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THE MAGAZINE

HOME TOURS / AUGUST 31, 2015

MEAD QUIN DESIGNS AN ELEGANT FAMILY HOME IN ATHERTON



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Written by **Kelli Lamb**

Interior Design by **Mead Quin**

Photography by **David Duncan Livingston**

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Mead Quin originally thought she would be a fine artist. She had a degree from Vanderbilt and was painting full time when she realized her passions were pulling her in a different direction – interior design. After putting in time at some of the top firms in San Francisco, Mead took a leap of faith and opened **her own firm** in 2013. Her talent shines through each and every project that she adds to her portfolio. Her designs always include a heavy hit of luxury while still feeling within reach. Case in point? This style-conscious family home in Atherton, a suburb in the Bay Area. The owners had spent many years living amongst the hustle and bustle of San Francisco, and knew it was time to slow down and revel in more space. Mead helped them transform a traditional craftsman home into the modern retreat they hoped for.

Hi Mead! Thank you of showing off this beautiful home. What can you tell us about the clients?

The clients are a wonderful couple who were living in SF with young kids. He is in environmental tech and she a lawyer taking some time off to be with the little ones. Their San Francisco home was constricted by tight quarters and a long commute down the peninsula that inspired them to turn their attention to Atherton. In this suburban setting, the family was able to purchase a much larger home with a tremendous yard that better suited their children and lifestyle.

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Our client purchased the home due to the fantastic space, neighborhood and proximity to work it offered. As it was, the traditional bones and palette of the home did not reflect the family's youthfulness or fresh, city aesthetic, but they saw potential and brought us in to transform it into a sophisticated and modern space.

The home is a 6052 square foot Craftsman style house located in West Atherton on a great street. With five large bedrooms (including the master), numerous French doors leading to wraparound covered porches ideal for yearround entertaining, a pool with a spa, spacious outdoor space, and a separate guest unit complete with a bedroom, bath, full kitchen and living/dining room, there was definitely a lot of preexisting space for us to work with!

For city-dwellers, this sounds like a dream! What were the requirements when beginning the project?

The clients are wonderful people.. a laid back, down to earth couple juggling a typical busy family schedule. With three small children, they needed their house to feel like home as soon as possible as they adjusted to new schools, neighborhood, community, etc. They wanted their home to feel modern, clean, and polished while still being warm and family friendly. The materials needed to be as kidfriendly as possible. Taking the client's background in the environmental tech industry into consideration, we worked closely with the contractor and electrician to find and install LED lighting throughout.

You mentioned the home was quite traditional. What all did you update?

The home had great bones but was in need of a serious face lift. We painted the entire interior and exterior, replaced the roof, renovated the kitchen, refinished the floors, replaced hardware and lighting throughout, and knocked down walls to create bigger, more spacious rooms.

Did you have to deal with any hiccups or challenges as you got to work?

Our biggest challenge was taking a home with traditional bones and creating something that was simple, modern, sophisticated and youthful. We were able to transform this home by simplifying at every turn. We took out walls that separated the living room and dining room to open and expand the small space. We removed wainscoting, crown molding, and french doors to shed the home's traditional feel. We painted heavy wood kitchen cabinets in the kitchen a pale grey, selected simple window treatments that quietly frame the windows and scenery, and completed reconfigured the fireplace from traditional to sleek and modern with a custom Haisa marble surround.

There are some stunning pieces in this home. Did you keep any of their existing furniture, or did you start with a clean slate?

There are a few pieces we incorporated from their previous home, such as the Saarinen table in the kitchen dining area, but overall we got to start with a pretty clean slate. We minimized furniture waste by filling the guest house with existing furniture. In the main house, it was important to pull in contemporary furniture in order to modernize the rooms and give them a fresh, cohesive look.

Selfishly, we must ask... What are your top resources for such great furniture?

One of my favorite places to shop for projects is Coup D'Etat in San Francisco. We found some amazing vintage lucite table lamps and a Klismos chair for the living room. In the office, we found pair of vintage oval rocking chairs by Milo Baughman that we reupholstered.. they are so chic and comfortable!

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What inspired you most as you began the design?

My original inspiration for this space was to create an elegant family home that incorporated kidfriendly materials but was still sleek, modern, and adult. I wanted the clients to feel that they didn't have to compromise their youthful, chic aesthetic when transitioning from living in busy city to a suburban location. While my project definitely takes the children's needs into consideration, the home is also a sophisticated space where the couple can entertain and be proud to share with friends and family.

Do you have a favorite room?

My favorite spaces are the living and dining rooms. We started with a quirky living room that had a super traditional feel and a tiny dining room next to it. We knocked down the walls between the living and dining rooms and added a sleek, modern fireplace between the two that you can enjoy from either side. It created a cohesive, modern, useful space that the client adores.

The result is just incredible! You obviously have an incredible skill. When did you discover your talents?

Beauty is my passion. Design is just one of many ways to discover and express beauty. I fell into interior design after a major life shake up: I was painting professionally, pursuing my MFA but one day found myself in a place where I needed to shift gears. Interior design interested me because of its creative qualities. As a single mom, I decided to dive right in instead of going back to school and serendipitously landed a job with a high end designer in San Francisco where I cut my teeth and learned the tricks of the trade. I started my own firm in 2013 and have enjoyed every second of it.

We're certainly glad you did... we'll be endlessly inspired by your portfolio! Finally, any words you live by as you navigate the interior design profession?

Stay true to yourself, purchase the very best you can afford so that it stays with you longer, and have fun!

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