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THE VIEW FROM THE ENTRY LOOKS THROUGH THE HOUSE AND OUT TO THE WEST MARIN LANDSCAPE. OPPOSITE ARMCHAIRS BY JOSEF FRANK FOR SVENSKT TENN PULL UP TO A WALNUT DINING TABLE BY TRIPP CARPENTER BENEATH AN ANTIQUE TIFFANY STUDIOS PENDANT LAMP. THE CEILING IS COVERED IN WOVEN RUSH BY RUSH MATTERS. SISAL RUG BY STARK.

HAPPY PLACE



In a classic 1960s home in Northern California, Commune Design crafts a loving ode to the beauty and spirit of West Marin

RUG: COURTESY OF COMMUNE. ART: STEVEN JOHANNKECH/COMMUNE DESIGN.

TEXT BY MAYER RUS PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURE JOLIET

THE FIREPLACE ELEVATION IS CLAD IN GLASS MOSAIC TILES BY THEODORE ELLISON DESIGNS IN A BRONZE SURROUND BY CHRIS FRENCH METAL. HANS WEGNER ROCKING CHAIR, JB BLUNK STOOL AND SIDE TABLE, ADAM POGUE OTTOMAN, GINO SARFATTI CEILING LIGHT, AND RUG BY COMMUNE FOR CHRISTOPHER FARR.



OVERLOOKING A STATELY BISHOP PINE, THE DECK IS FURNISHED WITH A DINING TABLE, BENCHES, AND COCKTAIL TABLE BY TEN10 AND REDWOOD LOUNGE CHAIRS BY JESSE SCHLESINGER.



At

its heart, this project is a love letter to Northern California's West Marin region—a paean to the area's history, landscape, craft traditions, and bohemian soul. Alex Riley, a prominent local designer and poet of organic architecture, built the original 1,000-square-foot house for himself in the 1960s. When the property changed hands in the late 1980s, Riley added a primary suite and a compact guest cottage for the new owners, evolving his signature design language of clerestories and trusses. "Our challenge was to pick up the thread where Alex left it, to honor the architecture while giving the home a fresh spirit and purpose," says Commune Design's Roman Alonso, the designer entrusted to renovate the house for its current owners, a pair of creative polymaths and philanthropists active in the arenas of design, food, and film. "They wanted to lean into the West Marin vibe, but they also wanted surprises in color, pattern, and decorative layers," he adds.

Fortunately, Alonso possesses a true affinity for this part of the country and a deep appreciation of its strange magic.

Northern California's fertile design heritage and progressive cultural climate have been a lodestar for Commune since the inception of the practice, and many of the firm's most trusted collaborators and craftspeople hail from the region. Their collective talents are on full, vibrant display throughout the home. Oakland-based Theodore Ellison created the vivid glass rondels that adorn the front door and bath screen, as well as the glass mosaic tiles that clad the fireplace. The dining table was lovingly crafted by Tripp Carpenter, son of the great furniture maker and Bolinas pillar Arthur Espenet Carpenter. There are fields of Heath Ceramics tile, JB Blunk sculptures, an Ido Yoshimoto cocktail table, and redwood lounge chairs by Jesse Schlesinger. The artwork on the walls buoys the site-specific mood, with pieces by Lena Wolff, Kelly Ording, Ruth Charlotte Kneass, and other artists based in and around the Bay Area. Altogether, it's a celebration of the best of the Golden State, past and present.

The decorative party, however, is not reserved exclusively for denizens of California. "We wanted to explore the connection between West Marin and Scandinavian summer homes, another one of our obsessions," Alonso says. "This house felt like the perfect place for JB Blunk and Edith Heath to finally meet Josef Frank face-to-face." The designer underscored the aesthetic kinship by deploying classic Danish chairs by



IN THE LIVING ROOM, A CUSTOM SECTIONAL SOFA AND WALNUT COCKTAIL TABLE REST ON A RUG BY COMMUNE FOR CHRISTOPHER FARR. BLANKET BY GREGORY PARKINSON. PAINTING BY GIANLUCA FRANZESE.

Hans Wegner and Ole Wanscher; Swedish flat-weave carpets; Arne Jacobsen fixtures; and a dizzying array of Frank wallpapers, fabrics, and furnishings for Svenskt Tenn. A select number of pieces that fall outside the Scandi/Cali range—bulbous light fixtures by Gino Sarfatti, an antique Tiffany Studios pendant lamp, wallpaper by British designer Marthe Armitage—pepper the playful mix.

THE RIOT OF COLOR AND PATTERN coalesces with particular charm in two snug bedrooms positioned along the central corridor that leads from the front door through the house and out to a spectacular view of the West Marin landscape, highlighted by a majestic bishop pine. The rooms are wrapped in joyous Frank wallpapers, but whereas most designers would let the patterns suffice for ecstatic decor, Commune chose a different approach—too much is never enough. Alonso paired the wallpapers with upholstered patchwork headboards by textile artist Adam Pogue, custom polychromatic bedding, and color-blocked Swedish carpets. Instead of cacophony, the effect is surprisingly warm and serene.

Commune set the stage for this kaleidoscopic, multicultural mash-up with strategic interventions and alterations

to existing finishes within the home. They stained the floors in what Alonso describes as a “weird, deep blue-green color,” refinished all the interior cedar siding to temper the wood’s orangey hue, and painted the columns, trusses, and trim in dark green, effectively heightening the drama of Riley’s architectural composition. In further deference to Riley’s work, all of Commune’s newly added mahogany bookshelves, cabinetry, and other millwork details were extrapolated from an original built-in hutch in the dining room, an area the designers divided to create an anteroom earmarked for casual repose. “The clients wanted lots of nooks and daybeds and perches to read and relax,” Alonso explains. “That’s the spirit of this place—rest, renewal, well-being.”

