

Take Two < By Deborah Bishop >



A DARK, INWARD-LOOKING ABODE GAINS SEVERAL ROOMS WITH A VIEW

Although it was the “ugliest house on the block,” the cave-like apartment with arched doorways and closed-off rooms seduced the real estate broker who purchased it with more than just investment potential. Not only was the flat endowed with prime outdoor space, but Alta Plaza Park also beckoned nearby.

“It’s amazing how much you can change with a few surgical moves,” says Jennifer Weiss, the architect who gutted the flat and put it back together. The ceilings are 9 feet high, but the rooms seemed cramped because

the doors and windows were exceedingly low. So Weiss raised the windows and stretched the new trim-free doors (many of which fold or pivot open) to 8 feet “to bring the eyes up.” She also moved and cut into a hallway wall and created new openings between the kitchen, dining room, living room and media room to capture views of the courtyard and park from vantage points throughout the house.

The living room, which was severed from the kitchen, is now open via a wide pass-through that encourages entertaining. The small brick-and-brass fireplace gained stature with a grander surround of high-gloss Venetian plaster that reflects the trees in the park. And guests can warm themselves on the elongated slate bench, fabricated by Clervi Marble, that wraps around to join a reading nook.

Espresso stained walnut floors replaced the old wall-to-wall carpeting, and spackled walls were smoothed out with level-5 finish — like dermabrasion for drywall.

For a “recovering workaholic,” the renovation was a kind of therapy. “We had conversations, like, what does he want his life to be like?” says Weiss, “He went from living without furniture to scrutinizing shades of white and the size of reveals. He found his voice — and gained a home — in the process.”

Deborah Bishop is a contributing editor for Dwell magazine in San Francisco.

Zahid Sardar is The Chronicle’s design editor. To suggest a renovation project for Take Two, contact him at zsardar@sfchronicle.com.



Resources

Architecture and Interior Design
J. Weiss Design
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LEATHER BENCH AND SHAG RUG

To complement the newly open, airy feeling of the apartment, architect Jennifer Weiss sought out furnishings that married comfort with craftsmanship. She found the green leather bench, a vintage design by Florence Knoll, recovered in green Hermes leather, at Hedge Gallery, 48 Gold Street; (415) 433-2233; www.hedgegallery.com (price available upon request). The charcoal-colored shag felt rug is \$1,875 through Zinc Details, 2410 California St., S.F.; (415) 776-9002, www.zincdetails.com.



WOODEN TABLES

The natural grain of the wood is revealed in Dutch designer Roderick Vos' steel and solid oak coffee table for Linteloo, which is finished in linseed oil. \$1,650 through Limn, 290 Townsend St., S.F.; (415) 543-5466, www.limn.com.



LIGHTING

Hand blown in Morocco, the bubbly green glass lamp that rests upon the coffee table may also be used as a pendant. \$260 through Nest, 2300 Fillmore St.; (415) 292-6199. An intriguing counterpoint is Tom Dixon's more linear Twist floor lamp (visible in main photo), which is wrought from pleated laminated cotton, \$510 at Limn.

ANTIQUE GEAR

Relic of the industrial age, this carved wooden gear mold dating from 1890 was \$1,900 from Ed Hardy, 188 Henry Adams St., S.F.; (415) 626-6300, www.edhardy.com.

ARTWORK

Weiss sought out art that was compatible with her client's aesthetic and budget. This bronze sculpture by Judith Shea, as well as oils by Squeak Carnwath and Enrique Martinez Celaya, are from the John Berggruen Gallery; (415) 781-4629, www.berggruen.com. Weiss also worked with Sightline Art Consultant to select some of the more accessible woodblock prints and watercolors throughout the house; (415) 829-3665, www.sightline.biz.



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