

California Dreaming

In Irvington, a family-friendly decor is suffused with light, bright, Golden State style.

Barbara Fein's clients had relocated from San Francisco to New York for business. The couple felt nostalgic for their former home, and asked the decorator to infuse their new place in a woody area of Irvington with "a California feel." Fein had a clean slate: a brand-new builder's spec home with a neutral gourmet kitchen and plenty of light.

The whole feel throughout is relaxed, as befits a California lifestyle. The couple have three children and a dog, so in the family room Fein used a durable chenille on the upholstered pieces, a cocktail table with a top made from reclaimed wood, suitable to put one's feet up. The kitchen and family are of a piece; Fein picked up the turquoise in accessories and upholstered the window cornices in both rooms in a faux leather with a geometric embroidered pattern: "It's one of my favorite window treatments ever."

The inspiration for the beachy palette came from six framed posters by graphic designer Michael Schwab for the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, hung within a cook's-eye view. Fein painted the owners' red chairs a "carefree, happy" turquoise and added a lantern-style light "to give a certain sculptural quality to the space. When it's turned on, the shadow it casts on the ceiling is just gorgeous."



Fein combined the owners' furniture, such as the farmhouse table in the kitchen, with new pieces from Stamford and Hickory Chair. In the foyer, Fein paired a restored secret with a Swaim chair and a custom Fabrica rug. The bird-base dining table and sideboard are by Bauman.



Even the formal spaces have a casual feel. The living room is relatively small, as is typical in new builds ("I think living rooms are going to disappear completely," says Fein) and has the same pale walls and airy palette. "I like to keep the flow of color going so it feels harmonious and of a piece as you move through the space." The one "dressy piece" is a satin-upholstered Hickory Chair side chair with a charming quatrefoil back. ("I don't think the dog would fit on it.") Crowned by a Paris flea-market chandelier, the glamorous dining room is deceptively user-friendly, with a wallpapered ceiling, a convivial round table with a birdcage base, and chairs covered in pewter faux leather. The owners can feel free to "use the chairs, spill the wine, have a great time, because it's all going to clean up just fine."

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