



ABOVE: The living room combines shades of beige, ivory, and cream with the occasional glint of gold or mercury glass. The custom sofas and upholstered chairs are from A. Rudin, and the ottoman, found on eBay, was reupholstered in zebra-print linen. The starburst mirror is from Candace Barnes Antiques, the two Kirsten Stolle paintings (left) are from Dolby Chadwick Gallery, and the Agnes Martin prints (right) are from ArtRiver. RIGHT: A Dan Corbin sculpture from Winfield Gallery draws attention to the landscaped views.



Crème fresh

Captivated by contrasts, San Francisco interior designer **Benjamin Dhong** updates a Tudor-style Pacific Heights mansion with subtle tonalities and the counterpoint of graphic art.

BY DIANE DORRANS SAEKS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON



LEFT: In the dining room, Dhong installed a photograph by John Casado from Inja, a banquette by Room & Board, and a table by Ralph Lauren, making this a multipurpose space. "Now guests linger around the table and socialize," he says. BELOW, TOP: A photo of Paris in winter by Christopher Flach hangs in the hallway.

BELOW, BOTTOM: The guest bedroom is a moody mix of textures, including linen cushions and upholstery, Egyptian cotton sheets, silk pillows, and Benjamin Moore Grant Beige wall paint, all in soft, neutral tones. The bed and zinc side table are by Crate & Barrel. The versatile white desk and curtains are by Williams-Sonoma Home. The black-and-white photo is by Christopher Flach.



BENJAMIN DHONG IS A CLASSICAL INTERIOR DESIGNER WITH A FINELY tuned modern sensibility. He revels in the theatrical, but don't label him: "For years, I couldn't figure out if I was a traditionalist who liked newer things or a modernist with a strong sense of history," he says. "Now I'm comfortable with dropping the labels. Beautiful design is timeless. It does not need a name."

For a young Pacific Heights family, Dhong—who did not formally study design but worked at Martha Angus's studio for several years—recently completed lighthearted interiors with carefully calibrated neutral tones and just enough punch to keep things fresh. "I love creating ethereal and serene spaces, but I also adore the design jolt of contrasts and the unexpected," says Dhong. "In this house, I drew up the tension of rough linen with rich velvet, and distressed wood with a silver bowl. I find that opposition exhilarating."

The artist in Dhong sees furniture as sculpture. "There's an elegant dialogue between furnishings that requires a deft hand," he explains. He likes rooms to have good art and a bit of intellectual heft. The right mix of antiques and paintings gives a sense of history and erudition but is never pompous. ■

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