Wood flooring by Tree Lovers Floors continues the warmth of the custom fumed-oak cabinets fabricated by Evan Becker of Boxcabco. The undermount stainless-steel sink is by Kohler, the faucets and pot filler are from Waterworks' Henry Collection, and the window covering is by Shade Inc.



In the master bedroom, Phillip Jeffries Suede Lounge wallpaper from De Sousa Hughes is the backdrop for a Dmitry & Co bed upholstered in Sandra Jordan fabric from Shears & Window. The bedding is by Leontine Linens, and an Apparatus light fixture hangs above a Gregorius Pineo nightstand.

The sheen continues in the console composed of three shades of goatskin parchment lacquered to a high shine and set with polished-brass accents. The element is more than pretty; it delineates the living and dining room spaces while concealing a television. As Sutro explains, “The television lifts up and rotates so it can be seen from the four swivel chairs or the eating area.” That same level of craftsmanship continues in the breakfast nook where a circular, brass and glass light fixture by John Liston illuminates the table without impeding the view. Likewise, all the pieces in the main living area are scaled low to emphasize the vistas.

The wife professes a love for dresses and flowers, and the master bedroom with its patterned draperies and

pink-and-white linens is a fitting homage to her tastes. “It is feminine, but not in an off-putting way,” says Pickart, noting the room bridges the gap between their former suburban home and the new modern apartment. “The draperies are actually a blown-out abstract of a traditional pattern and the waterfall skirt on the contemporary Gregorius Pineo chairs gives them a classic silhouette.”

This mindful merger made for happy homeowners who thoroughly enjoy their adult city digs and never lose sight of what is out those windows. “It’s a quiet, elegant, magical space,” enthuses the wife. “We start every morning in our gym and end every day looking at the Golden Gate Bridge and watching the sunset.”

For continuity, the vanity in the master bathroom has oak cabinets and marble countertops similar to those in the kitchen. "The geometric wall tile is fabricated by Fox Marble," says Pickart. "It's the same stone that we used in the kitchen, but we didn't book-match it, so its veining creates a different pattern and shakes things up." The sconces are from The Urban Electric Co.

