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# HOME BASE

IN MARIN COUNTY'S IDYLIC HILLS, ONE DESIGN TEAM DOVETAILS PAST AND PRESENT TO TURN THIS 1925 HOME INTO A PLACE OF INSPIRATION FOR A BUSY FAMILY OF FOUR.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY LISA TORNELLO AND CHELSEA AYRES, MILLROAD STUDIO  
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BY BRAD HUBBELL AND ALESSANDRO LAI, HUBBELL DAILY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMY BARTLAM  
STYLING BY KENDRA SMOOT  
CONTRACTOR: HTH CONSTRUCTION



# IN

1986, this Kentfield, California home went through an inspired renovation that left the bones nearly perfect. But for one young family, a few changes still needed to happen for it to be *their* perfect home. "The husband is a Chief Product Officer at a major technology company; his wife is a talented writer," says interior designer Lisa Tornello. "They are both inspired by nature and adventure—they ski, mountain bike, hike, and play soccer. They have two boys, ages 12 and 15, and a brown lab named Lily."

The family called on Lisa's Millroad Studio and architectural firm Hubbell Daily to bring the residence up to speed. Their punch list included extending the footprint to add a second floor, building out a dedicated workspace and home office, and ensuring the boys would each have their own bedroom. "We wished to preserve the unique look and feel of the home while adding new form and function to the spaces," architect Brad Hubbell explains.

"Our challenge was to create a much more functional, roomy, and light-filled bedroom wing incorporating two separate rooms for the boys with a shared bath, along with a primary suite containing a light-filled and spacious bedroom, a more efficient, clean bath, and a more generous, spacious closet," architect Brad Hubbell says. Interior designer Lisa Tornello outfitted one bedroom with a rug from Revival, a side table from Blu Dot, and Parachute linens. The lamp is from Ferm Living.

For the interiors, Lisa says that finishes of the home were an intentional mix. "We brought in planked interior doors that match the original doors of the home," she recalls. "We then mixed it with a more modern detail of recessed baseboards and window and door casings. We enveloped the rooms in crisp whites like Benjamin Moore's Simply White and Chantilly Lace." Additional features include the Ashley Norton interior door sets with rugged, worn details, finished in a dark bronze that reads both modern and historical, and gridded windows which add a historical nod.

To connect the original first level with the addition, Brad painstakingly designed and built—and rebuilt—a gorgeous stairwell with recessed wall string, a simple handrail, and cantilevered treads. "Though we had fine and thorough details, the contractor did not follow our instructions or share our vision for the space," he admits. "In the end, after much persistence, and at nearly the final hour, the contractor rebuilt the stairs to our specifications, resulting in a fantastic result."

From finishes to furniture, the interior aesthetic encapsulates the family's personal style, their Danish roots, and the architecture of the home. "And it's all done with a modern twist and through our signature style of a muted color palette, natural materials, and textural moments," Lisa admits. "The family wanted their home to blend historical and contemporary elements. And they wanted it to be a place they could sink into and find inspiration."

It was a three-year project, and all parties say well worth the wait. Brad reports, "The family's latest words to us were: 'First off, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We absolutely love the house. You really understood our house, our style, and incorporated it into a wonderful vision.'"

Through the use of a light-filled stairway, the design team connected the main level bedroom wing to an upper level that has an open, loft-like office, a guest room and upper guest bath.











(Clockwise from left) The boys' shower features dark Bedrosian tile. The floor tile from Tilebar was specified to easily transition from a curbless shower to the shower pan. In the primary, mouth-blown pendants were made by Danish lighting designer Nuura. "They're designed to be reminiscent of a peaceful, snow-covered winter landscape," Lisa says. A fluted travertine tile from Tile Fever is used on vertical surfaces behind the vanity and on the bathtub apron. The upstairs bath features stand-out marble (accentuated even further with an larger-than-normal edge detail) and Brendan Ravenhill wall sconces.



This nook, located in the primary bedroom, features a vintage table with a Notary Ceramics lamp and woven chair. "We imagined our clients could write letters here," Lisa shares. The artwork is vintage.

