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Tour a Bright Modern Family Home in California

Designer Mead Quin creates a neutral backdrop with earthy blue-and-green accents for one young family

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Sunshine and space first lured a young [family](#) from downtown San Francisco to the hills of nearby Marin County. The husband, who works in technology, and wife, a writer, easily fell for the northern suburb's natural charms: The enclave includes plentiful hiking trails and lacks their former neighborhood's near-permanent marine layer. But it was an [old house](#) with good bones and breathtaking views—and the promise of a wonderfully low-key oasis—that convinced them to stay. There was only one problem: The cabinlike look of the three-story living space didn't suit the light and bright aesthetic of the couple or the needs of their two young children.

Enter Oakland-based designer [Mead Quin](#). “They wanted to update a great house with tired interiors into a happy home they could settle into for the long run,” says the up-and-coming talent, whose signature aesthetic blends sophisticated high-end pieces with the handcrafted spirit that suffuses her Bay Area base. “We decided immediately to remove all the heavy wood framing and stone façades scattered throughout,” says Quin. Knotty oak floors and yellow walls were also on the chopping block, to be replaced with a wash of crisp white. “My experience is that young families with busy lives tend to unintentionally clutter themselves up,” says the designer. “Presenting options that create a restrained, neutral palette for the rest of their lives to pile up on is one of my favorite design challenges.”

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To the fresh canvas, Quin added clean lines and kid-friendly furnishings in an array of pale hues. “Anywhere you see white, it's a Perennials outdoor fabric,” she says. Color makes a bold showing on the dining room's emerald upholstered chairs and the living room's blue velvet sofa, as well as in one audacious [powder room](#), where Quin embraced her clients' bohemian leanings with an artful Sloan Miyasato wallpaper. One piece that did not make the cut: a television in the living room. “We knew that we did not want the room to have any media in it,” says the wife. “Instead, we wanted a place where we could sit by the fire, play board games with our kids, and listen to records.” The choice also lends itself to appreciating some of the things that attracted them to Marin County in the first place: peace, quiet, stars, and—an all-but-forgotten sound—crickets.

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Designer Mead Quin transformed the cabinlike interiors of a young family's new Bay Area home into a light-filled retreat perfect for appreciating the beautiful natural surroundings and one another's company. In the living room, a velvet-clad A. Rudin sofa and custom-made tête-à-tête by Richard Andronaco frame a fireplace newly faced in marble.

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