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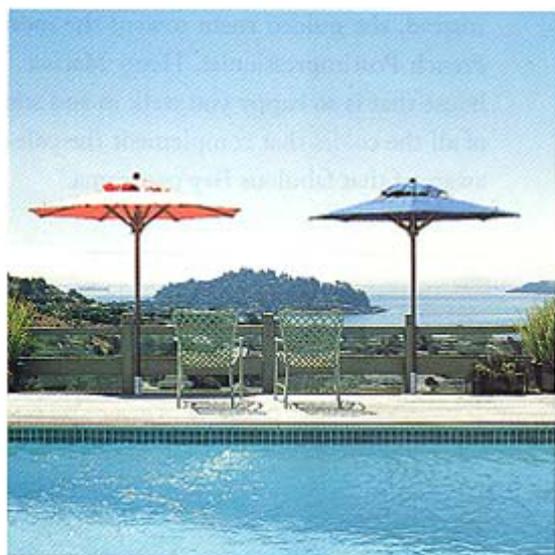


THIS PAGE: A 30-year-old house receives a modern look thanks to an adventurous color scheme. The curved stairs and soaring living room wall are especially enhanced by this eye-popping makeover.

OPPOSITE: Bright umbrellas shade a pool that overlooks shimmering San Francisco Bay. SEE BUYING GUIDE FOR DETAILS

NG

COLOR



A Matisse-inspired palette turns a once-dull house into a young family's joyful home.

In their professional lives, the couple who own this 1970s San Francisco-area house are likely to wear subdued hues of gray, black, and brown—sober tones appropriate for two attorneys. That may do for their wardrobe, but the couple knew that wasn't what they wanted for their dream home. Now, walking through the door each evening, they are greeted by rooms splashed with brilliant color. Vibrant hues spill down a stairwell painted a rosy pink-lemonade, dance over chairs wrapped in fabric the shade of pistachio ice cream, and zip across walls in the moody hue of a lavender-blue sky. The kaleidoscope of color creates an upbeat environment ideal for an active family with two little boys and a pair of rambunctious German Shorthaired Pointers.

The makeover of the house was a yearlong project that involved a talented designer's master plan, plenty of trial and error, and many, many cans of custom-mixed paints. And the results were definitely worth the time and effort.

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLAUDIO SANTINI DESIGN: LINDA APPELWHITE FAUX PAINTING: ARNAUD CORNILLON

