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A NEW POINT OF VIEW

BARBARA SCAVULLO INFUSES A TRADITIONAL
SAN FRANCISCO APARTMENT WITH A MODERN SPIRIT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MILLMAN/TEXT BY CAREN KURLANDER

WHEN DESIGNER BARBARA SCAVULLO began work on a new project in the Pacific Heights neighborhood of San Francisco, the clients, a couple who split their time between Northern and Southern California, presented her with a specific challenge. "They said that in all of their previous homes they had always defaulted to beige," Scavullo explains. "So they asked us to move them off of beige."

The designer also wanted to dodge any of the trappings that might go along with beige interiors, and the couple's apartment provided her with a generous start. Located nine floors up in a freestanding 1920s building, the unit has 360-degree views of the city from the Golden Gate Bridge to Alcatraz to the Transamerica Pyramid







building. "It's one of the premier apartments in San Francisco," says Scavullo. Georgian-style walnut paneling in the public rooms lent a formal air to the well-proportioned rooms, and the decision was made to keep the original woodwork intact. "The clients felt a responsibility to the architecture," says Scavullo. "But their sensibilities are contemporary, and they didn't need to do anything else that was at all traditional."

Architect Andrew Skurman restored the paneling and revised much of the interior architecture. The clients wanted to update the space and pull in influences from the Art Déco era. "That was kind of off our charts," says Skurman, whose firm is known for its classically designed residences. "It was a challenge for us but a very exciting and successful one." Skurman enlarged openings connecting the living room, family room and kitchen, creating an easy flow of spaces conducive to casual family living, and reorganized the private areas, including the bedrooms and baths.

previous pages: "We wanted this apartment to be incredibly fresh and definitely contemporary," says designer Barbara Scavullo (left, top), who collaborated with architect Andrew Skurman on reimagining a 1920s San Francisco apartment. *The Idea*, by David Maxim, stands on a custom bronze table in the entry. **this page, above:** Enid Ford chairs surround a 1940s Italian game table in a corner of the living room. **this page, right:** Streamlined furnishings, including chairs from Enid Ford, a Gulassa side table and a ceiling fixture from McEwen Lighting Studio, play off of the living room's original walnut paneling. The carpet is from Stark.







left: The kitchen was completely redesigned and opened up to face the family room. A Boyd Lighting fixture hangs above the new mahogany cabinetry. **below:** Skurman enlarged the doorway connecting the living room and the family room, where the paneling was given a painted finish. A Mousson sofa by Christian Liaigre for Holly Hunt is covered with a fabric from Kneedler-Fauchère Imports, and the pillow fabric is from Donghia. **opposite:** The clients' own chairs were upholstered with a Brunschwig & Fils silk-and-velvet fabric that reinforces the Déco feel of the dining room. Leather from Hunt Leather was used on two chairs.

Scavullo, too, responded to the clients' aesthetic when it came to the furnishings. Chosen by Amelle Kase, former design director at Scavullo's firm, the pieces respect the proportions of the rooms but create an artful juxtaposition with their unmistakably clean, modern lines. "My feeling is that interiors are better if you've dealt with the tension rather than just imposing conflicting styles on each other," says Scavullo. The well-edited living room underscores that point, as streamlined pieces from Enid Ford, Antoine Proulx and Mattaliano make fitting counterpoints to the traditional woodwork. "The furniture has a presence that's appropriate to the space," she says. Hand-screened painted velvet from Opuzen and a J. Robert Scott angora mohair have a luxe richness, while Michael McEwen's almost industrial pendants add an edge. "Because the scale of the rooms is so nice, you can really go much more contemporary as long as it feels warm," says the designer.

The intimate size of the dining room afforded Scavullo the opportunity to make a dramatic statement. The original curved corners of the room are emphasized with moldings added by Skurman, and the walls are washed in a deep terra-cotta hue. "It's always nice if you have one room that's saturated with color," says Scavullo. "And since this room is much smaller in scale than the living room, the color gives it the same amount of interest in a very different way." The rounded corners allowed for the introduction of a Déco style to the room, a look completed with the clients' own dining set and sideboard.







A subtle Déco motif continues through the master bedroom, but the palette is more subdued. "It's very calm," says Scavullo. "And that was quite intentional. We used texture rather than color to get the 'pop' without disturbing the serenity of the room." Two leather-covered Dakota Jackson club chairs create a sitting area by the window; mirrored side tables are paired with a shagreen-paneled bed that has bone trim and a leather-inset headboard, both from Ironies. "That serenity continues into the wife's bath, which is so clean and so minimal, and yet that's where we really have a lot of Déco detailing," says Scavullo. The tub and built-in vanity are clad with a painted-wood grid inset with mirrors accented by white-gold-leaf backing. "It gives them an immediate aging," says Skurman. "One of the things we specialize in is creating a residence that doesn't look new. We like it to look as if the clients bought an even greater old apartment than they did."

And it does. Scavullo and Skurman effectively wove together the traditional aspects of the architecture with the couple's wish for an interior that feels modern. Not only were the clients moved off of beige, but as the project progressed, they became more involved with and more excited about the furniture selection and were even inspired to add to their contemporary art collection. "The art is both appropriate for the apartment and extremely adventurous," says Scavullo. "I think working with us during the design process unleashed a passion and a sensitivity in them that they didn't even know they had." +



opposite, top left: Dakota Jackson chairs are situated near the master bedroom's window. The Roman shade fabric is from Bergamo. opposite, top right: A desk and a Hans Wegner chair are paired near the hallway's original paneling. opposite, bottom: "The wife's bath was inspired by Jean-Michel Frank," says Skurman. The sconces are from Urban Archaeology. this page: Ironies' Greylock bed and mirrored side tables add restrained texture to the master bedroom. Fabric from Bergamo covers the pillows.

