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TRAVELING TRIO:
The masa-based sopes at Tamarindo, in Oakland, topped with (from left to right) carnitas, roasted poblano strips, and potatoes and chorizo, bring a traditional snack from Jalisco off the street and into the dining room.





San Francisco interior designers **Jeffry Weisman** and **Andrew Fisher** are masters of opulent yet elegantly understated rooms. For a new ultra-private penthouse overlooking Lafayette Park, the duo turned the color down a notch to highlight the art, the views, and the sleek interior architecture.

City confidential

BY DIANE DORRANS SAEKS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANÇOIS DISCHINGER



MASTERS OF CONTROL (ABOVE) Jeffry Weisman and Andrew Fisher (right), whose San Francisco firm specializes in interiors that whisper luxury.

POISED PERFECTION (LEFT) Fisher and Weisman created a superb sitting room, calibrated to the millimeter so that each detail is balanced and harmonious. The custom-designed chairs and sofa are covered in ivory chenille by Bergamo. A pair of graphic Donald Sultan prints hovers above antique Chinese vases and cerused oak demilune cabinets that echo the wall molding. The wool-and-silk carpet, designed by Fisher Weisman, was crafted by Stark.





Jeffrey Weisman and Andrew Fisher,

with more than 45 years in the design trade between them, have decorated many prize San Francisco apartments over the years. So, within seconds, they could see the potential written all over their new clients' recently acquired penthouse in a blue-chip building in Pacific Heights. The spacious floor-through duplex has superb light, with windows overlooking Lafayette Park and silver expanses of the bay to the north and south. "It is a fantastic property, very private, very quiet," Weisman says.

The penthouse had undergone several transformations since its construction in the late 1920s, including a recent reworking by local architect Andrew Skurman, perhaps the finest purveyor of classical residential architecture in the city. Skurman's contributions included archways and new windows to infuse the 12-room apartment with a new grandeur.

Having worked on several apartments in the same building, Weisman and Fisher were thrilled at how Skurman had reconfigured the space, resolving many awkward aspects of



CLASSIC FLAVOR (ABOVE) The kitchen was modified so that pocket doors open into the dining room. The same ivory paint used throughout the apartment for a sense of continuity shows up here in an eggshell finish. Counter stools by Michael Taylor Designs are a modified version of his "White" dining chairs.

CURVES AND ANGLES (LEFT) The dining room, which accommodates 20 people, has two large tables for greater versatility. The ivory-painted dining chairs are classic styles by Michael Taylor Designs of San Francisco. The silhouette pattern of the chocolate brown-and-ivory wool-and-silk Stark carpet has a similar design to the carpet in the adjacent living room—in reverse tones.



BRIGHTNESS FALLS (TOP) Architect Andrew Skurman redesigned the hallway/gallery leading from the entry foyer to the living room, adding a gracefully detailed skylight. He also added the arched window at the end of the hallway to create a focal point along the enfilade.

THROWN FOR A LOOP (BOTTOM) The stairway banister from the entry hall to the upstairs media room, exercise gym, and outdoor terrace was restyled with a new elegance. The formerly open balustrade was enclosed to emphasize its dramatic upward angle. Fisher and Weisman had the parquet floor finished in a tobacco hue to create a more graphic juxtaposition with the ivory detailing of the arches, windows, and trim by Skurman.

EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE (OPPOSITE) The dove-gray dressing room affords both a discreet storage area and a passage to the bathroom, visible in the background. The closet doors have panels of vintage glass and antique brass door handles and hinges by P.E. Guerin of New York. Pocket doors are concealed in the archway. Linen drum shades are by Michael Vanderbyl for Boyd Lighting.

the original design. Hallways that seemed too long and confusing before are now skillfully paced, says Fisher. Four bedrooms became two, with ample bathrooms and dressing areas. Both husband and wife now have spectacular offices. "For casual or formal entertaining, the public spaces work flawlessly," Fisher adds. "And all the details that Skurman devised feel bold and exciting."

But when it came to decor, the previous owners had a penchant for elaborate Florentine froufrou, including overwrought plaster moldings, vivid marble fireplaces, and faux finishes and textures. The entry foyer was dark and ponderous, "like a law firm library," Weisman says.

The new owners have more modern taste. "Our goal was decor that was soft-spoken and a bit formal," says Weisman, who grew up in Los Angeles and earned an MBA from Stanford. "We wanted it to feel airy, with rooms that were contemporary in mood."

Fisher and Weisman had several discussions with their clients about stripping the detailing to the bare minimum. In the end, the designers took a more judicious approach, removing a series of heavy brown Corinthian columns in the foyer and erasing some plasterwork that felt dated, then painting every wall, ceiling, and doorway a pale french vanilla (Benjamin Moore's "Acadia White"). This new skin of matte white paint created a subtle play of light and shadow. "Suddenly, the rooms became a rich but low-key background for a collection of modern art and furniture," says Fisher, who has a degree from California College of the Arts.

The designers also introduced subtle color: a soft dove gray in the bedroom and dressing rooms, natural linen tones in the wife's office, pale taupe and stained oak in the husband's library, a deep taupe in the media room upstairs. "Without this layering of tones," Weisman says, "the effect would fall flat."

Today, hand-scraped and waxed parquet de Versailles in quarter-sawn oak adds a rich luster to the entry foyer and the grand enfilade of the hall gallery, which is lined with Matisse prints. In the living room, a new pale limestone mantel has replaced the old one of multicolored marble, its simple bull-nose curves bringing a sense of control to the room. A palette of ivory, taupe, and tobacco restores an air of order and calm. In the dining room, Fisher and Weisman selected a series of "White" chairs by Michael Taylor Designs. Painted ivory, in a curved design reminiscent of Klismos chairs in ancient Greece, they add a graceful, modern note.

Many of the pieces in the apartment are custom-designed by Fisher and Weisman or others. "We try to limit the amount of showroom furniture that goes into a project, so that it doesn't look too familiar or expected," Weisman says. The designers' combination of grand, classical architecture and an elegant yet spare decor is fresh, distinctive, and vital—the perfect background for city life. ■

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