



# In Balance

Dramatic gestures meet playful color  
inside an elegant contemporary  
estate overlooking the East Bay.

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**Architecture:** Timothy Chappelle and Casey Cramer, Arcanum Architecture **Interior Design:** Jennifer Robin, Jennifer Robin Interiors  
**Home Builder:** Spencer Curry, Behrens-Curry Homes **Landscape Architecture:** John Merten, Studio Green





A bespoke Bocci light fixture composed of 150 handblown glass orbs in the clients' favorite colors hangs from the great room's 20-foot-tall ceiling. Although it's always a focal point, designer Jennifer Robin notes it's "particularly magical" at night. The Statsky Design reclaimed wood table is surrounded by Atelier Purcell dining chairs.

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n the morning of her first interview with the owners of this modern Atherton abode, interior designer Jennifer Robin wanted to try something different. Bypassing her largely neutral work clothes, she reached for an emerald-green velvet blazer. The decision proved fortuitous: "The client commented on the jacket first thing," she says. "She ended up ordering one for herself and hiring me. Our shared love for this color became an inside joke, and it's a hue we utilized throughout the home."

The clients' previous residences had leaned heavily into bold colors and prints. But the clean-lined estate they were building from the ground up with architect Timothy Chappelle called for a different approach. "My clients love color, pattern and whimsy. This presented me with the challenge of incorporating these preferences in a thoughtful and restrained manner that lives in harmony with the architecture," Robin says. "On the flip side, if the interiors were too modern and subdued, there was the risk of it becoming a sterile, commercial-feeling home. We had to strike the perfect balance."

From the start, the dwelling was designed to make a powerful statement. Chappelle, who was assisted by project manager Casey Cramer, says the owners envisioned their future residence as a retreat where they could effortlessly host large parties and their now-grown children when they visit—something like a personal resort. To create that feeling, the architects and general contractor Spencer Curry employed techniques more often used in a luxury hotel than in a private home. Here, meticulous engineering meets materials such as board-formed concrete, horizontal slabs of limestone veneer and industrial steel posts that remain exposed—all flowing seamlessly from the exterior to the interior. "This is a unique commercial-grade concrete-and-steel building that required a level of coordination by the contractor and design team not common on residential projects," Chappelle notes.

The best resorts delight visitors with striking features, and this home has those sorts of captivating elements in spades. "They wanted lots of glass and floor-to-ceiling door systems that slide open to take in the big views," the architect

says. "But they were also very into the idea of more unique, fun-loving touches." Thus, every space has an architectural flourish. Take the voluminous, two-story great room, where a large-scale concrete fireplace surround joins a dramatic stone-and-steel staircase topped by a floating glass bridge. And with the push of a button, the space's glass wall system opens to a terraced pool deck designed by landscape architect John Merten overlooking unobstructed views of Palo Alto and the East Bay. Intuitively, Robin knew this room couldn't withstand an overdose of pattern and that it required furniture with substance. "I wanted heavy, comfortable furnishings with amazing texture," she says. "The kind of curated pieces that would draw people in."

Expertly threading the needle, Robin paired playful acrylic-and-emerald-shearing ottomans with a slender bronze table and a bulbous channel-tufted swivel chair. Deep-seated velvet sofas mimic the color of the sky views, while accent tables in marble, walnut and reclaimed wood have a grounding effect. The large-scale geometric Moroccan rug that flows underfoot was inspired by the lines of the scaffolding that surrounded the dwelling during construction. But it's the dining room chandelier on the other side of the space that redefines the phrase "jaw-dropping." The custom light fixture features 150 handblown glass balls in the client's favorite colors—green, blue, pink and yellow. "It's an interactive sculpture as you walk throughout the home, inside and out," the designer says. "The piece is the central 'wow' moment that sets the playful mood and palette."

Elsewhere, the designer opted for bold shapes and textures instead of color. In the kitchen, Robin selected a trio of quirky, asymmetric light fixtures above the island and created mesh-front metal cabinets with open backs that allow the veining of the marble backsplash to show through. An oversize half-circle sofa forms a conversation space in the lower-level lounge, and in the primary bedroom, wood paneling frames a channel-upholstered fabric headboard over 7 feet tall.

But the house isn't all about the drama. "We strove for modern interiors that reflect the fun and loving family that resides within," Robin says. "It's grand, but the clients are comfortable and happy in this home, even when it's just the two of them." ■



Oversize fixtures from Archetype hang over the walnut-and-rift-sawn-oak kitchen island. Pieces of shell and green aggregate in the Concreteworks countertops pick up the green veining in the backsplash from Da Vinci Marble. The stools are by Berman Rosetti.







Ambrosia chairs and Fern benches pull up a table refinished by Statsky Design in the family dining area. In the background, the terraced deck by landscape architect John Merten features a resort-worthy pool and hot tub.





**Above:** Architect Timothy Chappelle created a glass walkway between the primary suite and the bedroom wing that allows sunshine to stream down through the skylight to the first floor. Above is a ceiling of clear western red cedar.

**Opposite:** Wood-and-steel stair steps are mounted between slender metal pickets and a limestone veneer wall sourced from Peninsula Building Materials Co. Used on both the interior and exterior, the buff-colored stone helps blur the lines between inside and out. The Jorge Zalszupin bench is from Espasso.







For the primary suite, the homeowners envisioned a relaxing retreat in a calm palette. Built by Matthew Chase Woodworks, the bed features a pop-up television in the footboard and C&C Milano fabric on the channel-tufted headboard. The pendant lights are by Apparatus, and the neutral striped rug is by Erden.

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**Above:** Plastered walls and a Calacatta Oro-clad soaking tub with a Fantini faucet placed atop an oak-and-marble pedestal set a serene tone in the primary bathroom. Horizontal cedar slats outside the window provide ample privacy.

**Opposite:** A mix of natural materials distinguish the homeowners' bathroom. The vanity, topped with a statement piece of Calacatta Oro marble from Da Vinci Marble, sits on dark stone tile and against light wood paneling. Allied Maker sconces top a custom mirror with hidden lights and an integrated television.







The lower-level lounge's bar sports a backsplash and waterfall island made with Arabescato marble from Da Vinci Marble, plus custom walnut-and-metal shelves. The barstools are by (wh)Ore Häus Studios, and the brass light fixtures are by Thomas Hayes Studio.





Also found in the lower-level lounge is a curvy Ochre sofa customized with a blue-striped trim. Extra seating comes courtesy of a trio of Nella Vetrina stools. The Christian Woo coffee table is from The Future Perfect, and the rug is by Mark Nelson Designs.

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