





Childhood dreams sometimes conjure images of flying unicorns. Other times they're of magical lands where clouds, flowers, and butterflies are made of sugar. For designer Kendall Wilkinson's client, the dream grew up into something a bit more realistic. The client imagined herself in a historic San Francisco home. That proved a notable style pivot from the neighborhood of her youth, where midcentury modern homes lined streets, and where fluting, scrolls, and millwork never saw light among architecture with an intentional absence of frills.

Her husband not only supported his wife's fantasy, he also longed for a similar environment. In 2023, when the young couple sought to vacate their condo for more spacious accommodations, affinity sparked with a house built in 1905. Soon, their new living trajectory felt very "once upon a time" with a "they lived happily ever after" to come.

"My clients toured plenty of cookie-cutter modern homes while they were searching and recoiled against it," Wilkinson says. "They noted that in modern homes, there was an exact spot for everything, and that type of design seemed less inviting for

new pieces to weave into. They wanted a design that was fluid and allowed them to bring back mementos from travels that would seamlessly blend. They also wanted a design that would get better with age. Modern design can lose its effect and impact when that happens." The clients found their ideal in the home she crafted with creative design director Michael Schoeller.

While their peers tend to lean toward an aesthetic that celebrates relaxed and casual living, this couple is drawn to formality, and they wanted that to stand out. To do so, they made a commitment to daring color. A creamy white paint that offsets the dark stain applied to the original woodwork made the entry hall the color exception. But as guests enter public spaces they are greeted by an explosion of intensity.

Peacock blue, for instance, saturates the living room, where an airy botanical wallpaper wraps the space and sets the tone for the suite of formal furniture. A sofa dressed in a solid velvet corduroy matches the wallpaper, and a bullion fringe-trimmed daybed tucked into the window niche puts a modern-day spin on a heavy cut velvet used to fabricate a cushion. A pair of beige armchairs relieves the room of overwhelming vibrance.

Dining room Monotone landscapes in unconventional shapes hang above a Federal-style sideboard. **Powder room** A loden green floral wallpaper contrasts the white vanity. **Library** The aubergine-hue workspace shows a serious side with a gold-papered ceiling, reproduction writing desk, and mohair chair. **Previous pages** A diamond-pattern runner climbs all levels of the stair hall. In the dining room, a coffered ceiling lends architectural balance to a fireplace that includes new blue tiles, a mirror, and columns.

Designer Kendall Wilkinson's clients longed for artwork that would respect the history of their home. In the living room, an oil landscape and still life hang on adjacent walls and seamlessly blend with the mélange of traditional upholstered seating, blue-and-white ceramic lamps, and a chinoiserie faux-bamboo cocktail table.





Kitchen Blue and white used as a room's color directive is nothing new. Blue in the vivid teal shade that Wilkinson selected for the cabinetry and molding is noteworthy. The room vibrates in the electric hue that contrasts with white marble countertops. **Stair hall** Emerald-color velvet on the grand settee anchors the soaring space. A credenza with imperial gold detailing provides a surface for a timeless collection of blue-and-white ginger jars.



"They are both people who love fashion," Wilkinson says of her clients. "So the same way that one appreciates fine materials and textures in the closet played out here throughout the interiors. We had velvet in the living room, mohair in the office, and alpaca in the foyer. They committed to heightening the quality of the materials early in the process, so we searched for fabrics that were elevated and special."

The dining room took a cue from the airy wallpaper in the living room and displayed its own floral swag around its perimeter. Executed in deep blue, the room shows off its fashionable hue on chairs with a textural crewelwork fabric on the backs and a sumptuous teal velvet on the fronts. A crystal chandelier hangs from the coffered ceiling and supports the formality the homeowners desired. Old monotone landscapes effortlessly blend into the room but grab attention with gold frames.

"The dining room was one of the few spaces in the house with natural light," Wilkinson says. "Even with its deep coloring, it could be pretty and elegant during the day but transform to a moody and sexy atmosphere at night. These clients entertain quite a bit, so when guests are in this room, they are getting a visual experience with lots of layers. This room is reserved for



A sculpted carpet blankets the primary bedroom floor and offers a soft surface underfoot before stepping outside to a simple deck that overlooks the neighborhood.

the special people in their lives, so we wanted to make sure that the room lived up to guests and celebrations.”

Open to the dining room, the kitchen brings the drama. It’s filled with classic cabinetry, white marble countertops, and warm brass from lantern-style light fixtures and hardware. But the functional space exudes a modern presence with a bright teal lacquer paint that wraps all cabinetry and millwork. As a distinct departure from the classic all-white so prevalent today, the homeowners wanted a kitchen that would command as much attention as the rooms it connects with.

The home’s public spaces are decorated in a manner that takes guests on a visual journey of jewel tones and statement antiques. But the private spaces offer their own aesthetic stories and are rooted in history through the lens of traditional style.

The library on the main level houses books the couple has read and melds walls and built-in cabinets painted aubergine. Drapery panels that slide across French doors boast a regal metallic trim balanced by a brass rod and an armillary-style light fixture secured to the gold-papered ceiling.

