

INTERIOR DESIGN / MARIA TENAGLIA, MARIA TENAGLIA DESIGN
ARCHITECTURE / BENNETT CHRISTOPHERSON, BENNETT CHRISTOPHERSON, ARCHITECT AIA
HOME BUILDER / NICK W. OZIER, NICK W. OZIER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / JEFF GEORGE, JEFF GEORGE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

MODERN HISTORY

BY KEEPING A THOUGHTFUL EYE ON THE PAST, A TEAM REVIVES A CENTURY-OLD SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA HOUSE WITHOUT LOSING SIGHT OF THE PRESENT.

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Designer Maria Tenaglia placed contemporary furnishings against the traditional backdrop of a 1915 Bay Area house for a fresh look. One of the home's existing Swarovski-crystal chandeliers hangs in the entry above a bronze-and-lacquer table by Jun Ho Collection and a custom rug by Himalayan Weavers.



It was the perfect match: a century-old estate that had seen better days and East Coast transplants who could see its potential. Happily, the two found each other. The owners, who had watched friends transform their Gilded Age houses back East, were poised for the challenge of doing the same when they relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area. But, given the state of the 1915 house they purchased, they knew it wouldn't be easy. "You really had to look hard to see the true beauty of this thing," says the husband. "One hundred years of neglect was pretty obvious."

To get things started, the owner and his wife hired a team—architect Bennett Christopherson, builder Nick W. Ozier and landscape architect Jeff George—that was just completing a project nearby. But the couple quickly realized that they needed a designer sooner rather than later and turned to Maria Tenaglia. "We brought in Maria to help us control things from an appearance perspective," says the husband. "She helped us establish a vision to understand the project." Given Tenaglia's background in architecture, she was perfectly suited to advise on all aspects of the extensive renovation that lay ahead as well as keep a cohesive and stylish eye on the overall aesthetic.

"We went from zero to 60 in literally 48 hours," Tenaglia says, recalling the time between the initial consult and getting the project underway. "The demo, design and build-out were only 22 months." An aggressive schedule, considering four levels had to be gutted and rebuilt to modern earthquake codes. That's not to mention the changes necessary to suit this young family's modern lifestyle. The structure had fine elements of Georgian architecture, along with ornately paneled rooms, decorative plaster ceilings and intricately carved moldings. Yet the layout was a less-desirable holdover from when servants occupied warrens of small rooms beyond the large public spaces. "We wanted to respect the inherent architecture but at the same time give it the new lease on life that it desperately needed," Tenaglia says.

To meet that goal and stick with the clients' strict timeline, the design, construction and architectural plans needed to evolve simultaneously for the 12,900-square-foot house. While Christopherson collaborated with the husband to rework the floor plan, Tenaglia worked with the wife on a plan to express their contemporary tastes within a deeply traditional setting. "I said we were going to think about the furniture in a different way, and the backdrop of the inherent architecture will simply be that—a backdrop," explains Tenaglia. When it came to selecting pieces, the designer kept to clean lines and modern silhouettes. She custom-designed a sofa for the living room and paired it with a sleek gold-leaf-and-glass coffee table and an Ironies chandelier. The streamlined forms of the pieces create the perfect foil to the room's intricate millwork.

Taking cues from the wife's affinity for color—purple, aubergine and blue, in particular—the designer alternated those shades with what she calls "neutral zones" of cream and gold throughout the interiors. Although the living room stayed relatively muted, the dining room's walls are sheathed with a deep blue, and the library is brimming with jewel tones. In the latter, Tenaglia dressed a pair of custom wing chairs with purple fabric and upholstered a tufted sofa with chartreuse velvet. "I approached the furnishings with a modern point of view," says the designer. "The pieces are bold, elegant and

very practical. And with the dynamic use of color throughout, the overall effect is unexpected and unique." She worked in tandem with art advisor Tom O'Connor, who added another layer of interest by curating significant modern works for the main level and lower-level ballroom.

Christopherson, meanwhile, produced a layout that eliminated small secondary rooms in favor of an open kitchen, breakfast area and family room on the main floor and bigger bedrooms and a large master suite upstairs. The gracious proportions of the ornate public spaces and elegant stair hall that branch off from the entry on the main level remained intact. "The flow of space between the public rooms was quite special, and we didn't touch it," Christopherson says, noting how the entry not only anchors the living room, dining room, parlor and conservatory, but is also on axis with breathtaking views of the city's horizon.

