

ENGLISH LESSONS

With moody colors and organic patterns, a designer infuses British sensibility into a young couple's breezy Marin County abode.

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Interior Design: Heidi Caillier, Heidi Caillier Design Home Builder: Kurt Brellin, Brellin Company



The office is cozied up with Farrow & Ball's Card Room Green on the built-ins and a Rose Tarlow Melrose House stripe on the walls and window shade. A lamp from Faithful Roots illuminates a Serena & Lily chair.



t's not often that a brief stumps Heidi Caillier, but the designer felt perplexed when she first considered two seemingly disparate visions for a contemporary Kentfield dwelling's interior renovation. A Pinterest board created by her clients displayed one thing: sunny, California-cool rooms draped in simple, neutral fabrics. But the words the young husband and wife used to describe their dream home—moody, layered, British—evoked a cozy Cotswolds tableau.

With its tall, beamed ceilings, wide-plank wood floors, white walls and sweeping views of Mount Tamalpais and the San Francisco Bay, the couple's contemporary residence certainly lent itself to the former vision. "It had this easy, breezy, expansive interior that was all very connected to the landscape, which is just classically Northern California," Caillier says. But by slipping in some muddy neutral colors and organic prints, the designer decided, she could achieve a sense of warmth and comfort appropriate for both sides of the pond.

"Color and pattern are tenets of British interior design," Caillier explains. "There must be one or the other; that's what creates interest. Pattern, in particular, is really useful in this house for that reason. It takes what would otherwise be very simple spaces and makes them feel layered—often with just one print." In the living room, a pair of classic, clean-lined sofas upholstered in a brown-on-ivory floral linen grounds an eclectic arrangement of vintage rattan armchairs, a bone-inlaid coffee table and a Moroccan Tuareg mat. "The fabric pattern—which has been a favorite of mine for a long time—feels very special in a large dose like this; it makes the entire room," the designer says.

The adjacent dining room's sage-green wallcovering has a "pattern so small in scale that you don't really register it," Caillier notes. The element adds a warmth that's emphasized by simple, rush-backed dining chairs with brown-striped seat cushions. "Those earth tones, used here and throughout the house, go a long way to making the interiors feel more understated," she says. "There are no bright colors; everything feels of the earth, which allowed us to create a

coziness that's not out of place in a very sunny California home."

A charming guest bedroom in the Maine vacation abode of New York City-based architect Gil Schafer inspired the design for the primary suite, in which a vertical floral print on linen extends from the walls up onto the ceiling, where it's fitted between the wood beams. "An upholstered bedroom is the coziest thing you can imagine; it feels like you're in a cocoon," says Caillier, who layered that diminutive design inspired by Indian block prints with new and vintage textiles in feminine florals, a ticking stripe and a Japanese stencil print—all united by their neutral tones and organic, handcrafted quality. Lest the room's cane bed, traditional English bedside cabinets and patterned fabric lampshades lean too far into British territory, Caillier was careful to create balance with California-inspired elements, from a deep window seat with a ticking-stripe-upholstered French mattress (which she says feels a bit more contemporary) to natural linen draperies.

On the other hand, in the reimagined kitchen, Calacatta Gold marble countertops and soft-green cabinets—installed, along with other new finishes, by general contractor Kurt Brellin—might feel a touch too beachy when lit by the room's broad skylight. So Caillier added a walnut island top and delicate, pleated porcelain light fixtures to bring that British sensibility into play. "Often, in that part of the world, you'll see super small-scale pendants hung a little lower over a big chunky island," she says. "I think it feels really charming."

From classic English pendants to vintage and antique lamps, the statement-making light fixtures Caillier sourced for each room "go a long way in pushing the design forward," she says. But it's the dining room's cluster of balloon-like frosted-glass orbs that provides the most powerful impact. "It's a fairly modern fixture, but it doesn't feel modern in the right setting," the designer explains. "Here, it swings the farm table, chairs and console away from the traditional zone and puts them in that vague area of 'what is this design style?' It's the place where my work always falls." Which, in retrospect, makes this home's unconventional creative brief right up Caillier's alley after all. ■



Above: A navy grass-cloth wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries and sofas upholstered in a Carolina Irving Textiles linen set the mood in the family room. Through the passageway, a row of Devol counter stools and Calacatta Gold marble backsplash are visible in the kitchen.

Opposite: Purchased at Nickey Kehoe, nautical paintings by Old Jack—a retired fisherman whose identity remains a mystery to all but the English gallery that represents him—hang above the fireplace. They complement a coffee table covered in an antique textile and an RH rug.





Above: Devol's pleated porcelain pendants, Classic Brass knobs and pulls from Chown Hardware and a butcher block island countertop add English charm to the sunny kitchen. The custom cabinets are painted in Portola Paints & Glazes' Against The Grain.

Opposite: An Apparatus light fixture prevents the Shoppe Amber Interiors table, Hollywood at Home chairs and Swedish console by Chelsea Textiles from feeling too traditional. The result is a dining room with an aesthetic that's hard to pin down—just how designer Heidi Caillier likes it.



Above: Two Michael S. Smith patterns—Jammu on the walls and Wallace Vine for the sink skirt—give the powder room a layered look. Caillier emphasized this with a rattan Soane Britain sconce and antique mirror from Bureau of Interior Affairs.

Opposite: Penny Morrison’s Ashok fabric applied to the primary bedroom’s walls and ceiling give the room a cocoon-like quality. The Serena & Lily bed is dressed with Hollywood at Home and John Derian throws and flanked by Penny Morrison lamps.