

PACIFIC PALAZZO

With an eye for design and collected treasures, a young family creates Italianate chic on our shores



by DAWN MOORE photographs by LISA ROMEREIN





The living room fireplace with an 18th-century limestone mantel from François & Co. Iron fire screen from Cabana Home. Mirrored table from Revival Antiques with crystals from Maison K and Lily. Farrow & Ball Vert de Terre paint. All curtains, hardware, and trim by St. Croix Collection with fabric by Schumacher. Manoir Gray wide-plank French oak floors from Exquisite Surfaces glow with Old World patina. In the library, a 19th-century shield-back chair is illuminated by natural sunlight. All flowers throughout by JL Designs, jldesignsandevents.com. PREVIOUS PAGES, LEFT TO RIGHT: Antique glass console and mural mix with a pair of antique candelabras from Hollyhock. Urns from S.R. Hogue with moss balls from Cabana Home; a soaring two-story entrance is defined by the custom Musée Rodin-inspired wrought iron staircase by Old World Elegance, antique sconces from Santa Barbara Lights, and antique Murano glass chandelier. Stone floors and wood stairs by Exquisite Surfaces, upholstery by St. Croix Collection and fabric by Schumacher on 18th-century settee. Wall paint by Farrow & Ball.



challenge” in design parlance usually means solving a problem. Or two. A home with sweeping ocean views to the west and mountain vistas to the east should hardly qualify, but the new owners of this Italianate palazzo soon found its quirks and turned them into jewels of inspiration.

Perched on a ridge on a quietly winding street, the house—a light-filled two-story structure with Palladian influences—was in mid-construction when the current owners acquired it. Which meant take-it-or-leave-it architecture presenting challenge number one: the front door was in the back. “We used landscaping and terraces to entice visitors to keep going,” notes the wife. Intrepid guests are rewarded with their first glimpse of the magic to come—an entrance surrounded with enchanted frescoes by decorative artist Scarlet Abbott. Using emulsions based from natural pigments, Abbott’s design gives a nod to the ocean locale by capping the mural with a shell motif.

Once inside, the aged limestone floors from Exquisite Surfaces, vintage Murano glass chandelier, and wrought iron staircase ooze grandeur with provenance. The home’s owners travel extensively, and, while in France, were inspired by the ironwork at the Musée Rodin, so they engaged the locally based Old World Elegance to reproduce it. “The Rodin museum was my father’s favorite place in all of Paris,” says the wife. “So now I feel like I have a touch of Paris and my father with me.” In fact, family is a strong presence in each and every room, given the treasure trove of cherished—and museum quality—heirloom antique furnishings and lighting fixtures, including 1920s French rock crystal sconces, Empire gilt bronze torchères, and several 19th-century Murano glass chandeliers. Resources such as Istdibs, eBay, and Santa Barbara Lights filled in.

While the exterior colors were original to the house, the owners’ preference for faded tapestry hues allowed Farrow & Ball’s Vert de Terre, Hay, and Skimming Stone in soft celadon, buttercream, and greige to set the tone for the interiors. St. Croix Collection’s use of the luxe silk damasks, taffetas, and velvets from Schumacher carried the palette throughout the living areas, layering delicious textures against the gray-washed French oak floors.

The overall effect evokes the serenity of a multigenerational palazzo with the sensibilities of southern California living. Think George Washington Smith goes to Florence via Versailles. The owners’ collection of 18th and 19th-century French and Italian antiques infused the space with a real sense of family history. “It’s not all matchy-matchy because I am really against full-on matched anything,” says the wife. That said, the library’s deep espresso walls, leather sofa, and partner’s desk offers the lone dark counterpoint to the home’s pale essence.