For the reworked family areas, Tenaglia designed simpler moldings while keeping to the original proportions, and she updated much of the original trimwork with a creamy white paint. "Paint is the perfect medium for change," she says, though it took a bit of convincing. "On the East Coast, dark paneling is more common, but from a Californian's point of view, it just seemed too dark and formal for a young family." But before the paint could be applied, samples of the original trim and moldings were set aside and cataloged so that they—and custom duplicates if needed—could go back in their place once Ozier's team rebuilt the foundation, replaced the electrical and plumbing systems, and reinforced most walls. Ozier also kept, polished and reused many switchplates, doorknobs and other hardware. Unlike remodeling attempts in the house's past, he says, "We were far more careful in constructing the house to pay attention to the original design and honor its intentions."

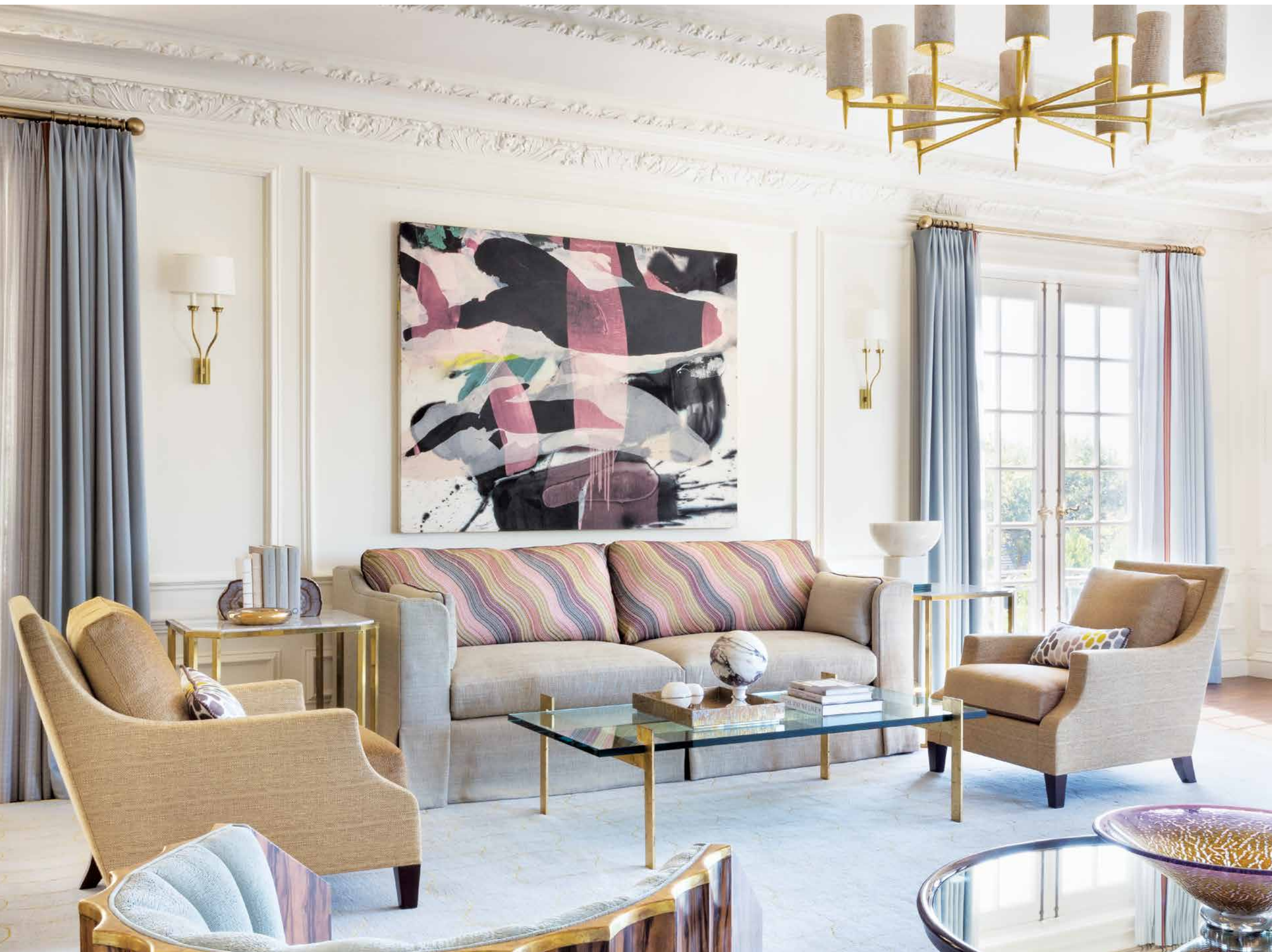
Likewise, George nodded to the home's history with rosebushes and citrus trees outside the glass conservatory—common garden designs for estate homes of this era—and he framed the entry with traditional spiral junipers and Italian cypress. But in the backyard, he created a modern-day playground with a bocce ball court, putting green and a large fire pit and conversation area. "That was the challenge," George says. "Fitting in all of these contemporary uses, but also weaving them into the traditional aspects of the home."