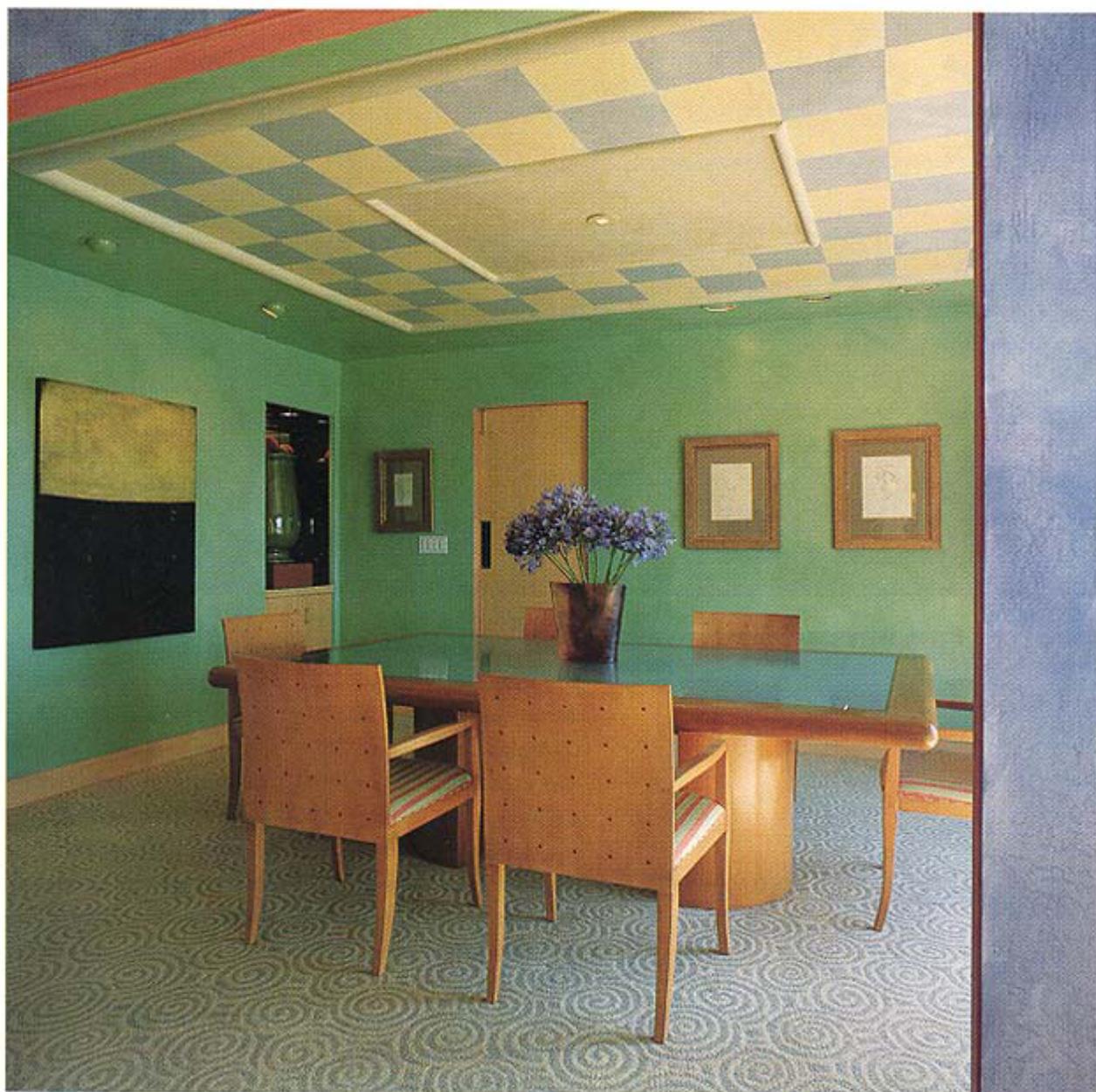
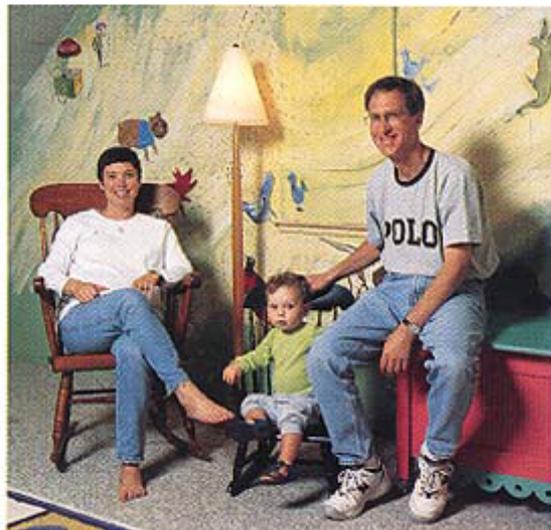
When a realtor first showed the couple the house, they were captivated by the vista. "The site was stunning," says the wife. "There is an amazing view of the Golden Gate bridge." Less enthralling was the strictly 1970s monochromatic color plan. "The house had gray marble floors, gray linoleum floors, gray carpet, gray walls, gray ceilings," recalls San Rafael, California, designer Linda Applewhite, owner of Linda Applewhite & Associates. She coaxed her clients away from their initial idea of painting every wall a different strong primary color. "That would have eclipsed the great views," explains Applewhite. Instead, she guided them toward the more gentle and luscious colors of the French Postimpressionist, Henri Matisse. The result, says Applewhite, is "a house that is so happy you walk in and start smiling." But, she adds, because of all the colors that complement the pale-blue marine vista, "you are always aware of that fabulous Bay panorama."

