

# CALIFORNIA HOMES

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AT HOME  
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TO HISTORIC

DIABLO  
LOS ANGELES  
NAPLES  
SAN FRANCISCO

LA DESIGNERS  
ENTERTAIN WITH  
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# *New Life For A Historic Mansion*

In Diablo, San Francisco  
Interior Designer Claudia Juestel  
Took A Creative Approach To  
A Century Old Interior

TEXT BY DIANE DORRANS SAEKS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CESAR RUBIO

OPPOSITE The handsome Italianate style house stands on land originally developed as a 6,000-acre ranch in 1879. The residence has fulfilled several roles, including a clubhouse where guests such as Albert Einstein once retreated from the city. ABOVE The veranda, which overlooks the pool and the garden, wraps around the house.

In the late nineteenth century, Contra Costa County, east of San Francisco and Berkeley, was a bucolic scene of rich farmland and acres of fruit orchards, framed with views of the snowcapped Sierras to the West and nearby Mt. Diablo. The region was an ideal setting for ranches and spacious country residences and a rural escape for many San Franciscans who had found success in silver mining and real estate development.

Today, the San Ramon Valley is a thriving area where few ranches remain. San Francisco interior designer Claudia Juestel and her Adeeni Design Group recently renovated a residence that reflects the history of the valley.

The Italianate style home was inherited by newly wed Carrie Colton in 1879 from her father, David Colton. Situated on the south side of Mount Diablo it was originally called the Railroad Ranch, as it was owned by the Big Four of the Central Pacific Railroad: Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker and Collis Huntington, who built the first railroad into the area.



OPPOSITE A new 600 square foot wine cellar was excavated beneath the house. To create an authentic atmosphere, new walls were crafted with faux stone. Custom sconces and chandeliers add to the Old World atmosphere. The tin ceiling was from a demolished movie theater in Kentucky. ABOVE A 37 x 15 foot custom made Persian style carpet sets the dramatic tone of the living room, which was originally used as a ballroom. In the bookcases, designed by Adeeni Design Group, are a collection of eighteen T'ang era ceramic Lohans, disciples of Buddha, and elegant branches of coral. The bookcases have gold and other lacquered chinoiserie finishes by San Francisco decorative artist Carol Thosath. Lamps were made in Udaipur, India.



The history and ownership of the property had a series of vicissitudes, twists and turns (it was at one time the clubhouse for the nearby Diablo Country Club) until a young family recently acquired it. They asked San Francisco interior designer Claudia Juestel to update the house and refresh its interiors.

Juestel was the ideal designer to handle the additions and furnishing for the historic property. She grew up in Salzburg, Mozart's birthplace, surrounded by classical and Baroque architecture.

"I developed an almost subconscious understanding of appropriate historic and architectural renovation, and it shaped my eye for a more European approach to design which was a great advantage with this house," she says.

Juestel had also worked at the award winning San Francisco hotel design specialist firm, Candra Scott & Anderson. The company is noted for its painstaking historically accurate hotel restorations.

"I always get inspired by fine architecture and detailing. This is perhaps the most admired historic house in the region."

—*Claudia Juestel*

ABOVE A round mahogany pedestal table, with extension leaves, from Burton-Ching, takes pride of place in the dining room. The dining chairs are from Dennis & Leen. Chandeliers with rock crystal drops were custom made for the Adeeni Design Group. The Sarouk style carpet was custom made in India.

RIGHT A handmade marble-topped walnut Syrian style Wunderley bar in the library is ornamented with mother-of-pearl inset in brass. The 'North African Scene' oil painting is from Lost Art Salon, San Francisco.





LEFT A chair designed by Adeeni Design Group was upholstered in blue velour from Old World Weavers to add color to the master bedroom. A bamboo cabinet from Out of Asia displays a collection of blue and white porcelain, picking up the blue and white pattern of the curtains. The bedcover is a fine woven paisley from India. BELOW Designer Claudia Juestel, left, principal of Adeeni Design Group, relaxes with her client in the cabana with a collection of Moroccan tables, leather ottomans, and vividly colored pottery plates. The iron sconces were also made in Morocco.



RIGHT The wood trestle table in the kitchen is from Ploi & Company. Tabouret barstools are available through Café Society.

In 1999, she formed her own design firm, Adeeni Design Group, with projects in San Francisco, Lake Tahoe, Carmel, Portland and London.

"I was initially commissioned to consult on furniture placement and some refreshment of the house, but this quickly grew to a much more ambitious program," she says. "I always get inspired by fine architecture and detailing. This is perhaps the most admired historic house in the region."

The living room is ballroom sized, with a carved mahogany fireplace. The dining room still has its original walls of mahogany paneling, and the hardwood floors original to the house are still in fine condition.

"My clients are youthful and they want rooms that feel current and hospitable." To add the richness and texture the family required, the designer and her client headed to India where they ordered custom made Mughal Jali carpets, and Kirman style rugs as well as colorful Sarouk rugs characterized by groupings of intercon-

nected floral designs, with typical deep and rich red and blue background tones.

While in India, they traveled to New Delhi, Jaipur and Udaipur to source and commission bone inlay lamps, silver topped tables, and other decorative objects that add flair and history to the interiors.

"I wanted the rooms to look as if they had been designed a century ago, with beautiful pieces from travels added as the rooms evolved over time," Juestel says.

As the project went forward, the design program included excavating beneath the house to create a new wine cellar with an antique tin ceiling and the style of a century old wine cave. Each room has collections of antiques and art, along with handcrafted chairs and glittering crystal chandeliers made specifically for the house.

"In the end the house paints a portrait of the owners and their family," says Juestel. "They and I could not be more pleased with the outcome." 