

Selectie Décor

WARM & HOMEY

The goal for this interior: Create a timeless feeling using flea market finds.

BY BARBARA BALLINGER



FORGET THE RULE BOOK

So says designer Claudia Juestel. Here, she mixed a walnut farmhouse table with Pennsylvania Dutch balloon-style chairs; an 18th-century Hungarian pine buffet; and a vintage tole chandelier from eBay, paired with custom shades. "The room reflects the Victorian era, even if every piece wasn't made then," she says.



Subtle walls and flooring let the living room's curtains, rag rug and antiques star. The pine-and-iron trunk can stash toys and serve as a coffee table.



Mixing up paint palettes and furnishings from different time periods can offer a freshness and a personal charm that are irresistible. This Walnut Creek, California, farmhouse, which dates from 1917, is a stunning example of how to achieve a cohesive whole with a little bit of this and a whole lot of that. Its exterior reflects a California-Mediterranean influence, with a stucco façade and terra-cotta roof. But its interior features a combination of furnishings and objects favored in the Victorian era within settings that read visually as East Coast farmhouse chic.

How did this eclecticism come together? California-based designer Claudia Juestel, owner of Adeeni Design Group in San Francisco, was hired by a couple to redo the house where they had raised their four children. Juestel knew that its dark interior had to give way to a brighter, fresher backdrop. “The wallpaper and dark blue palette had to go; they were too dated,” she says. So, she introduced lighter hues: aqua blues, yellows and celeries for walls and ceilings. Juestel complemented these tones with warm butter-colored trim, keeping values similar so that rooms flow together visually. “Colors don’t all have to be the same, but the hues and values should be similar,” she says.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY

Juestel’s decorating philosophy involves mixing not only disparate periods and styles, but also various fabric designs and patterns. Here, plaid curtains add a masculine flair to the comfortable living room, with its sofa slipcovered in pale pre-washed hemp, which is perfect for visiting grandkids.

COMFORT & AMBIENCE

When updating the design of the 1917 California farmhouse, Juestel took her cue from the casual barn-board siding that the couple had lined their family room with years ago. Below, oversized furniture, bold-patterned fabrics and classic game-themed collectibles give this space a welcoming ambience.

Paint is an essential element to create the right background mood, says designer Claudia Juestel. For the living room, she selected a custom butter yellow for the walls and robin’s egg blue for the ceiling; complementing both is a buttery cream used for the trim. Beaded-board wainscoting contributes to the casual vibe.





Finding Affordable Pieces

Instead of trying to make the house period-proper and similar to a museum, Juestel took her cue from the casual barn-board siding that the couple had lined their family room with years ago. From there, she visualized a combination of farmhouse friendliness with an East Coast vibe—with a strong sense of Victorian charm throughout.

“We didn’t want to be authentic, but we wanted a period feeling that would appear timeless,” Juestel says, continuing, “It’s also a novel look and one rarely found in California.” Off to antiques shows and flea markets Juestel and her clients went. “We focused on finding the best individual pieces—many were Victorian and affordable. We brought them together so that the whole fit like a jigsaw puzzle,” Juestel says.

Any list of what to buy was forgotten. “You have to go with an open mind, since we often found nothing of what we were shopping for, yet

FEELING SUNNY

The master bedroom’s many windows and ample sunlight let Juestel design the space, above, with a cool palette of blues and greens. She doesn’t worry if things don’t match. She says, “Design should be timeless, and doing a room more creatively creates a less stuffy space.”

CREATIVE RE-USE

Embroidered wool crewelwork was used for the curtains at the windows and to close off the small anteroom, where a Victorian wicker chaise was painted a fresh pale green. The side table next to the armchair in the bedroom was originally a Victorian piano stool.



Restyling

FORM IS FUNCTIONAL

Find new uses for old items from the attic.



POUR ON THE CHARM

Don’t let a great find collect dust: Many items can be transformed into lamps.

