



The clients' own artwork is complemented with neutral tones via Gregorios Pineo sofas and Archie Held coffee tables.



The house was lifted to allow for a multi-car garage since parking is at a premium in downtown San Francisco, however the darker shade makes the addition feel not too imposing on the already tall residence.

# *Period Piece*

A CLASSIC SAN FRANCISCO  
VICTORIAN GETS A MODERN TWIST

TEXT **JENNIFER BLAISE KRAMER**  
INTERIOR DESIGN **TWG**  
ARCHITECTURE **RICHARD BEARD ARCHITECTS**  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN **STRATA**  
CONSTRUCTION **CENTRIC**  
LIGHTING **BANKS LANDL LIGHTING DESIGN**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **MATTHEW MILLMAN**





**LEFT** The piece de resistance is a custom staircase with a handrail by Chris French Metal, offering spacious curves to an otherwise angular, narrow home.

Modernity is introduced subtly in filtered fabric shutters on the classic double hung windows and more intensely in the striking fireplace with linear sconces by Ozone Lighting (through Bright on Presidio). The dining table by Axis is paired with Gaulino chairs.



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AN FRANCISCO IS KNOWN FOR its extensive stock of Victorian row houses such as this 1880s home, set on a steep sloping street in Pacific Heights. The distinguished residence had all the classic curb appeal, plus plenty of natural light given all the windows of its prime corner location. But the interior needed to be fully restructured with an entirely new layout for a family of six. While preserving the historic elements—consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards—Richard Beard Architects and The Wiseman Group gave the interiors a definitively modern new era.





**OPPOSITE** The exterior's black and white palette is echoed inside here with a white Saarinen table and a jet-black pendant, both from DWR.

**RIGHT** To seat large dinner parties, the team installed a custom dining table by Troscan around a banquette and finished the look with a sparkling custom Appollinaire Chandelier by Jonathan Browning.

**BELOW** In the chef's kitchen, Neolith countertops and Gaggenau appliances are easy to clean and every bit sleek.



“Unlike many Victorian houses, which can be dark inside, the corner location of the house allowed for many more windows along three sides of the house. The abundance of natural light prompted us to consider light, airy, and contemporary interior architecture,” says Richard Beard, principal of Richard Beard Architects. “Victorians in San Francisco often include a dark, heavy, and formal material palette. To better reflect this large, active family, we chose a more contemporary and neutral palette that drew more attention to the spatial qualities of the home.”

The first move was lifting the home—literally and figuratively—to allow for more spaciousness in the layout, by first adding a multi-car underground garage and basement. The base of this exterior was painted a dark charcoal while everything above is a clean, bright white. This

two-color, high-contrast palette is stark, modern, and classic all at once, but also strategic to help with scale.

“The lifting of the house made it more massive from the street, so the painting process was key to creating the correct sense of scale for the house,” says Paul Wiseman, president of The Wiseman Group, who worked on the design with colleagues Jess Redondo and Stephanie Paul. “The darker color on the lower floor gave the house a sense of foundational grounding while the white lent itself to the airy living spaces on the upper floors.”

The jet-black front door coordinates with the base color and creates a transition between the classic exterior and the strikingly different modern interior behind it. “We didn’t pull any Victorian details into the interior,” Wiseman says. “The idea was that the interior was a

counterpoint to the traditional exterior. Your first experience of a modern interior happens at the front door where the mahogany was ebonized so as not to disrupt the flow and stand out too much from both the interior and exterior space.”

Once inside, the four stories are furnished in a minimalist fashion and connected by a sculptural staircase that adds unique architectural relief and curves to an otherwise long, narrow, and angular house.

“The stair was an opportunity to create a more open and continuous flow of space between floors, a spatial quality uncommon in historic houses. The large skylights at the roof direct light between the top four floors, generating a more spacious feeling,” says Beard.

The graceful curves of the staircase are echoed in many of the furnishings, such as the long, narrow





**LEFT** Lighting was one way to bring in modern statements to juxtapose the Victorian era elements; here a Seed Cloud chandelier by Ochre mingles with Eva Sconces by Satori.

dining table that seats 12 with a long curvilinear banquette and comfy chairs snug together in a tight, narrow passage. Set right off the chef's kitchen, this is the site for frequent big Greek dinners. Since the husband himself is a chef, they requested high-performance outdoor-rated fabrics that were stain, spill, and spice proof. Similarly, most building materials are equally durable for foot traffic, dinner parties, and entertaining from the ceramic flooring to the Neolith counters, to that stone stairway which winds its way down to a wine wall and game room.

At the very top of the staircase is the fourth floor where the primary suite resides. The team tucked the primary bath in the turret, an iconic period piece of architecture, where Wiseman added a modern lighting—just one of the areas his team chose to “play out the tension between new and old.” While Beard says these turret spaces are more often turned into reading nooks, libraries, or offices they become unfortunately, infrequently used. “By dedicating this space to dual vanities, the owners enjoy this space multiple times a day where they can enjoy the tall ceiling, large windows, and San Francisco Bay views.” **CH**



**ABOVE** RH furniture graces one of the girls' suites with ottomans by Holly Hunt.

**LEFT** The stately Victorian, a classic San Francisco gem, retains its character after having been refreshed for this era.

