

San Francisco

Eye on the Ball

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In the dining room, a custom white oak dining table by Oakland's Jason Lees Design is paired with blackened ash Kilmos chairs from Oakland-based Munson Furniture. On the tabletop, works by Japanese ceramic artist Kaori Tatebayashi (found at MARCH) are illuminated by a Michael Anastassiades pendant.



Clockwise from top left: In the living room, a custom multisided sofa takes advantage of Presidio and Golden Gate Bridge views. Adjacent to the floor-to-ceiling window, an ink-on-panel piece by Bay Area-based artist Jenifer Kerf (via Dolby Chadwick Gallery) hangs above a custom steel console table fabricated by Oakland's Chambers Art & Design; the stained whitewashed wood kitchen cabinets are finished with Dune cabinet pulls by Alice Tachery; pillows on the sofa were custom made locally by Magnolia Lane.



East Meets West

GAMBLE + DESIGN CREATES A SERENE PRESIDIO HEIGHTS SANCTUARY FOR A SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY RETURNING HOME AFTER A TWO-DECADE RUN IN JAPAN.

BY LAURA ECKSTEIN JONES // PHOTOGRAPHED BY SUZANNA SCOTT

When she first came across it, the state of the 4,200-square-foot Presidio Heights home Jeni Gamble was tasked to transform was not good. "Every tile was different, there was a big, gaudy fireplace, and the floor was painted blue," she says.

Gamble, founder and creative director of San Francisco architecture and design firm gamble + design (gambleplusdesign.com), needed to completely overhaul the home for her clients, a family of four returning to the city after two decades in Japan. "The wife is native to Japan and very sophisticated, and the husband is originally from England," Gamble explains. "The home wasn't them at all. They would rather have a few beautiful items than a whole bunch of visual noise."

Interestingly enough, before the previous owners made their changes, the home was meant to be very modern and sleek architecturally. "The architect actually built his own home down the street, and it's very modern," Gamble says. "So in some ways, we were stripping it down to its original modern take, but with a more individual look and feel."

The entire home was overhauled with the goal of creating a serene Japanese aesthetic translated for the Bay Area. First, Gamble tackled the architectural changes, overhauling the kitchen, adding a powder room, redoing the bathrooms, ripping out the ceiling, refinishing the walnut floors, redoing the lighting and more. Then came the design changes, where pretty much everything—including furniture, artwork and textiles—was

brought in. The only item the clients brought with them was the primary bedroom bed. “We touched everything in the home the whole way through,” Gamble says. “It’s one of the things that’s unique about our firm and what we do.”

Along with the big changes, no detail was overlooked. Even the main stairwell’s exposed joinery—modeled after the traditional Japanese craft of *tsugite* joinery—was thought through, as was the living room’s custom double-sided sofa, designed by gamble + design and fabricated by Buildlane. “In true Japanese fashion, the sofa was lifted a specific height from the floor to make for cleanability,” Gamble says. “We wanted it to be double-sided so you can socialize on one side and look at the view of the Presidio and the Golden Gate Bridge on the other side.”

After 20 years practicing in the Bay Area, Gamble has many strong relationships with local artisans and makers, and used that to her advantage when selecting pieces for the home. In the dining room, Gamble paired a custom white oak table by Oakland-based Jason

Lees Design with blackened ash Klismos chairs by Munson Furniture, also out of Oakland. This sits atop a rug created in collaboration with Woven Designs.

Artwork and lighting play a large part in adding personality to the home and, for the most part, were created by locals or have a personal connection to the owners. “I do get kind of cuckoo about lighting,” says Gamble, who used to be a lighting designer. “We are constantly looking for pieces that are out of the box.” In the bedroom, a photograph from Aynur Girgin Westen’s *Shades of Gray* series and crocheted pendants by London-based Naomi Paul surround the bed. In the living room, an ink-on-panel piece by Bay Area artist Jenifer Kent—sourced from Dolby Chadwick Gallery—hangs above a custom steel console table made by Oakland’s Chambers Art & Design.

All in all, the yearlong project was a success—the homeowners have recently called Gamble back to work on the rooftop deck area. “It was such a great project,” she says. “I was really sad when it ended.” ■



Clockwise from top: The stair enclosure, hewn in stained white oak, features exposed joinery, echoing the traditional Japanese craft of *tsugite* joinery; in the entry, Foscari’s Spokes 2 pendant illuminates a custom bench with shoe storage, perfect for a no-shoes household; in the primary bedroom, Naomi Paul’s distinctive crocheted pendants make clever reference to the hanging metal sculptures of artist Ruth Asawa, while a photograph from Aynur Girgin Westen’s *Shades of Gray* series hangs over a bed. Opposite page: The serene primary bathroom features a Japanese-style soaking tub, set against a wall clad in Moon tiles by WOW.

