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**Fresh
Row-House
Updates**

**Inventive
Family-Room
Fixes**

sense of place

THE LIVING SPACES ISSUE



sage advice

A Condo Design Takes Cues from Greenery

Katie Storey's inspiration for her clients' San Francisco condo was fairly immediate. "When I walked into the space, one of the first things I was drawn to was the outdoors," says the designer of the Victorian row house, located in the city's Pacific Heights neighborhood. "The home overlooks a lake, which is surrounded by a bunch of trees. As soon as I saw that, I thought, we have to bring this view in."

The one-bedroom condo was in need of an update and Storey looked at the outdoors as the easiest and most appropriate way to freshen things up. The existing space was dark while the furnishings were "more or less a bunch of furniture that was inherited or a little more jumbled together," says Storey. "They didn't want a high-end design but rather a well put together condo. So that meant upgrading their furniture so it felt like it really flowed together in an organic, eclectic, funky way."

Storey started the design process by painting the home's interior in colors inspired by the nearby lake and trees. A typical row house, natural light was limited to only the front and the back of the dwelling, which meant the "hallway was like a railroad running through with no light," says Storey. "The trees change their shades of green and it was really inspiring. So I wanted to replicate that inside, which is why I chose that silver-sage color in the family room. Gray or white would've been fine colors to use, but I wanted to add color without it being too bold. I just wanted the subtlest, simplest hint of color." A fresh coat of simple white paint immediately brightened the existing wainscoting and gave the room a cleaner feel.

To keep things on a budget, Storey splurged on key pieces and seamlessly mixed them with furniture and decor from more mainstream retailers such as west elm and CB2. In the family room, the striped sofa from Design Within Reach served as the starting point for the space. "I knew we couldn't purchase everything from higher end retailers, so I saved a few pieces like the sofa for high end and then made everything work within the mid-range budget,"

she says. The large window that overlooks the lake was once blocked by a TV and media stand. The designer replaced that setup with a bistro table and a pair of chairs from Jonathan Adler and the nook now serves as the ideal dining space for the couple. A terrarium hangs from the ceiling giving the space an organic touch.

Upstairs, Storey transformed the one-time dressing room, which was adjacent to the master bedroom, into a more sophisticated sitting area. "One of the roles of a designer is to see a space and increase its function for the client," she explains. "When I walked in, I saw all these holes in how they were using the space. They weren't optimizing the layout. Simple things such as turning the sofa or finding a sofa that takes advantage of the space they have—lots of inefficiencies throughout that needed a designer's eye to rework and maximize." In the dressing area, Storey added a curved sofa from west elm to fit the shape of the space to allow for more room and additional seating. The bookshelf, also from west elm, instantly updated the room from closet to living area. "The brass framing on the bookshelf was a lot more feminine than a black-and-steel framing you see in most bookshelves these days and [because it's in] her dressing area, we wanted it to still have that feminine touch."

The row house, though once dark and dated, is now bright and sophisticated thanks to the designer's discerning eye. "Drawing in the outside and really looking at how the space was being used really elevated the design of the home," says Storey. Elevated to new (Pacific) heights. *Written by Blake Miller. [YHL](#)*

Photography by Helynn Ospina, www.helynnospina.com

