

interiors

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VISIONS OF GLAMOUR

DESIGNER: GREG STEWART
TEXT: ZAHID SARDAR
PHOTOGRAPHY: NATHAN KIEKMAN



INTERIOR DESIGNER GREG STEWART, PRINCIPAL AT ODADA (ORLANDO DIAZ-AZCUY DESIGN ASSOCIATES), made sections of the apartment he designed for a couple in San Francisco's *Four Seasons* tower deliberately disorienting. For instance, you enter the L-shaped apartment through an octagonal vestibule with black-lacquered walls. A gilded drum is inset into its black-lacquered ceiling, and black granite floors are inlaid with a circle of polished variegated black-and-gold Portoro marble. *Four* identical Roman-style frosted-glass black grille doors on opposing facets of the vestibule lead to two coat closets, a powder room and a capacious guest suite, but there are no clues to suggest the purpose of the doors. Twin gilded cobalt commodes against two other facets are like mirror images.

"The dark entry is a bit of a shock," the designer says. "You don't know where you are, but I wanted the square white room beyond it to pull people in deeper." On its west side, a hallway gallery—a sort of Hausmannian Paris boulevard—links a bright, white-lacquered anteroom to the sunny south-facing living room. It has pieces of Neoclassical furniture and offers vistas of downtown, the city's famous bay, and Yerba Buena gardens.

Stewart's Parisian and classical conceits are not coincidental. "For this project, my clients came with an unusual brief," says Stewart, who typically prefers satin nickel finishes and a taut Jean Michel Frank sensibility. "I had to start with many givens and think differently." The owners, a retired couple with another home in Las Vegas, love Neoclassical-style opulence moderated by an Asian aesthetic. They wanted Stewart to work with their eclectic collection of art, including rock crystal obelisks and Chinoiserie, but most importantly, they wanted him to use a ready-made floor plan for the 4,230-square-foot apartment. The project also came replete with a shipping container full of Portoro marble and Italian granite.

The owners made other requests too. "She asked me for a glamorous city apartment with light cream-colored lacquered cabinetry in the kitchen and bathrooms, yet she wanted shiny brass fittings, dark walls and some bling everywhere," Stewart says. "I like to let materials speak for themselves, but clients often want more color and finishes. To give each of them what they wanted, I decided that the apartment could be about contrasts: dark and light, and also heavy and light, all linked by neutral colors."















Given the big windows in the apartment, the designer felt that black walls would seem oppressive at night, so he went from the darkened entry to increasingly lighter volumes – like Corbusier at Villa Savoye. “Corbusier didn’t invent the concept,” Stewart explains. “Ancient Greece and Rome had such spatial progressions, too.” His skillful interpretation of such concepts neatly incorporates one of ODADA’s signatures: white lacquered spaces filled with modern art, custom furnishings and vintage one-of-a-kind pieces. Stewart melded the dark and light influences deftly, including the Portoro in the powder room and Tiger Eye stone mosaic in the bar, where a gilded Portuguese lion from Thierien & Co. holds court.

Stewart also made strategic changes to the plan he inherited. By moving a few walls, he mitigated any lingering tension between the materials and the flow of the space, visually and literally linking the onyx-clad white bathroom he designed for the wife to its twin, the husband’s dark Macchia Vecchia marble-clad bathroom. He also ensured seamless transitions from a contemporary kitchen and breakfast room with Josef Hoffmann-esque chairs to a modern family room adjacent to the formal dining room.

In the Neoclassical-style black dining room, a white lacquered ceiling with a round gold-leafed drum inset is an effective foil for a 1940s French crystal chandelier. A large black dot print on a square sheet of paper by Richard Serra hangs on the wall, while artist Hiramatsu Yasuki’s piece *Flight*, a 1997 gilded-iron spiral from Japonisque, adds movement. “It is a nearly square room, so I wanted to allude to the classical penchant for circle-and-square patterns,” Stewart says. His dining table—a gilded sphere sitting on a square base—underscores the theme. Two-tone vintage Swedish chairs around the table are covered in Dedar taffeta.

In the trapezoidal living room, softened with vaulted ceilings, Swedish Neoclassical chairs from Thierien & Co. complement the dining chairs as well as gilded panels by Colombian textile artist Olga de Amaral. Stewart designed a custom sofa and several new lounge chairs, which were made by Marco Fine Furniture, and arranged them around two coffee tables that were originally old Chinese screens. The seating is covered with Joseph Noble linen velvet and accented by pillows covered in Bailey & Griffin striped silk and solid gold silk from Old World Weavers.

Even though it is relatively spare and casual, the living room has a formal air. “I wanted the family room to feel a little more relaxed,” Stewart says, indicating its sofa and lounge chair covered in soft mohair from Fische Frey, called Teddy.

Stewart’s choices of pale lightweight Cowtan & Sout chertille on the guest bedroom walls and for shades and soft middle-tone carpets in most of the rooms, as well as a leather headrest and Fortuny bedspread in the guest room, are intended to enhance the furniture. In the kitchen and family room the velvety wool carpet also mitigates the excessive liveliness of Black Marlinachi granite used for the kitchen counters and floors.



In the master bedroom, the wall behind the bed was deliberately concertinaed and veneered with pear wood to simulate a large Coromandel screen. It is paired with a Fortuny bedspread and an apricot Osborne & Little silk headboard that seems grand and monumental in a Vegas highroller kind of way.

“It’s perfect for my clients,” says Stewart, “it’s their home and not an altar. Instead of weighing it down with my own design philosophy, I simply tried to instill a sense of calm without lowering the volume they enjoy. If that comes through, I know I’ve succeeded.” ■ Greg Stewart, ODADA (Orlando Diaz-Azcuy Design Associates), odada.net