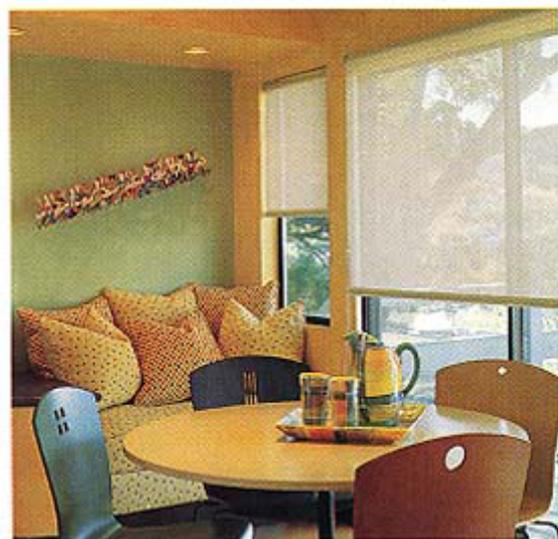
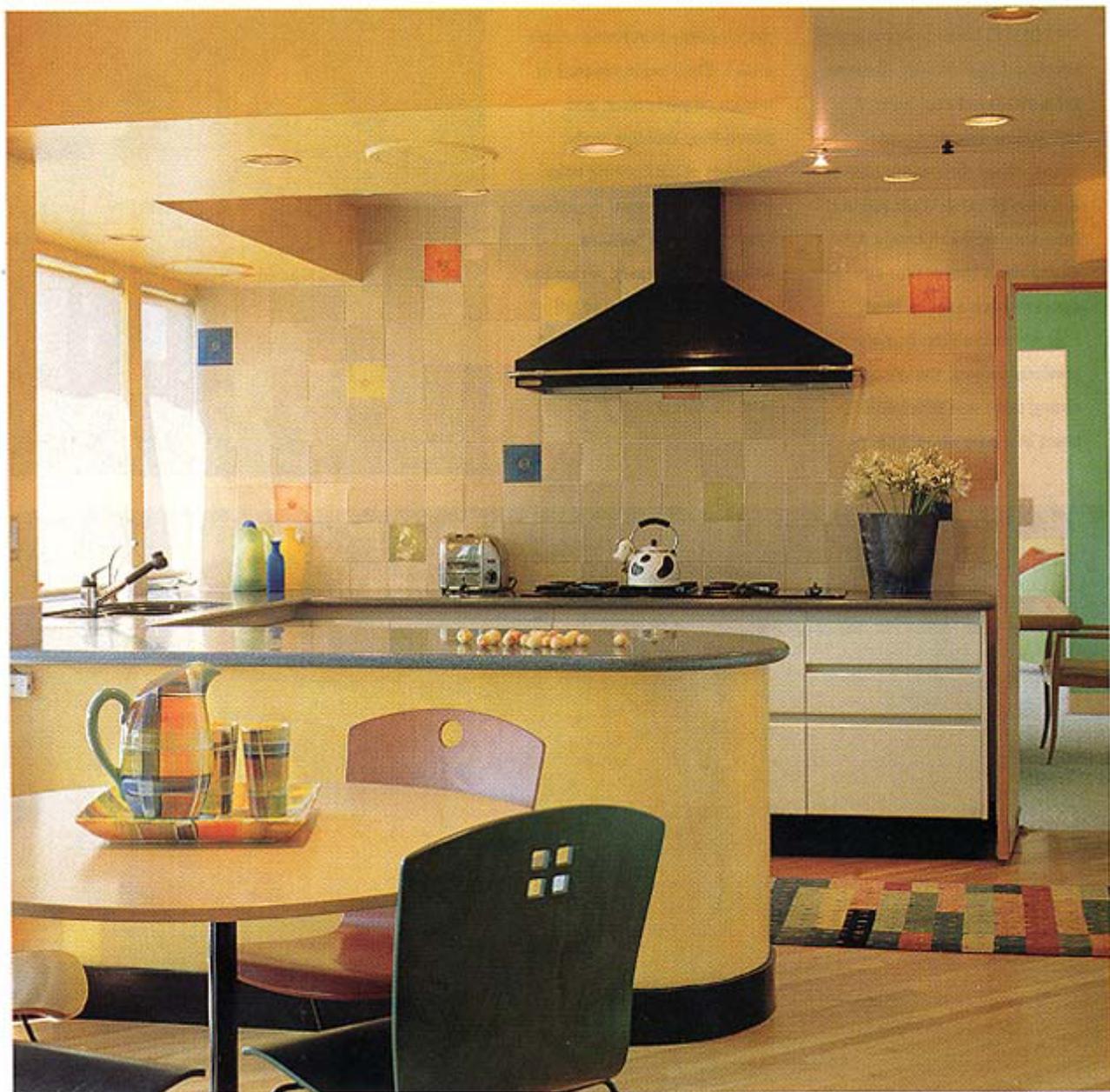