The owners give high praise to the entire team for meeting that exact challenge. "It's a real sense of accomplishment," the husband says. "We've fixed this house for the next 100 years." ■

“WE WANTED TO RESPECT THE HOME’S INHERENT ARCHITECTURE BUT AT THE SAME TIME GIVE IT THE NEW LEASE ON LIFE THAT IT DESPERATELY NEEDED.”

—MARIA TENAGLIA

A Truro chandelier by Ironies crowns the living room, while a Himalayan Weavers rug grounds it. Tenaglia designed the sofa and covered it with a solid by Jim Thompson and a stripe by Kelly Wearstler for Groundworks. Anees Upholstery chairs face a coffee table by Studio Van den Akker.



Architect Bennett Christopherson left the living room's original dimensions untouched, and Tenaglia painted the room's millwork with Benjamin Moore's Navajo White. A scalloped black-walnut 1930s French Art Deco chair pairs with a glass-top mahogany table by Jan Showers.



Left: Decorative painter Lynne Rutter, who consulted on the paint colors, waxed the walls, painted in Benjamin Moore's Hidden Sapphire, to add depth to the drama-filled dining room. Manchester side and armchairs, upholstered with fabrics by Kravet Couture and Harlequin, respectively, by Anees Upholstery surround a mahogany table from Antique Purveyor in New Jersey.

Below: Rutter also painted the existing crown molding to match the existing woodwork, which frames the dining room's butler's pantry. Tenaglia selected the custom wool-and-silk rug by Mansour Modern in Los Angeles, as well as the Beau Monde Glass mosaic from Ann Sacks on the backsplash in the pantry.



