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PREMIER
ISSUE!

Inner Sanctum An Urban Electric pendant hangs above an antique Danish wingback chair from Lief in the library (THIS PAGE). A wingback chair in the living room (OPPOSITE PAGE) is covered in a Durable linen. The Bolero chair by Mariette Himes Gomez for Hickory Chair is available through Henredon. See Resources.





VITAL SIGNS

A San Francisco designer sets up
a soulful new Bay Area home for a family
of New York transplants

BY LEILANI MARIE LABONG PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON



CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, it is quite possible for a brand-new house to be filled with soul from the beginning. Soul does not necessitate, for example, generations of a family to have taken up residence there over the course of decades. The only thing required is a genuine intent to make the house deeply personal. So when a young family of three, pursuing a grand business opportunity for the husband, migrated from the concrete jungle of New York City to an idyllic Bay suburb, they chose a pristine new build whose clapboard-inspired architecture connected them to their East Coast origins.

While the shingle style is sometimes reserved for modestly sized cottages in New England, this particular home measured in at more than 10,000 square feet. The family's interior designer, San Francisco-based Elizabeth Martin, recalls an early conversation with the wife about the size of the domicile. "She told me it was around 4,000 square feet," says Martin. "But doesn't that speak volumes about how intimate this house feels?"

Considering as well that the individual spaces are quite lofty and the scale of doors oversized, achieving a level of intimacy in a house this grand could

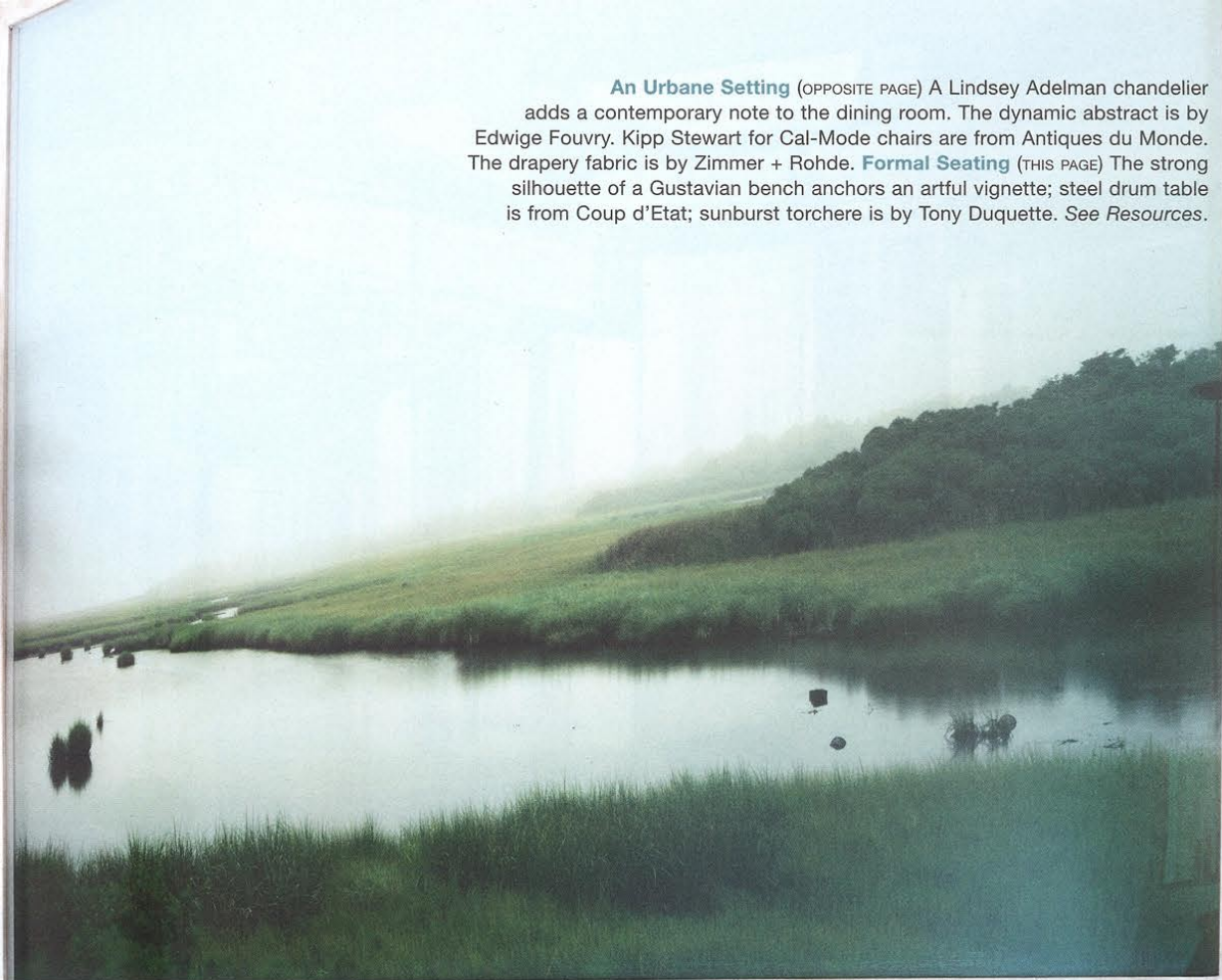
Coastal Hues In the family room (ABOVE), the custom sofa is covered in a Sunbrella Tropical navy fabric, available through Kravet. The coffee table is from Hunting House Antiques. Barbara Barry lounge chairs are from Baker Knapp & Tubbs. A banquette (LEFT) adjacent to the family room offers a cozy spot for casual dining. See *Resources*.