OPPOSITE: Favorite objects are displayed prominently, showing off a medley of cool hues. A soft yellow vase and pastel teapot offset the deeper blue of the tray. BELOW: Walls painted lime-sherbet green create a dining room that makes sit-down meals a special treat. Purchased from the home's previous owners, the once-gray dining table was renewed with paint in a pale wood tone to

match newly purchased maple chairs. Chair seats covered in mango-striped cotton and peach-tone molding make splashes of contrasting color. RIGHT: A wall mural depicting family trips and hobbies enlivens the nursery, where the homeowners and one of their sons pose for a family portrait.

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ABOVE: Though the original Euro-style cabinets in the kitchen were retained, California designer Linda Applewhite replaced the old gray linoleum with red oak set on a diagonal. The walls were paved with cream and pastel handmade tiles and surfaces were painted butter-yellow. **LEFT:** The perfect spot to have a quiet cup of coffee: Applewhite added colorful aniline-dyed chairs to this breakfast

area and piled a ton of fluffy throw pillows on the seat near the sunny window. **OPPOSITE:** In the master bedroom, a whimsical raspberry-and-peach striped chair is teamed with a table banded in black and white. "I used black accents to ground the colors, otherwise the bright colors would float away," explains Applewhite. **SEE BUYING GUIDE FOR DETAILS**



I grounded all the color with neutrals," says Applewhite, explaining how she was able to use so much color so effectively. One neutral that runs throughout the rooms is the original gray of the high, angled ceilings. So the designer used basic gray as the background in the home and added another neutral to pair with it: a flesh tone with touches of pink and orange in it. The gray and pink-beige pairing flows through the house and sets off a bouquet of other lively pastels. "In some areas, such as the staircase and in the bookcases, we painted in highly saturated tones to drench the small spot in color," says the designer. Assisting Applewhite was decorative painter Arnaud Cornillion from Nice, France. He spent several months brushing, ragging, and glazing on paints to get just the right depth and tone. "Every night we'd come home to a surprise, and say, 'Look what Arnaud did today,'" the wife says. "Rooms were painted and repainted. He'd keep experimenting with the color until we'd say, 'Hey, stop, we like that.'"



While color is the main feature of designer Applewhite's decorating scheme, she also orchestrated a repertoire of geometric patterns to give the rooms a bit of punch. At the entry, for example, she replaced old gray marble squares with a checkerboard of gray-and-gold custom-made cement tiles. Then she repeated that lively motif by having a checkerboard pattern painted on the dining room ceiling. In addition, she installed carpeting with a spiral pattern in the living room, then used a ceramic tile with a spiral design for the kitchen walls. A medley of fabrics with stripes and polka dots jazz up the furniture. "I also wanted to tie the interiors to the wonderful garden that came with the house," says Applewhite. The rejuvenated rooms are now a colorful complement to the garden's orchard of orange and lemon trees and the field of lavender agapanthus flowers growing nearby. The trial-and-error painting process and the entire design project was an adventure, says the owner: "It really opened our minds to the creative possibilities of color."

—Sarah Clark



OPPOSITE: Overnight guests are treated to a colorful fantasy in this guest bathroom. The walls are glazed in a hot-pink shade. "Using glaze softens the color and gives it transparency and depth," Applewhite notes. Cantaloupe cabinets, a soft yellow mirror, and a trio of funky glass flasks round out the room. ABOVE: Who wouldn't have restful dreams in this guest bedroom? Applewhite decided to paint the walls in

lemon-drop yellow, then mixed the color with a play of patterned fabrics sporting stripes and dots. The overall effect emphasizes the luxuriously high ceilings. RIGHT: A medley of small objects in different colors can make a room pop. Here, a trio of translucent vases in cool pastel hues have a calming effect in a window.

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