It’s always a thrill to bring new life to old or unused objects. Designer Claudia Juestel did just that with these Victorian silver-plated coffee pots, wired to become lamps. Here’s how to create your own:

■ CRAFTING FROM A KIT

Just about any object with a hollow core can become a lamp. Simple lamp-making kits are available at home and hardware centers as well as online. Some are as basic as a socket and attached cord, and then you can add things like a harp and finial for attaching a shade. To turn a silver-plated coffee pot into a base, simply drill a hole in its top for the socket, and then drill another around the base for threading through the plug. The kit will give specifics about connecting parts.

■ WORKING WITH CERAMICS

If you wish to drill into a ceramic base like an old vase, cookie jar or garden statuary, you will need a special diamond or carbide tip. When drilling, use little force and instead allow the tip to do its work so you avoid cracking the surface. Tip: Lay masking or even Scotch® tape over the place you want to drill to help prevent cracking any glaze on the ceramic piece. It also will help to keep the bit in place, since the surface is slippery. Depending on how thick the ceramic is, you may need to wet the surface to prevent the bit from overheating or breaking. Most of all, slow and steady wins this race.



we found other things that fit the look,” says Juestel, who filled in any missing pieces by prowling eBay. As a result, there was no attempt to match items by style, period or color.

Handmade Finishes

To introduce additional farmhouse and Victoriana flavor, Juestel selected colorful curtain and pillow fabrics, handwoven rag rugs and runners, shades with fabrics or lively paint colors, and collections of everything from vintage canes to straw hats to gameboards.

Choices also needed to be practical, so Juestel slipcovered some furnishings in prewashed hemp that could be removed and washed. And for more charm, she turned found objects into functional pieces such as pitchers, glass bottles into electrified lamps, trunks into coffee tables and vintage storybook pages into framed art.