Commune’s design ultimately walks the line between traditional and modern with aplomb, satisfying the predilections of clients whose tastes tend to hew in different directions. “There’s a genuine harmony here, not just among the furniture and the luscious fabrics and wallpapers but in all the relationships we cultivated with the craftspeople, fabricators, and even the people at the auction houses,” one of the homeowners attests. “This house is our favorite place to think, recharge, listen to records, and be in love.” ▀

ART: GIANLUCA FRANZESE



A COZY BEDROOM IS ENROBED IN JOSEF FRANK WALLPAPER FOR SVENSKT TENN. UPHOLSTERED HEADBOARD BY ADAM POGUE AND BEDDING BY STUDIO FORD AND FREECITY FOR COMMUNE. PAINTINGS ABOVE BED BY SAMUEL HUNG.

“This house felt like the perfect place for JB Blunk and Edith Heath to finally meet Josef Frank face-to-face,” says designer Roman Alonso.

"They wanted to lean into the West Marin vibe, but they also wanted surprises in color, pattern, and decorative layers."



THE PRIMARY BEDROOM HAS A DAN JOHN ANDERSON WALNUT SIDE TABLE, CURTAINS AND TABLE LAMPSHADE BY JOSEF FRANK FOR SVENSKT TENN, A SWEDISH FLAT-WEAVE RUG BY DORIS LESLIE BLAU, AND A BEDCOVER BY ADAM POGUE. ARTWORKS BY LENA WOLFF (ABOVE BED) AND RUTH CHARLOTTE KNEASS (MOBILE).

THE PRIMARY BATH IS OUTFITTED WITH A JOHN WIGMORE LIGHT BOX, WALLPAPER BY MARTHE ARMITAGE, HEATH CERAMICS TILE, AND A GLASS SCREEN BY THEODORE ELLISON DESIGNS.



FABRIC: COURTESY OF COMMUNE. ART: © LENA WOLFF/SARAH SHEPARD GALLERY. RUTH CHARLOTTE KNEASS.

design notes

THE DETAILS THAT MAKE THE LOOK



COMMUNE DESIGN CARVED OUT A COMFORTABLE ANTEROOM TO THE DINING AREA FOR LOUNGING AND PLAYING RECORDS.

1930s ORIGINAL TIFFANY-STYLE GLASS FLOWER PENDANT LIGHT; \$3,800. CHAIRISH.COM



MUG BY WHITMAN SHENK; \$100. COMMUNEDESIGN.SHOP

A CUSTOM NICKEY KEHOE WOOD BENCH OCCUPIES A CORNER OF THE LIVING ROOM.



ASSAMESE COTTON JACQUARD BLANKET WITH IKAT BINDING; \$450. GREGORYPARKINSON.COM

“We had to find a balance in the clients’ tastes.”
—Roman Alonso



FLUTED PITCHER BY ZOE DERING; \$600. COMMUNEDESIGN.SHOP

HALF PILE SWEDISH RUG; \$8,000. DORISLESLIEBLAU.COM



ASTURIAS LOUNGE CHAIR BY CARLOS MOTTA; PRICE UPON REQUEST. ESPASSO.COM

SEA URCHIN INCENSE HOLDER BY LISA EISNER FOR COMMUNE; \$600. COMMUNEDESIGN.SHOP

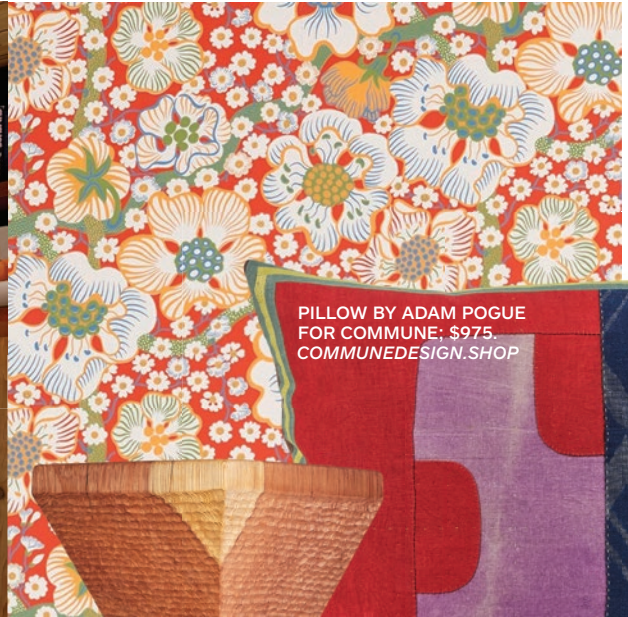


CLAW TABLE LAMP; TO THE TRADE. CHARLESEDWARDS.COM

“Scandinavian summerhouses were a big influence.”



A BEDROOM IS OUTFITTED WITH A JOSEF FRANK WALLPAPER FOR SVENSKT TENN, AN ADAM POGUE HEADBOARD, AND BEDDING BY STUDIO FORD FOR COMMUNE.



ELDBLOMMAN WALLPAPER BY JOSEF FRANK FOR SVENSKT TENN; \$160. SVENSKT TENN.COM

PILLOW BY ADAM POGUE FOR COMMUNE; \$975. COMMUNEDESIGN.SHOP



REDWOOD STOOL BY BRUCE MITCHELL FOR COMMUNE; \$8,000. COMMUNEDESIGN.SHOP

INTERIORS: LAURE JOLIET; CHAIR: ELISEU CAVALCANTE. ALL OTHER PRODUCTS COURTESY OF THE COMPANIES.

PRODUCED BY MADELINE O'MALLEY