

# california

HOME+DESIGN

OUR  
ANNUAL  
TRIBUTE  
TO THE  
WINNERS  
OF THE

CH+D AWARDS  
2006

PLUS  
SFDC  
WINTER  
MARKET  
REPORT

WINNER OF THE  
RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR  
DESIGN AWARD:  
SAN FRANCISCO'S  
NORTHBROOK DESIGN

In the living room, a suite of Saarinen—a side table and two Womb chairs covered in chocolate bouclé from Knoll—is juxtaposed with a painting by Alice Fisher Blood that creates the impression of a sunrise over the warm room. OPPOSITE: Accents of orange and yellow pop against a scaled-down sectional from Mitchell Gold.



## CH+D AWARD FOR RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR DESIGN (UNDER 3,000 SQ. FT.)

**KATHERINE NORTH, KARIN  
FALCK-STRICKLAND, CHELSEA POST,  
SHIRA O'KEEFE  
NORTHBROOK DESIGN**



For a young couple living in a 1949 house in the heart of Noe Valley, Katherine North, principal of San Francisco-based Northbrook Design, combined midcentury modern classics with colorful accessories to create a contemporary dwelling that pays tribute to the era in which it was built. But before turning her attention to decorative elements, North undertook a few renovations to maximize the 2,100-square-foot space and make it more livable. An oversized laundry room

was converted into a master bedroom, the former master bathroom became a closet and custom storage was added throughout. Now the entry level contains a living room, dining room, kitchen, office, den and guest bathroom. Downstairs, a spacious master suite along with a laundry room and utility space were made to measure with built-ins designed by North.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LANOLA KATHLEEN STONE



In the dining room, a 1950s Heywood-Wakefield table was purchased to accompany the owners' existing sideboard. The abstract painting of sunlight reflecting on water was found at the SFMOMA Artists Gallery.



With a specific vision that she describes as "retro with a forward-thinking twist," North started the design with a subdued palette of brown and taupe before adding splashes of color with classic mid-century furniture and custom upholstery. "They wanted their home to feel young and quite cheerful," she says. "But they are also very practical people, so there are no frivolous pieces. Each item has its purpose and its place."

Accordingly, when the couple began the redesign in June 2004, they kept only a few pieces from the house's prior state—including a Heywood-Wakefield sideboard purchased at Another Time in San Francisco. Adding the necessary furnishings one by one, North helped the homeowners build up their mid-century collection, filling in the blanks with custom pieces and clean-lined basics from sources such as Ted Boerner, Mitchell Gold and Limn. The result

ABOVE: Adjacent to the dining room, the kitchen features glass tiles from Ann Sacks for a warm backsplash that contrasts with the stainless-steel Miele stove and limestone countertops. RIGHT: In the guest bath, graphic white tiles offer a stark contrast to the terra-cotta-colored walls.



*“They wanted their home to feel young and quite cheerful.”*



is an open, airy space that marries old with new in a fresh light, thanks in part to the addition of witty vintage-style artwork. An oil painting in the living room presents a simple bucolic scene that feels decidedly San Franciscan, while one in the dining room offers a subtle abstraction of sunlight reflecting on water.

In addition to avoiding clutter, North also tried to maximize light in the small rooms by keeping windows unobstructed and, at times, employing just the idea of sunlight. A serendipitous light motif in accessories and artwork—juxtaposed against the earthy hues of the walls and furnishings—casts brightness throughout. In the kitchen, amber-hued glass tiles from Ann Sacks create a warm backsplash. In the upstairs guest bathroom, terra-cotta walls provide a sunny but unobtrusive canvas for an architectural sink and custom vanity.

If the home's common living areas represent sunlight, then it's sunset that prevails in the relaxing downstairs master suite. Here, North resumes the taupe-and-chocolate color scheme but relies on natural light from wall-to-wall windows—which lead to a private garden—rather than candy-hued accessories to enliven the space. As compact as the rooms upstairs, the bedroom uses space-saving tricks, including built-in storage and a gilded wall mirror to suggest a larger space. The master bath is a tranquil haven: Rift-cut white-oak cabinets and recessed storage offer a subtle contrast to limestone countertops and deep wall color.

After more than a year, North raised the curtain on the revamped home this September, just in time for the couple's in-house wedding-rehearsal party. Since then, the homeowners have relished the sense of privacy and lightheartedness that North created. “With lots of texturing, touches of whimsy and unusual color combinations, we were able to create an aesthetic that is both timeless and fun,” says North. —*Chloé Harris*

TOP: A rich bedspread from Amenity Home, emblazoned with a single white dandelion, covers a bed from Limn, while just a few favorite things dot the custom-designed night table and built-in bookcases constructed by Solid Wood (left). RIGHT: A recessed cabinet over the tub, framed in the same white oak used in the bedroom, was designed to appear as a continuation of the vanity mirrors.