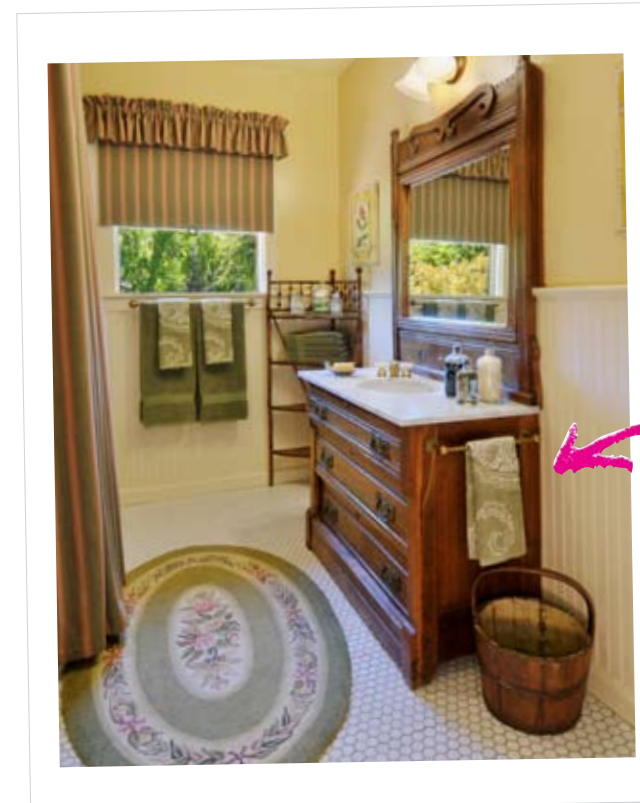
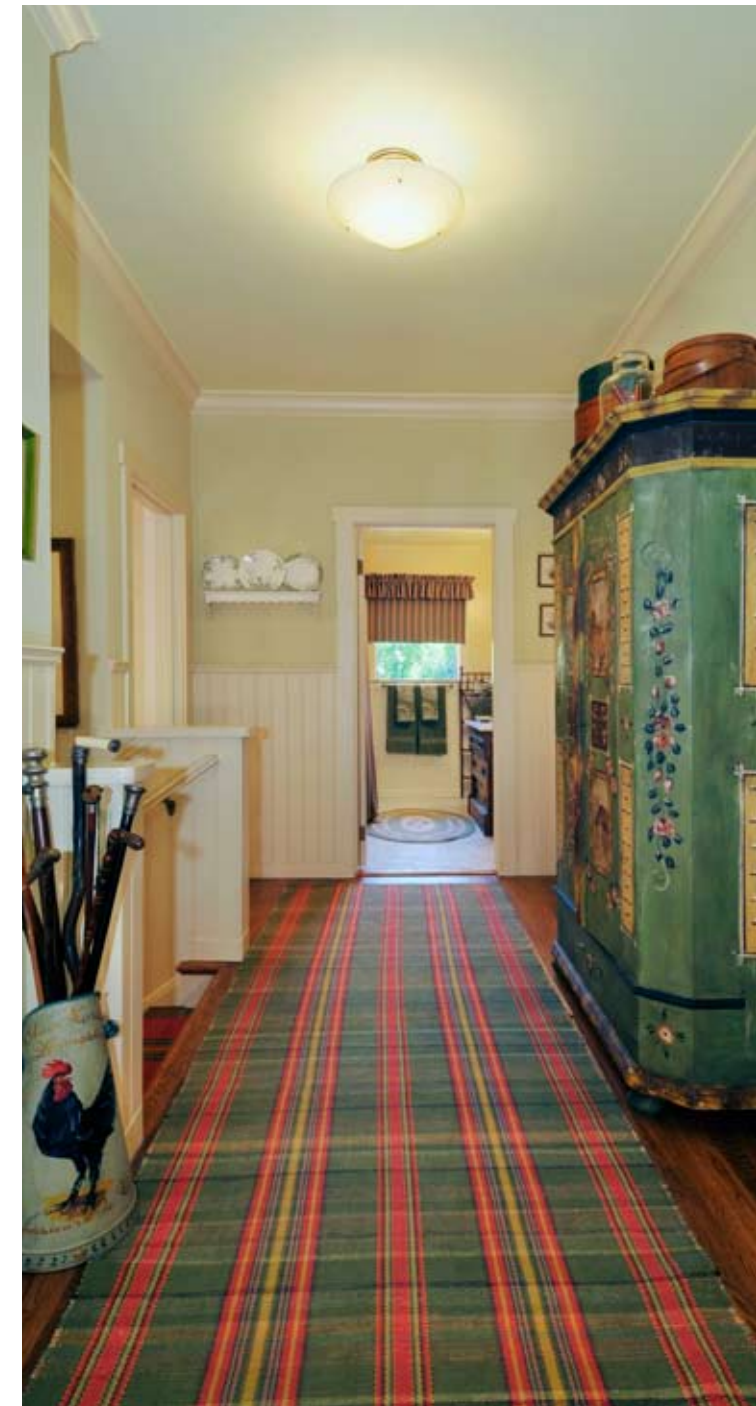
To warm the formerly stark beige exterior, Juestel suggested golden ochre paint—inspired by the Austrian emperor’s Schonbrunn palace; for punch, she added green trim. “We looked at colors of my native Austria and borrowed the pale yellow. It’s a royal color,” she says. And quite proper for a remade, stylish country home.

CHILD’S HAVEN

The homeowners’ youngest son’s bedroom, top left, was transformed into a whimsical haven for grandchildren, with lots of old toys and stuffed animals, many from when the owners’ children were growing up. The framed vintage storybook pages are a great DIY project.

HATS OFF

A narrow bedroom, bottom left, once a son’s room, became a guest bedroom. Among its accents are antique embroidered shams, Victorian bamboo side tables with lamps made from wicker-covered French wine bottles, a rocker and a trio of old straw hats above the bed.



ADD INTEREST
This space needed only a cosmetic update. The biggest change was turning a Victorian oak dresser into a vanity. To soften the large room, Juestel added an antique hooked rug, new bamboo shade and new ticking-stripe shower curtain.

STRAIGHT AWAY
The rag rug runner, above, was commissioned by Juestel to muffle sounds in the hallway and add color. An advantage of a new runner: Favorite old fabrics can be woven in for sentimental value. A handpainted armoire displays antique boxes.