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All the Right Moves

This dramatically remodeled dwelling is simply the grand sum of small updates.

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Interior Design: Casey Howard, Casey Howard Interior Design
Home Builder: Reynaldo Cruz, ABC Painting and Remodeling



Designer Casey Howard refreshed the media room with Benjamin Moore's Balboa Mist and Super White on the walls and trim, respectively. To one side of an arched passageway are an abstract artwork by MarbleWish and Interlude Home ottoman; a Joelle Somero painting hangs just beyond.

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eimagining a house sometimes requires a scalpel rather than a bulldozer. To the well-trained eye, the boldest transformations can emerge from carefully reframing existing architecture in a new light. This approach felt

intuitively right to interior designer Casey Howard, who Carolyn and Kevin Comerford recruited to rejuvenate their home just outside of San Francisco, where they live with their three children.

The couple liked the general footprint of their Mediterranean-style abode, so there wasn't "a whole lot structurally that we wanted to change," Carolyn notes. However, the cherrywood floors and cabinetry felt dated, and the duo wanted a new atmosphere that nodded to contemporary sensibilities. At first, they toyed with pivoting the entire dwelling toward a modern farmhouse look, an aesthetic that was the style du jour at the time. But the more Howard explored changing rooms, with their formal arched doorways and tall ceilings, the more convinced she became that some things should stay the same. "We felt that we should be true to the bones of the home," the designer explains. "We knew we could strip a bit of architectural detail to create a more warm and welcoming transitional space."

Collaborating with general contractor Reynaldo Cruz, this gentle metamorphosis began with some precise editing, such as removing the Roman columns running along the central hallway, which gave more visual breathing room to appreciate the graceful archways, elegant crown molding and sweeping curved staircase. Eliminating a few key walls enlarged the couple's bathroom, allowing for the addition of a wet room, floating vanity and walk-in closet. "There was a lot of unused space there, so opening it up gave their suite a more elevated feel," Howard says.

With these structural adjustments in place, the designer turned to refocusing the interiors from a material perspective, and the results are a testament to the power of finishes in uplifting the mood of a home. European white oak flooring replaced the cherrywood, and the textured grain and knots infuse a softer, organic quality throughout. Millwork became more modern and crisper, shifting the nature of the abode to contemporary elegance. The new white cabinetry and brass-accented range hood brightens the

kitchen, a contrast to the dark glamour of the primary bathroom suite.

The walls and ceilings became a blank canvas for bold textures and color. "We worked to create a unique vibe within each space," Howard says. The designer also enjoyed injecting graphic accents into unexpected places, from the hexagonal wood-veneer wallcovering lining the living room's ceiling to the delicate chevron paper on the couple's closet doors. But she was also unafraid of letting patterns and textures envelop a space, like the slabs of veined marble that encircle the primary bath's shower.

The special occasion spaces underwent the most dramatic changes. The neglected formal living area became a debonair media room with smoky gray wallpaper and a new fireplace featuring stained shiplap and black marble. Before the remodel, "we only used it at Christmastime," Carolyn notes. "Now it has a cool lounge feel. It's become a fun place to hang out that we never had." In turn, Howard covered the dining room with what she describes as a "floral wallpaper with a moody edge."

The plethora of new materials and motifs could theoretically become overwhelming, "but we kept to a monochromatic color scheme with a mix of light and dark neutrals," the designer explains. "You feel that cohesion as you transition through the house." This tonal harmony carries to furnishings, which favor dark woods, metallic accents and fabrics ranging from plush velvet to nubby bouclé. The pieces themselves follow the home's transitional bent, offering "a mix of sharp, modern edges with some curved silhouettes," Howard notes. Yet comfortable approachability remains a stylistic through line, from the living room's cozy sofas to the kitchen's custom curved banquette. In contrast, the statement light fixtures serve as true "conversation pieces," Howard says, with details such as Sputnik starbursts or crystal shards.

Filtered through a fresh lens, the familiar walls feel entirely new to the family. Though the layout remains mostly the same, they find themselves moving differently through each space. Or rather, they linger longer—from early mornings together around the kitchen island (one dedicated stool for each member) to late nights in the media room "putting on some music and playing pool," says Carolyn with a smile. "Casey helped us reform our ideas to better fit the home we have, and it has changed the way we live in it." ■

The cozy living room features matching Patricia Edwards sofas covered in Colefax and Fowler fabric and paired with twin Interlude Home coffee tables. Howard lined the ceiling with a wood-veneer Schumacher wallpaper, highlighting the Nellcote Studio light fixture.





Right: An alcove in the kitchen was turned into a built-in bar, featuring customized Omega Cabinetry from Diablo Valley Cabinetry with a maple finish and a warm Calacatta Vagli marble counter and backsplash. The hardware is by Schaub & Company.

Opposite: White Omega Cabinetry, a New Ravenna tile backsplash and Calacatta Vagli marble countertops distinguish the kitchen. Kravet barstools pull up to the island, with fixtures from Hudson Valley Lighting above.





Howard wrapped the media room in warm Mark Alexander wallpaper. A Burton James sofa, Theodore Alexander club chair and Global Views rotating cocktail table form a cozy seating area by the new fireplace, clad in Artistic Tile's Pinnacle Nero Marble.

“We felt that we should be true to the bones of the home.”

—CASEY HOWARD



Above: The new walk-in closet is anchored by a John-Richard light fixture and a central storage island built by BlueLine Custom Builders and topped by Silestone countertops. The closet doors are covered with Thibaut wallpaper and finished with Schaub & Company hardware.

Opposite: Shades of black and gold define this glamorous guest bedroom, from the Porter Teleo wallpaper to a Robert James Collection metal-trimmed four-poster bed. A Roman shade made with an S. Harris sheer filters the light.



Above: Book-matched marble slabs surround the new open-concept wet room in the primary bath. At the center are a freestanding MTI tub with Watermark Designs hardware and a spiky Visual Comfort light fixture.

Opposite: For the primary bathroom, Blueline Custom Builders created a floating fluted wood vanity, which is accented by twin Hudson Valley Lighting sconces and a Made Goods mirror. The bouclé ottoman is by Kardiel.

