

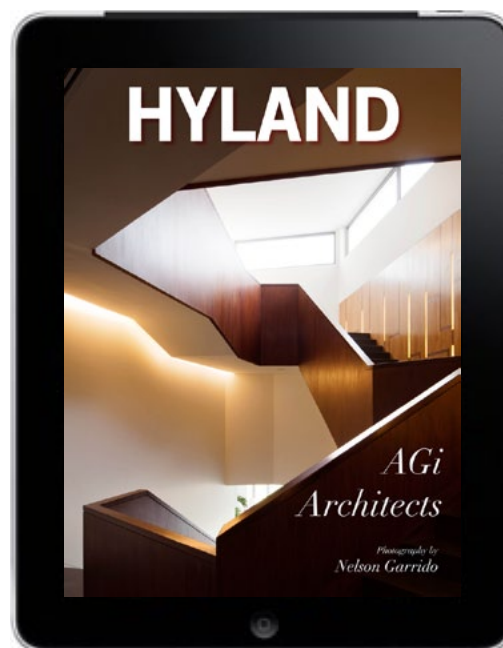
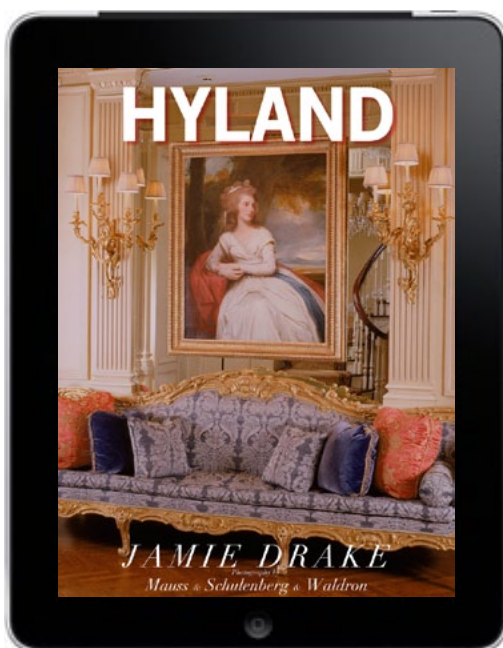
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TUCKER & MARKS

Photography by
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Tucker & Marks, the prominent interior design firm, have created in this San Francisco house by architect Andrew Skurman a refreshing, sparkling and expertly wrought interior decoration scheme.

There is an architectural and design milieu inhabited by McKim, Mead, & White and Delano & Aldridge, two bastions of classical design, which significantly hallmarked three-quarters of the twentieth century. The former employed purely classical elements of design,



the latter oftentimes hinted at the modernism that would increasingly also define the twentieth century. The house was completed in 2005 and embodies the spirit of architect and designer alike. Deciphering this design concoction would also reveal elements familiar to Ogden Codman's philosophy. All of them substantially pay homage to eighteenth century western European design and its American heirs, particularly David Adler's Reed House in Lake Forrest, Illinois.

The designers drew upon classicism in its broadest and most far flung manifestations. Says designer Suzanne



Tucker, “This residence was planned as a neoclassical Georgian villa,” but its aesthetic roots go deeper still. “The owners are of Greek heritage and took inspiration from their homeland of Crete and the Villa Kerylos, a recreation of an ancient Greek villa on the French Riviera near St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat.”



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The house and its garden, the latter designed by Elizabeth Everdell, represents a five-year collaboration with Tucker & Mark's exceptionally proactive clients, "an exercise in building beautiful forms and volumes, enhancing them with strong architectural details and moldings, handmade mosaics, custom furnishings, decorative painting and luxurious textiles to make the interiors of this grand home both approachable and intimate."

The clients embraced the acquisition of rare antiques exemplifying several major styles. The guest bedrooms were even assigned a stylistic theme: Biedermeier, chinoiserie, 18th century Italian, respectively. The gallery leading to these bedrooms was designed by Suzanne Tucker and her senior designer, Dino Vannoni, who laid out its mosaic patterns so that a medallion designed with each theme "landed in front of each bedroom door thus providing a hint as to what one



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would find within the room.” Master craftsmen in Italy interpreted Tucker’s sketches of the mosaics and skilled craftsmen installed them on site.

A hall with a statue of Aurora by Carlo Nicoli at its end in its own oval niche includes superbly executed architectural details easily similar to, if not surpassing those found in great McKim, Mead & White houses in Newport and New York. The great hall with black marble baseboards and triumphant arch into the living room with an intriguing perspective device employed in its composition would be much appreciated at Delano & Aldridge. As much as there is a decidedly Georgian feel about the place, the scale of the rooms, high ceilings, tall windows and refined classical decoration would please Ogden Codman and his cohort, Edith Wharton who espoused in their book, *The Decoration of Houses*, the glories of the Continental aesthetic.

In many of these rooms there is an aesthetic nod to Paris. Expert draping made possible by an outstanding understanding of the use, indeed the importance, of textiles in interior decoration is very much in evidence. Testers





rise comfortably and appropriately in perfect proportion to elevations up to or near to ceilings. Curtains are appropriately full. Old-fashioned sheers enable a glow to emanate from windows forming nature's own lighting installation, a device romantic in the eighteenth century made more so today by the ubiquitous synthetic shade which in general is far too opaque.

Generous and diverse lighting, including sconces, occasional high hats, floor lamps, table lamps, lanterns,



chandeliers, candles and skylights foster an architecture of shadows that assures a warm and inviting atmosphere. Coupled with every manner of supremely comfortable seating, generous use of pillows, harmonious as a whole yet rich and where necessary, suitably colorful fabrics, elegant floor covering and/or beautifully designed marble patterns: every aspect of being in these rooms is appealing. In any given room, furniture finishes, colors and types are diverse. Generous use of mirrors and prints, the souvenirs of civilization, create a continuum



of reflection and graphic detail on the more often than not plain walls.

In Stephen Calloway's books, among them *Twentieth Century Decoration*, there is an underlying theme, also expressed by others, that in the twentieth century modernist interior decoration did not dominate. To the extent that many thinkers on the subject might characterize modern interior design as spaces minimally furnished, he is then most certainly correct. This astutely designed house, with





all of its traditional allusions, is eminently fresh, clean and streamlined. Joseph Adler and his sister, decorator Frances Elkins, champions of modern classicism, would embrace these spaces.

The richness of the owners' commission reveals a spirit that most assuredly is interested in broad parameters. In viewing the pillar-like drapery window treatment in the dining room and living room, one thinks of noble temple columns, the swags at top standing in for acanthus leaves. This author wishes he could invite twelve inquisitive minds to dine beneath them.

Tucker & Marks have created a modern classical interior, clean and state of that art. X-rayed, its historic antecedents, McKim, Mead & White, Delano & Aldridge, David Adler and others are visible. Every period must come to terms with the design apotheosis which was the eighteenth century. Here Tucker & Marks have done so superlatively. **H** *Christopher Hyland*

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