The most natural light dapples through the home’s top level, where the primary suite radiates elegance. Instead of continuing the same rich tones of the lower floors, Wilkinson

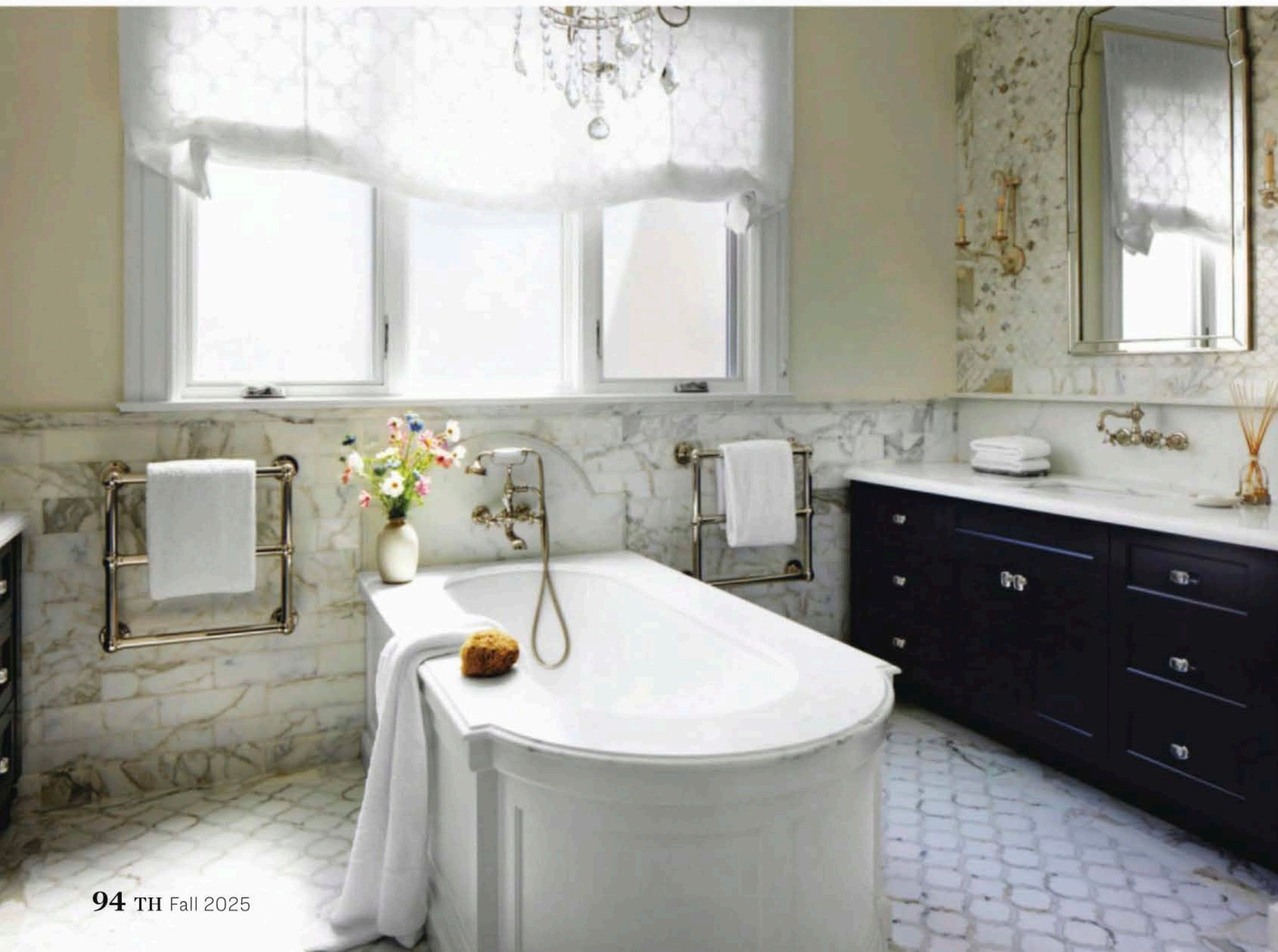
used sunny yellow as the decorative note that extends a cheerful complexion to the bedroom. The wood of the canopy bed contrasts a yellow chinoiserie fabric joined by yellow walls, a pair of matching armchairs, and a tufted ottoman. A crystal chandelier amplifies daylight with an elegant flicker.

Getting ready for the day takes place in the dressing room and primary bathroom. Anchored by an inlaid vanity table and mirror from India, the dressing room is papered in a tone-on-tone terra-cotta ombré stripe. A tufted and skirted velvet stool embellished with cut velvet trim provides seating at the vanity table. In the primary bathroom, a tub placed in the middle of the marble-clad room has an architecturally inspired profile.

This home will continue to evolve. The couple had a young son when they moved into the house. He’s now 3, and they are expecting another child. Living in a historic home was only part of their dream. Living there with a family fulfills it.

“This is their forever home,” Wilkinson says. “They want to host their friends and family, their children’s friends, and create memories that will add to this home’s story. And because they understand that a home is never done, all the layers and additions to come will build on the beauty that exists now.”

Interior design: Kendall Wilkinson with Michael Schoeller



Primary bathroom Wilkinson chose arabesque and subway tile styles for the floor and walls. A graceful sheer Roman shade cascades over the window. **Dressing room** An elaborate inlaid vanity table from India introduces culture, shape, and texture—in addition to function.

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