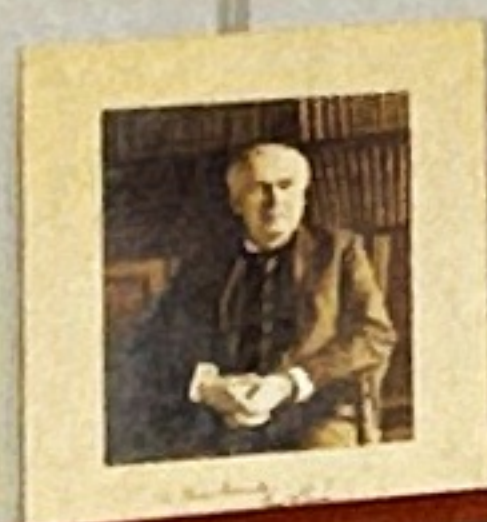








The living room features an heirloom Steinway & Sons piano (not pictured), passed down through the family. "The homeowner's grandmother was best friends with an accomplished opera singer," Lisa says. "Steinway crafted the piano specifically for her accompanist who she, allegedly, had an affair with and later married. A picture of her accompanist sits on the fireplace mantel."



**"THESE ARE PLACES TO TAKE A MOMENT, PAUSE,  
AND TAKE IN LIFE'S SIMPLE PLEASURES."**  
—LISA TORNELLO



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# COTTAGE TO ITS CORE

This Bay Area makeover is full of budget-friendly solutions.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY MILLROAD STUDIO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMY BARTLAM

STYLING BY ANITA YUNG & CAROLINE STEIN

BUILDER: LEO JACINTO

“We imagined traveling in a forest, stumbling upon a cute cottage, heading into the kitchen, and thinking—*What a delightful place to find.*” says designer Lisa Tor-

nello of Millroad Studio. So began the design process for this kitchen in San Anselmo—a community north of San Francisco with a decidedly small-town feel.

“Many homes in the area started as second homes, catering to families living in San Francisco who wanted to escape the fog and head to the countryside,” Lisa

shares. “The opening of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937 introduced more full-time families living there but the small-town feel has remained ever since. We wanted to pay respect to the home’s lineage but, also, honor that a young family lived there.”

The project began with a deep forest green color from Benjamin Moore, aptly named Boreal Forest. By extending the rich hue from the cabinets to the walls, the design team created a moody, saturated moment—hello, indoor nature bathing! “The timeless, aged harlequin floor was meant to feel like lived-in faded denim jeans,” Lisa explains. This detail didn’t come easy, however. “I was having trouble locating 12 x 12-inch tiles that could give me the look that I wanted,” she recalls. “I finally found a 12 x 24-inch option at Ceramic Tile Design and luckily our builder cut them down to size. The tiles weren’t all exactly the same size, so he worked his magic with the grout lines to get them to look the same.”

To complete the all-around delightful vibes, vintage wood accents add an element of collected character. “We brought in art, textiles, and accessories from Westpark Home, a well-curated boutique in downtown San Anselmo, that felt traveled and rich with history,” Lisa says. “The clients said they felt like the kitchen looked like it’s always been there which, to me, is the ultimate compliment.”



BEFORE

1. The kitchen hadn’t been touched since the 1950s, but budget was wholly important. “The couple had just finished an expensive gut-job to their two bathrooms and were looking for an upgrade to their kitchen. They didn’t want new cabinetry or to move any walls. Luckily, because the cabinets were actual wood and not a veneer, we could easily paint them,” the designer explains.

2. A clever corner sink from Home Depot makes the most of the window views. The countertops are Caesarstone’s Statuario Nuvo with a honed finish, and the light above is by Regina Andrew.



