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PIEDMONT

GREENER PASTURES

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY MINDED DESIGNER
CREATES AN ECO-CONSCIOUS SPACE TO CALL HOME.

By Allison McCordy
Interior Photography by Danae Knaab // Portrait by Ingrid Photography

The Jones family, with a 5-year-old son and energetic cattle dog, were quickly outgrowing their San Francisco home. After five years in their beloved Bernal Heights Victorian, they did what many San Franciscans in search of more space do: make the move to the East Bay. They settled on Piedmont, an idyllic leafy town with a strong sense of community and great schools that didn't feel too far from the city. "It's one of the closest towns to San Francisco in the East Bay, so it's close enough to my office in Potrero Hill," says Jennifer Jones, head of design firm Niche Interiors.

As a seasoned designer with an ethos of eco-friendliness, Jones had a specific vision in mind for her new home. She wanted an older building with original charm that she could put her stamp on with a mix of classic and modern furniture for a California canal vibe. So when she saw the beautifully restored 1930s brick home with views of the bay from the front courtyard, she knew it was a winner. The recent remodel retained many of the original architectural elements—crown molding, fireplace, staircase railing, bay window—that give the place its character. Jones was also drawn to the layout: formal living room and dining room to the left of the entry, connecting to the kitchen in the back, which opens up to a more casual eating area and family room on the right. "The flow of the house works really well for our family," she says. "In fact, our 5-year-old son and cattle dog like to do laps around the main floor."

Since no further interior renovation was required when they moved in, Jones could focus on environmentally friendly cosmetic changes instead. Designing for anyone's own family is a daunting task, so she approached the process like she does with clients, putting together an inspiration book and



For her own home, designer Jennifer Jones mixed vintage furniture and modern pieces with a nod to the 1930s. Here, a classic white sofa is paired with a teal armchair. The fireplace surround is made of marble, and the built-in shelving is a sophisticated yet family-friendly vibe.

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Hardwood in the dining room really made the space feel like a warm embrace. Modern luxury reimagined the dining room with a mix of classic and modern pieces. The table is a mix of classic and modern pieces. The chairs are a mix of classic and modern pieces. The lighting is a mix of classic and modern pieces. The overall look is a mix of classic and modern pieces.

design concept with her husband, where they identified the colors, shapes and moods they were looking for, then tapping her team at Niche Interiors to weigh in on paint swatches and non-flame-retardant upholstery choices. "It felt overwhelming at first, because as a designer, you know the thousands of options available," she says. "The team at Niche Interiors would cast the tie-breaking votes when I couldn't decide on a fabric or accessory."

While a formal design would have made sense with the home's traditional style, Jones chose a more family-friendly approach. "I wanted it to feel sophisticated, not stuffy," she says. So she mixed in vintage furniture and pieces with classic details—like the Cisco Home tufted sofa in the living room—and kept the look modern with new light fixtures, updated window treatments and graphic wallpaper. They also repainted every room in the 2,300-square-foot house—using zero VOC (volatile organic compounds) paint, of course—to keep the space light and airy inside.

A color palette of cool neutrals, with pops of blues and greens, has a calming effect and achieves the cohesive (not "matchy") look that Jones was after. She balances the darker Verellen sofa in the family room with boisterous blues and light wood furniture in the adjacent breakfast nook. Vibrant sea-green walls in the guest bedroom are toned down with ivory, gray and black accents. And so keep



the all-white kitchen from looking too stark, they painted the lower perimeter cabinets a blue-gray. "My goal was to use neutrals in a new way," she says. Her favorite example: the vintage ottomans reupholstered in blush mohair from Schumacher in the formal living room. "They're neutral, but not in a literal way like tan or beige."

For a house with a dog and a 5-year-old, there's a lot of white, but that didn't scare Jones. Her advice to anyone with a family and penchant for light colors: "Think realistically about how you use different rooms in the house; pick durable, natural fabrics like cotton or linen blends; think of using patterns that will hide normal wear and tear; and choose retail pieces that aren't so precious for high-traffic areas."

"Also, non-toxic, water-based stain treatment is a family's best friend," she chuckles.

Jones brought in layers of texture to punch up the muted tones throughout the house. She added drama in the dining room with a striking hand-painted, hand-dipped Cate & Son wallpaper and vintage Miller chairs reupholstered in mossy green velvet.

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Blue-gray lower cabinets and island break up the all-white kitchen, while copper and brass accents add a touch of color and texture. The master bedroom features a double vanity with marble countertops and a tub.

by Ramo Fabrics. Plush, patterned pillows carry up different rooms in the house, and the tasseled ottoman throw in the master bedroom is a personal touch from a trip to Ajay's home in Mexico.

Since Jones specializes in sourcing eco-friendly, nontoxic materials for all professional projects, she naturally made it a priority for her family's home too. In addition to using zero-VOC paint throughout the house and avoiding upholstery treated with flame retardants (some of the most harmful chemicals in

the home), she had her eyes on sustainability as well. The 10-foot custom, midcentury-inspired walnut table, a collaboration between Niche Interiors and Varian Design, is made from FSC-certified (Forest Stewardship Council) wood with a nontoxic finish. Potted plants add an organic element and also help improve air quality inside. "I tell clients all the time that you don't have to sacrifice style to go green," she says. Now, she can use her Piedmont home as a personal setting point. ■

DESIGN DETAILS

RESIDENCE
Single-family home

LOCATION
Piedmont

INTERIOR DESIGN
Niche Interiors
nichedesign.com

LANDSCAPING
Joey Moss Landscaping
925.358.5192
Valerie Metzger Landscape Design
METZGERDESIGN.COM

VENDORS

APPARATUS
Formal dining room chandelier
apparatustudio.com

ARTERIOS
Bedside lamps in master bedroom
arterioshome.com

CHASIDH
Mirror in formal dining room
chasidh.com

CISCO HOME
Living room sofa and armchairs
ciscohome.net

COLE & SON
Wallpaper in formal dining room
coleandson.com

EGG COLLECTIVE
Entry console
eggcollective.com

MR. BROWN LONDON
Entry mirror
mrbrownlondon.com

NOBIS FURNITURE
Heavy-gal brass coffee table in living room
nobisfurniture.com

REBECCA AT WOOD
Decorative pillows in master bedroom
rebeccatwood.com

ROOM & BOARD
Rug in family room
roomandboard.com

SABIN
Nightstands in master bedroom
sabin.us

STAIN CABINET
Rug in formal living room
staincabinet.com

VERELLEN
Family room sofa
verellenbz.com