If These Walls Could Talk A grouping of graphic works from the homeowner's collection of art and photography greets visitors from an entry hall wall. Console tables are from Coup d'Etat. Vintage Turkish rug is from the Tony Kitz Gallery. See Resources.





An Urbane Setting (OPPOSITE PAGE) A Lindsey Adelman chandelier adds a contemporary note to the dining room. The dynamic abstract is by Edwige Fouvry. Kipp Stewart for Cal-Mode chairs are from Antiques du Monde. The drapery fabric is by Zimmer + Rohde. **Formal Seating** (THIS PAGE) The strong silhouette of a Gustavian bench anchors an artful vignette; steel drum table is from Coup d'Etat; sunburst torchere is by Tony Duquette. See *Resources*.



Soul does not necessitate generations of a family to have taken up residence there over the course of decades

be considered miraculous. Instead of the formality that might be expected in a home of this dimension, however, Martin chose to give it a more relaxed sensibility—a comfortable elegance suited to California living. She began by carefully considering proportion and selecting furnishings that were appropriately scaled to each room. Next, she chose a neutral palette, underscored with plenty of textured, natural fabrics, to reflect the Bay Area's organic sensibility. The understated hues also provide a backdrop for the furnishings, which, in their coastal grays and blues, wood and well-worn leather, add richness and coziness to the rooms. Martin also appreciated that the deep crown moldings and baseboards bestowed a charming heritage quality upon the house, and left them in place. As she notes, because they're bereft of any ornate carvings, the vibe remains fresh. "The homeowners really appreciate modernism, but they have a traditional streak, too," she says. "The bones of the house perfectly accommodated both styles."

While some designers would consider appointing a home from scratch as the ideal situation, Martin believes that incorporating the homeowners' existing pieces goes a long way. "I don't find the family's treasured pieces to be limitations at all," she says. "You can have the most beautiful new furniture, but without personal effects, something's missing. You might not be able to put your finger on it, but you'll definitely sense it."

For instance, since the husband, who is French-American, is a history buff, the home is steeped in Americana, from a bust of Lincoln and a portrait of Geronimo in the living room to a wall-size, timeworn American flag in the basement. "These pieces evoke a certain nostalgia that makes the place feel somehow familiar," says Martin. The homeowners' antique dining table, a transplant from their Nantucket vacation house, is also important in establishing a sense of soul in the residence. Crafted from solid walnut, the traditional piece provides visual warmth and its hefty proportions anchor the tableau.

Martin is a firm believer that art is also integral to a home's spirit. Here, such modern pieces as the colorful abstract in the dining room or the moody blue canvas in the library—both from Dolby Chadwick Gallery in San Francisco—have the ability to enliven or subdue a space. The gallery wall at the entry—a lively arrangement of new works by California artists and pieces from the homeowners' collection—is a marriage of old and new, symbolizing how the two elements come together in a home to achieve a meaningful space. ✨



Inspired Lines Strong shapes continue in the kitchen (TOP RIGHT), where a dramatic kitchen island is topped in Absolute Black Granite and paired with vintage leather Spanish stools. Fog-gray tiles envelop the master bathroom (RIGHT). See Resources.