

A Warm Welcome

After a remodel, a century-old Pasadena home continues to embrace its inhabitants.

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Interior Design: Amy Sklar,
Amy Sklar Design Inc.





Interior designer Amy Sklar worked to preserve the original details that make this Pasadena home special, including key elements such as this bank of French doors and windows in the living room. The woven-back settee from One Kings Lane and kilim impart a vintage vibe, the metallic table belonged to the clients before the remodel.

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hen this Pasadena home was built in 1915, the owners made their welcoming nature clear. Working with Sylvanus Marston, a prolific regional

architect of the era, they installed a fireplace with the Spanish words, "*Entre, es su casa, amigo*," cast in the tile beneath the mantel. Translated, that means, "Come in, it's your house, friend," and the hospitable sentiment was reinforced by the inglenooks hugging the fireplace, inviting people to draw near the hearth.

Fast forward a century. The current owners also desired a dwelling where family and friends could feel comfortable, so they charged interior designer Amy Sklar with updating the home for modern inhabitants. Sklar, who appreciates history, marveled at the home's near-original state, a condition she describes as both charming and challenging. "It was clear this house had been lovingly maintained," she remembers. "The good thing is that all the classic details were there, but we just don't live the same way today." Features prized by Americans in the early 20th century—small rooms, dark colors and heavy woodwork—don't always work for present-day families who enjoy light-filled spaces and open floor plans. The interior designer set out to remodel the home while maintaining its period appeal.

The solution was to strike a balancing act between classic and contemporary. The decision was made to keep the dark woodwork while painting the majority of the walls a fresh white. New furnishings and fixtures are mostly modern but contain marked references to the past. The delicate design equilibrium is evidenced in the living room, where the fireplace mantel and the inglenooks still invite visitors to venture inside and relax. However, when it came to the new furniture, Sklar employed creative liberties. "Our goal was to pay homage to the past but to brighten things," she explains. "The profile of the sofa is not modern, but it's done with crisp white linen. The chairs are like clean-lined notions of a traditional heavy wooden chair."

Similarly, in the nearby powder room, the original sink and fixtures were left in place, but the walls are covered with a William Morris wallpaper pattern done in modern shades of blue and white. "I thought this room could be like a time capsule," says Sklar. "The classic pattern in a contemporary colorway makes for a fresh interpretation that lets you see the details anew—it's a bit like having your cake and eating it too."

In the dining room, the designer envisioned a modern table and chairs set against the backdrop of the distinctive, tall wainscoting. "We presented many options to the client, but none of them fit," Sklar says. "She already had this table and six of the chairs around it, and she liked them. We decided to make them work for the space by reupholstering the chairs and installing a grass-cloth wallcovering with a pale blue shimmer. Although it's not terribly modern, it feels fun."

Other rooms are entirely new, but you would have to look carefully to ascertain it. Before the remodel, the kitchen comprised a breakfast room and work area. Sklar, working with general contractor Steve Meuchel of Steve Meuchel Construction, "blew out the space," making it one large room with modern appliances hidden behind cabinet panels. The one you can see, the range, is crafted in a classic style. Carefully considered details, like the wavy glass panes installed in some of the cabinets, contribute vintage appeal to the new space. "One piece that's genuinely old is the kitchen island," says the designer. "It took us a long time to find it because we needed something narrow. We discovered this antique table, but of course, we had to lengthen the legs to make it island height. It was a lot of work, but worth it for the antique nature it brings to the room."

The thought that went into preserving the home's native details and the careful introduction of new elements continues the sense of warm friendliness established 108 years ago. "I pay attention to what my clients want, but I also look at what the house wants," Sklar says. "As a designer, I have a duty to respect the integrity of the house. I feel responsible for the story it's going to tell." Thanks to that attitude, future generations will find a seat in front of the fire. ■



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Sklar says that the inglenooks embracing the fireplace dictated the living room’s layout—she wanted to leave them, and the home’s original character, intact. They are complemented by new District Eight armchairs and an inlaid occasional table the clients brought to the project. A vintage hemp rug and a coffee table from Chairish add character to the setting.



Above: The lower kitchen cabinets, in Polo Blue by Benjamin Moore, set a stylish tone. They flank a La Cornue range from Williams-Sonoma and are topped by White Macaubas countertops from Stoneland USA. An antique table from Susanne Hollis doubles as the island. Above the Kohler sink fitted with Perrin & Rowe fixtures is RH lighting.

Opposite: A Cowtan & Tout wallcovering that layers grass cloth over a shimmering blue paper lends a fresh spin to the dining room. A Peter Dunham Textiles fabric does the same for the chairs surrounding the antique table. The light, composed of metal ginkgo leaves, is by Ballard Designs.





Right: In the office, Lost Highway by Portola Paints & Glazes is the backdrop for a vintage console and patterned ottomans, all from Dekor. A picture light by Situ Lighting illuminates an Arthur Leipzig photograph.

Opposite: Sklar cleverly converted the office's built-in bookshelf into a flip-down desk, allowing for an unobtrusive spot for the television. The desk chair is a vintage Paul McCobb find from Chairish. The photograph is by Flor Garduño.





In the main bathroom, an altered antique sideboard serves as a vanity. The period piece is married with new California Faucets fixtures from Pirch. The double-ended tub is by Vintage Tub & Bath, and the mirrored medicine cabinet is by Pottery Barn.



Above, left: An etagere with a scalloped edge purchased from Chairish holds an antique lamp sourced from Carl's Lamps & Custom Shades, a vintage painting and a collection of small boxes. The main bathroom's wall color is Simply White by Benjamin Moore.

Above, right: The powder room's wallpaper is the traditional Morris & Co. Pimpernel pattern rendered in a contemporary colorway. The sink and its faucet are original to the home, while the new brass-framed mirror above is from Lamps Plus.