AFTER

1





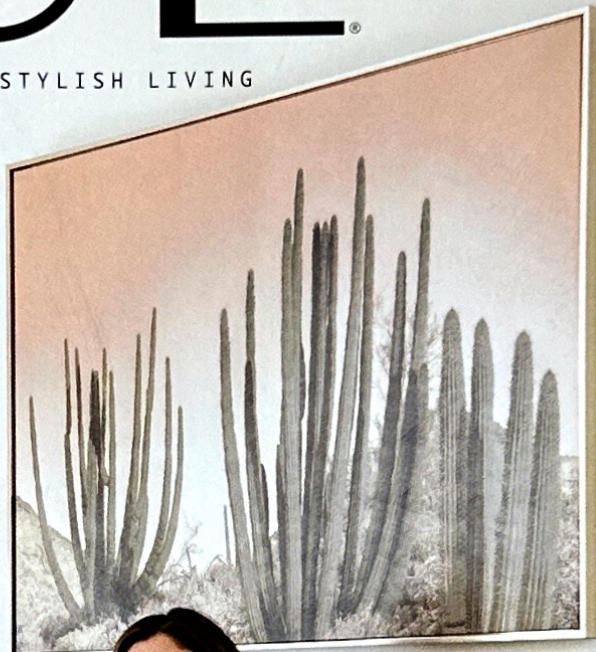




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# SALT of the EARTH

A DECADE IN THE MAKING

LISA TORNELLO'S DREAM HOME BECOMES REALITY



• Interior Design by MILLROAD STUDIO • Photography by SETH SMOOT









“The people here connect to the land in a way that’s special,”

says designer Lisa Tornello of her Northern California home. “When we bought the house, we knew it was a rare opportunity to own almost a half-acre in this community. That amount of land would never change, but we could change everything else, from the finishes to the flow to the backyard. So, for ten years, we saved our pennies to make this renovation a reality.”

As the founder of Millroad Studio, Tornello is an interior designer by trade. That said, her profession didn’t necessarily make the process any easier. “In my design work, I’m normally the conduit to my client’s stories. I love digging in and finding what makes them happy, inspired, and comfortable. So, when it became time to tell our story, I was a little bit all over the place because I love so many things,” she recalls. It was her husband, a writer, who gave her the nudge she needed. “He kept urging me to stick to my creative process and to trust it. It was only when I began the process reserved for my clients that things began to open up. And through that, I was able to identify our must-haves.”

## DESIGN AT EASE

Tornello and her husband boiled down their design checklist. “We knew we wanted to use real, natural materials as much as possible,” says Tornello. “We knew we wanted to work with other creatives and makers and bring in their expertise to produce something special. We knew we wanted to know all about the backstories of who made everything and how. We knew that our family heirlooms will always have a prominent place in our home. We knew that we wanted the home to not just look good but to feel good.” In the dining room, a mix of old and new works well. Vintage paper cord Danish chairs, snagged from Craigslist, surround a worn farmhouse dining table.



"It's the old adage that the more you know about the Earth, the more likely you are to protect it."







## SPACES WITH A STORY

"When Rei at Pietra Fina told us that the mismatched veining in our Brazilian quartzite was the result of an earthquake, we knew it was ours," Tornello recalls. "We gave it a prominent place right by the kitchen sink and love to be able to share the story." Architect Samina Saude had the idea of a fourteen-foot-long island that runs parallel to the backyard, connecting the space to the outside. Custom cabinets handcrafted by Bob Charlesworth look intentionally original to the home, though with flair. Charlesworth carved the range hood from wood. "When I saw how he nailed the curves I wanted, it brought a tear to my eye. I couldn't believe he could do that," Tornello says, smiling. Also of note: chic Italian sconces from the 1950s rewired to today's standards.





"The materials that always seem to last and feel good are from the Earth and crafted by hand."

## TRUST THE PROCESS

Even after years of patience, there were still hiccups. "We had so many challenges and, early in the process, adopted the belief that life doesn't happen to us, it happens for us," says the designer. "We learned that our electrical wiring and panel needed to be redone because there were burn marks already present, but we were thankful we could fix that and make it safe for our family. When our flooring showed up wrong three different times, it led us to find the flooring we liked even better. And when our sewage backed up and needed to be replumbed, we were happy it happened before our new flooring was in!" Now, they're just happy it's home. "Every morning we walk down, grateful for this space, for our health, for our jobs. Because we saved for so long, waited for so long, went through so much to get here, it means that much more to us."