Although the residents are a young family with a toddler and the promise of more to come (challenge number two: baby-proof elegance), the wife’s love of grand, formal kitchens held sway, and triple ogee-edge Calcutta marble surrounds the Julie Lloyd-designed space. “Who’s to say living elegantly and child safety cannot live hand in hand?” says the designer. “The island allows for easy family seating at breakfast and transitions to welcoming guests in the evening to sample wines.” Blue and white ceramics and a Kohler farmhouse sink add a touch of country, but the tour de force comes from a custom-designed Scagliola stone hood by François & Co. Cast and finished by hand, it is the soul of warm gatherings en famille. And in what appears to be a rare concession to the husband’s hobbies, the space boasts a professional Thermador wine refrigeration unit. “My husband is an oenophile,” says the wife, “so we had to find space for his bottles.”

For his part, the husband seems content with his wood-burning fireplace and unpolished limestone mantel

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The guest bedroom’s gilded chinoiserie panels, tortoise shell box (from Guinevere in London), and rich cream damask bedding offers Asian exotica for overnight stays; a custom roman shade by St. Croix Collection shields family heirlooms, Italian desk from R.M. Barokh; the gilded Empire console and carved ebony screen purchased at Sotheby’s are from the family’s vast collection; a 17th-century Aubusson tapestry brought back from a family trip to Australia mixes with an antique chair with Fortuny fabric. FOLLOWING PAGES: Julia Grey chinoiserie bed from Summerhill Antiques. St. Croix Collection designed the bedding and draperies—finished with double rows of St. Croix Collection silk tassel trim—in Schumacher’s Botticelli silk taffeta. Silvergate damask-pattern handblocked wall covering from Farrow & Ball. Silvered chinoiserie screen by Gracie with antique chaise from Summerhill Antiques. Manoir Gray wood floor by Exquisite Surfaces.







in the cathedral-beam master suite. A softly patterned handblocked wall covering from Farrow & Ball in pale dove gray graces the walls, punctuated by French doors opening to ocean-view terraces—perfect for a morning’s yoga moment. The same finish carries into the sparkling but narrow walk-in closet. Custom alder wood cabinets painted ivory with a brown glaze are paneled and mitered for a Venetian feel, with mirrored doors ramping up the glamour. “Even though it’s a relatively smaller space, I wanted it to feel like a boutique, dressing room, and living area—a place you feel good in,” says designer Lisa Adams of LA Closet Design. Challenge number three conquered.

But the ultimate dazzle comes from the master bath’s silvered vanity with handpainted trees and flowers. The chinoiserie-infused theme is completed by rock crystal sconces and antique shelves wrought from intertwining gilded vines to hold the couple’s daily toiletries, offering a fantasy-filled start to every day. Turning “challenging” to “charming,” this home marries a romantic vision with a family’s past in the most classic California way. ■



TOP TO BOTTOM: Elegant yet family friendly, the Julie Lloyd-designed kitchen includes space for the husband’s wine collection and displays blue and white porcelain, including ginger jars from Cabana Home. A warm glaze of Farrow & Ball paint creates a light cream cabinetry color, which complements the luxe marble. Dalle de France Marly limestone floor by Exquisite Surfaces. Custom roman shades and trim by St. Croix Collection and fabric by Schumacher; the custom-designed handfinished hood by François & Co. hovers over Thermador’s Pro Grand Range. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: “Closets should look like little boutiques,” says designer Lisa Adams. Glass doors and mirrors enhance the illusion of space; roman shades in Schumacher’s Fog soften the Calcutta marble and porcelain tub by Kohler; the master bath’s silvered cabinets embellished with panels painted by Scarlet Abbott. Faucet, sink, mirror, and towel holder by Kohler; 1930s gilded corner console from Jefferson West Antiques became a guest bath vanity and Fortuny-inspired, Scarlet Abbott-stenciled walls in matte gold burnish the jewellike space.



The dining room's turn-of-the-19th-century Louis XVI chairs from Summerhill Antiques are still graced with their original paint; draperies with passementerie from St. Croix Collection in Schumacher's Mineral silk taffeta; an heirloom cabinet displays more family treasures. Vert de Terre paint by Farrow & Ball covers the walls. Manoir Gray wood floors by Exquisite Surfaces.