

Details Make The Difference

Unforgettable finishing touches
make homes memorable

text | Paula Wrenn

Before moving to Paradise Cay near Tiburon Yacht Club in December 2005, Susan and Michael Schoen invested more than a year gutting and remodeling the 2,000-square-foot home and adding 1,000 square feet. Mahoney Architects designed the remodel, addition, and overhaul of the largely stucco exterior. Pedersen Associates transformed the sloping yard into a family-friendly patio and a flat, grassy play area on two levels.

The Schoen family enjoys soaking in the views and seaside culture from their home with its bi-coastal influences—a California casual interpretation of a Cape Cod. “Outside, it’s very much like a house in the Hamptons, with dormers, white clapboard, and black shutters,” she says.

Details make a statement

Rob Weber, co-owner of Haven Home in Mill Valley and Carmel, assisted Schoen with her selections and furnishings. He praises her organization and attention to detail: “Susan layered a lot of textures and finishes into a very retro-vintage kitchen.”

Local cabinet craftsmen interpreted Schoen’s favorite Christopher Peacock kitchen cabinet designs with simple inset doors, matte white paint, and range hood cover to match. Icebox latches and old-style pulls perfectly detail the cabinetry. The countertop marble is a departure from color-flecked darks to heavily veined, gray statuary marble. The farmhouse sink with teak railing, and combination herringbone subway and Carrera tile, add interest.

Schoen is pleased with the seaside blues and greens Weber recommended for her walls, and how they are offset by white ceil-



All the room’s elements—artwork, furniture, accents—work together to add drama and interest.

ings and trim of chunky crown moldings, wainscoting, and wide baseboard. Both agree the chandelier-lighted stand-alone tub and his/hers sinks in the center of the master bath make a very personal statement. Can-do contractor Norman Charles worked magic with potential construction versus design issues. One of his attractive solutions was a gooseneck, used to compensate for the low ceiling to achieve a normal height for the master shower head.

She counts the hand-finished, variable-width plank floor from Carlisle Wide Plank Floors of New Hampshire among her best decisions. The custom staircase with white trimmed risers and wooden treads, wooden bannister, and custom rounded newel supports offer visual impact.

A large apothecary jar of seashells is typical of personal details, but there could be no more intimate finishing touch than the collection of family photographs displayed throughout this home.

Accessorizing with objectives

Once all the major pieces are in place, interior designer Eugenia Erskine Jesberg

enjoys helping clients achieve the proper balance, scale, drama, and contrast. The founder of EJ Interior Design, Inc. of Mill Valley says it is always a treat when clients have or can add fine art to achieve that end. In the example shown here, the painting *Open Book IV* by Charles Brown is a source of drama. The *Venus on V* torso sculpture by Rick Soss, a humidior, and an antique bombe commode add interest and scale in relation to the other furnishings.

In Jesberg’s view, the goal of these finishing touches is to add life to the space and give the eye someplace to go. Bring in a new piece of art and it is fine to experiment, re-balance, and shift emphasis.

“Whether it is a vase of flowers, art, found objects, more art or books, they don’t have to remain static. Re-arrange them to create more contrast and to experiment. You may find an antique chest comes into its own when you add a lamp,” she says.

Color and light are also key. She recommends having a few special detail pieces with lots of space, so each can be appreciated. Collections of small items should be grouped together. |