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Room for a Refresh

Interior designer Casey Howard gives houses—or even just a corner of them—new life.

BY ANH-MINH LE



Long before she embarked on a career in interior design, Casey Howard was honing her skills—even if she didn't realize it. As a kid growing up in Southern California, she would rearrange the living room furniture as well as decorate (and redecorate) her bedroom. In the latter, a lavender-and-white polka-dot scheme—down to the wastebasket and dust ruffle—gave way to a black-and-white post-modernist concept.

After earning a degree from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in business administration and working in the tech industry in Silicon Valley, Howard moved to Danville in 2002. Around that time, her professional focus shifted as she enrolled in interior architecture and design classes. Upon graduating from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, she joined Lindy Smallwood's firm. "I learned from an amazing mentor," she says.

In 2012, she launched her own practice in Danville, Casey Howard Interior Design, with a 5,000-square-foot new build in Alamo that took two years to complete. Today, among

the projects keeping her busy are an overhaul of a 1930s hilltop hunting lodge in Alamo, a second home in Truckee for an existing East Bay client, a kitchen renovation in a San Diego high-rise, a new-construction modern residence in San Luis Obispo, and a remodel of a Craftsman bungalow in Piedmont.

Although her endeavors range in scope, they typically balance modern and traditional aspects. "I describe [my approach] as a little funky, a little classic. Everything we do has a transitional through line with layers of the unexpected," Howard elaborates. "We like to be true to the bones of the house, while personalizing it for our clients. We really focus on their needs and desires to deliver that elevated turnkey experience."

A few years ago, Howard teamed up with Revitalize, whose services include reupholstering and refinishing furniture. With the arrival of spring, a season of renewal, those seeking to update their decor right now can cull inspiration from

that collaboration: Pieces from big-box retailers were made bespoke—"taking something that was ordinary and making it extraordinary," as Howard puts it. A concrete cube of a coffee table was wrapped in a Lori Weitzner wallpaper and further punched up with high-gloss purple paint. To bring the beauty of spring inside, Howard augests perusing the plant and pottery offerings at Sloat Garden Center, which has locations in Concord, Danville, Martinez, and Pleasant Hill.

"I love adding a plant to a bookcase or fresh flowers at a bedside or kitchen table," says Howard, noting that enlivening a room can also be as simple as a walk in nature. "There's nothing more authentically seasonal than going outside, foraging in your garden and surroundings for florals and branches."

From left: A Casey Howard-designed interior; Howard grew up in Southern California, moved to Danville in 2002, and opened her own practice there in 2012.