

HouseBeautiful

This Colorful California Home Will Make You Want a Neon Coffee Table

Who says neon lucite and classic prints can't coexist?



BY HADLEY KELLER MAR 22, 2019



"Most people in California love their neutrals," San Francisco-based designer Heather Hilliard tells *House Beautiful*. Not one such client, though, whose Los Altos home is a [colorful oasis](#).

"It was so nice," Hilliard says of the project, for a young family. "She was our first and only client who has ever let us do that."

"That" is playing with color in wholly adventurous ways (just wait until you see the neon green coffee table). Far from feeling over-the-top and loud, though, the colorful home is comfortable, calming, and even classic—thanks to Hilliard's clever balance of modern and traditional.

"She grew up in a French-style house with a lot of Louis XV type furniture," Hilliard explains of the client. "She likes that and likes references to the past but has a curiosity for the future and going more bold, so it's useful and fresh."



The home's blues and greens echo its lush surroundings.

JOHN MERKL

To marry those two worlds, Hilliard decided to stick to a fairly simple color palette—and then make daring choices within it. "She mentioned she liked blues and greens," the designer says. "So I thought, ok, let's really dial up the blues and green."

And dial up she did, selecting eye-popping pieces like a bright blue Fontana Arte mirror and a neon green lucite coffee table from Alexandra von Furstenburg whose modern lines have a prismatic effect in the home's sun-filled living room, refracting light throughout the space.



Hilliard selected an "indestructible" French lava stone table for the breakfast room.

JOHN MERKL

"It's even brighter than it looks in the pictures," Hilliard laughs. "Even our furniture installers walked in and were like, 'wow!'"

Despite that wow moment, though, the table and other eye-catching pieces don't feel out of place, thanks to Hilliard's deft layering ability. Every room in the house has at least a few patterns in it, and many have multiple [saturated colors](#).



An antique chest in the hall.

JOHN MERKL

That's not to say it's all bold and modern, though; in fact, far from it. Mixing in pieces like an antique chest in the dining room or bench in the bedroom give the home a certain gravitas. Plus, Hilliard says, "the client does really like traditional patterns," so those play a big part throughout. The perfect example? Brunchwig & Fils's iconic Les Touches, which swathes the bedroom walls and ceiling (an application, Hilliard says, that was no easy feat: "My wallpaper installer said it was the most challenging install he's ever done, because we wrapped it all over the ceiling, around the fireplace, everywhere!").



In the powder room, a bright blue Fontana Arte glass mirror stands out against a more classic wallpaper (Arbre de Matisse by China Seas).

JOHN MERKL

The pattern-heavy decor wasn't an easy sell at first. "She was a little bit reluctant at first to layer patterns," Hilliard admits. "We used that China Seas wallpaper in the family room and we showed her the small printed linen sheers from Soane with the light green flowers for the curtains and she said, 'this doesn't really go.'"

Undeterred, though, Hilliard explained: "I said, 'No it's the layering that makes it work; it's using large *and* small scale patterns, contemporary and new. Then she got it." The family room in question? "It's now her favorite room," says Hilliard.

Tour the rest of the house:



FAMILY ROOM "We really thought about the outside," says Hilliard, especially in this space, which looks over the yard. "It's so lush most of the year and they have a beautiful yard and pool, so we thought a lot about making it feel sunny and fresh." JOHN MERKL