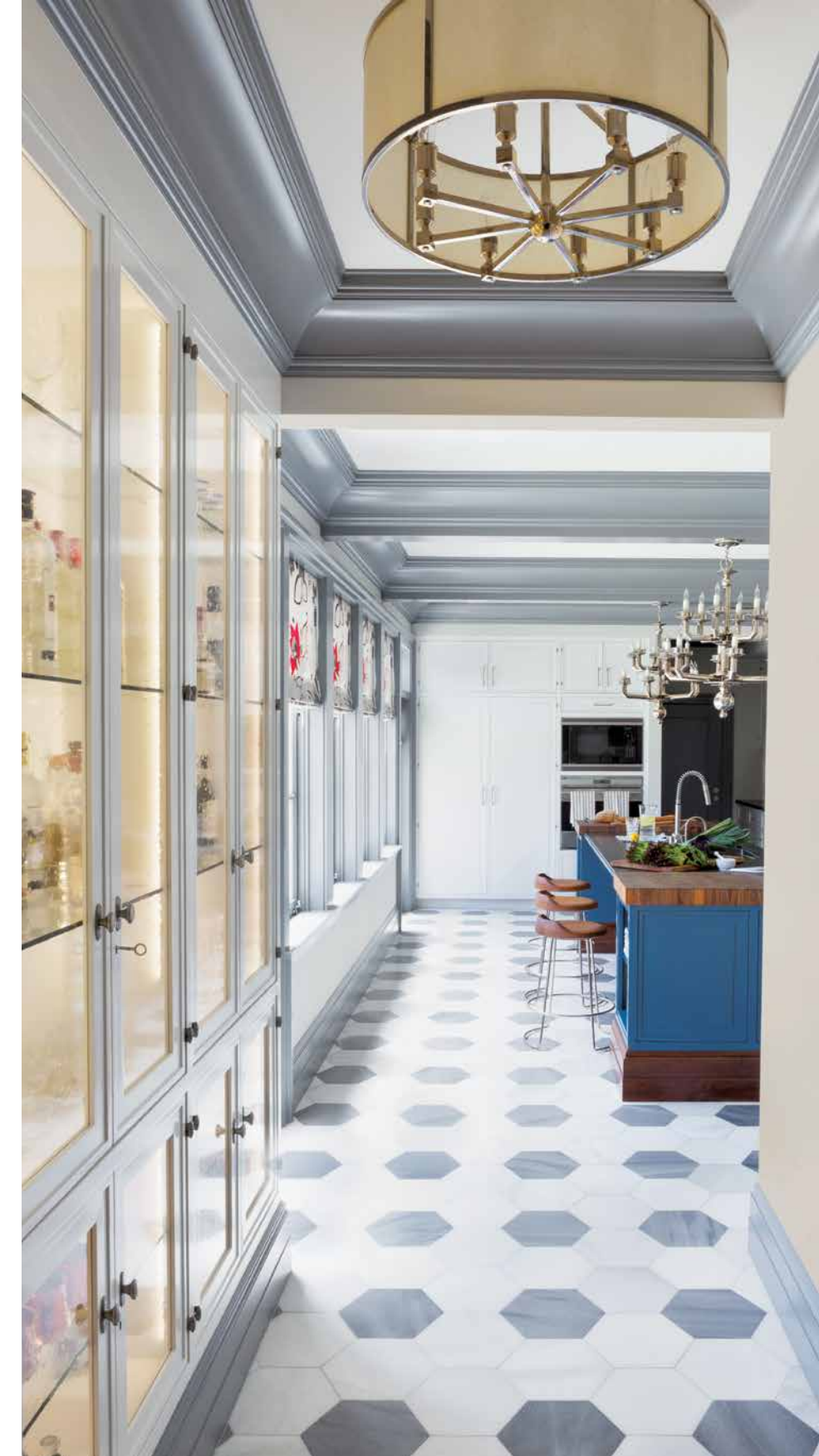


Jewel tones define the library, where Tenaglia selected a custom aubergine-and-gold rug by Kyle Bunting and had Rutter give Benjamin Moore's Perfectly Pesto on the walls a strié finish. Custom wing chairs are dressed with a purple Nina Campbell fabric for Osborne & Little; a Holland & Sherry velvet covers the custom tufted sofa.



Tenaglia designed the cabinetry for the new catering kitchen and had it fabricated by Lloyd's Custom Woodwork. Nickel-plated Arts and Crafts-style chandeliers from Epoca hover above the marble countertop, which pairs with McGuire barstools. Brushed-aluminum tile by Ann Sacks marks the backsplash.

Seeded-glass-front cabinetry lines a hall to the kitchen and features Von Morris knuckle hinges and Bauerware knobs. A custom hex-pattern marble from Paris Ceramics defines the floor, while the ceiling moldings are painted in Benjamin Moore's Hearthstone. The pendant is by Holly Hunt.



In the fourth-level attic playroom, Tenaglia chose a colorful custom Stark carpet to anchor an A. Rudin sofa and shagreen console by Ironies. The designer selected the chandeliers from Design Within Reach, while the project's lighting designer, Peter Dempsey of Dempsey Newport, handled the installed lighting.





Tenaglia gave the master bathroom a formal layout and suspended a three-tiered Venini glass pendant above a floor made with water-jet-cut glass-and-stone mosaic by Artistic Tile. She created the ottoman to replicate the floor's pattern and designed the cabinetry and silver-framed mirrors.

The master bedroom is a calming retreat, with hints of the blue and purple palette used throughout. A sconce by The Urban Electric Co. illuminates the bed, which is crowned with a headboard upholstered with a Mark Alexander linen. The draperies are made with a Nobilis linen; the wall-to-wall carpeting is by Stark.



The backyard landscape design by Jeff George includes a bocce court, a formal rose garden outside the conservatory, a pool and cabana, and a large fire pit and conversation area. The round chaise is by Lane Venture, and the Adirondack chairs are by Loll Designs.

