



SITTING/DINING ROOM: Centered by a 19th-century neoclassical mahogany table by Baker with a Woodhouse lounge chair by Jonathan Adler to the right, the sitting/dining room overflows with energy. The Choros chandelier by Barry Goralnick for Visual Comfort is of aged iron and hand-rubbed antique brass.

Retail branding executive David Jimenez wields his design cunning to create a Parisian lair in San Francisco's Nob Hill, before resettling in the actual City of Lights

Cool at

While most of us would say it doesn't happen often enough, sometimes life works out perfectly. This was the case for David Jimenez, a retail branding executive with a deep passion for interior design, when he decided to move from Kansas City to San Francisco, often called the "Paris of the West."

TEXT MICHELE KEITH
PHOTOGRAPHY DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN

"I wanted to live in a classic San Francisco neighborhood, and Nob Hill was at the top of the list," Jimenez states. "Out of the blue, a friend told me about an apartment in a swanky, historic building that had recently come up for rent. I called the building manager and told him, sight unseen, that it was exactly what I was looking for and asked if he would delay renting it until I arrived a week later. Amazingly, he said, 'yes.' I booked my flight, visited the apartment and signed the lease."

Topping Nob Hill, The Bently was built in the Art-Deco style by architect William E. Schirmer in 1924. Spilling over with gorgeous views, Jimenez's apartment offers panoramas of downtown San Francisco, the Transamerica Pyramid and the city's fabled cable cars that seem to glide up and down the hills. While small at just 500 square feet, the apartment has one bedroom, a master bath, a sitting room that was converted from a dining room and a living room.

Captivated by the sun-drenched rooms of his new home, Jimenez notes that the place was in "overall good shape," but it still required fresh paint, lighting fixtures, hardware and a few strategic upgrades, plus a lot of work to bring the kitchen up-to-date.

As to the style he planned, Jimenez notes, "I like rooms that are layered, that create a feeling of comfort and warmth. I also love to mix contemporary and rustic," perfect for the frequent entertaining he enjoys, "coupled with dim lighting, classic tunes and smart cocktails for fun soirees with friends that go late into the night."

Among the myriad changes made to restore some of the apartment's original charm and to emphasize its sense of grandeur, Jimenez accented the picture-frame and crown molding with a neutral shade of paint to complement the wall color and hung paintings and photography salon-style. Another strategy was exchanging all the contemporary door handles with 1920s hardware found at Omega Salvage, the "palace of architectural elements" in nearby Berkeley.

The biggest challenge Jimenez faced, however, was the apartment's diminutive footprint. "I had to plan carefully and was forced to make sharp edits because I had more furnishings than space. Each of the pieces I have are meaningful to me and it was hard to let some of them go."

As to the broad spectrum of furnishings — ranging from a few family heirlooms and flea-market treasures to 1950s Stilnovo chandeliers to a grandfather clock featuring a face with the classic details of a vintage Rolex watch to Ralph Lauren metallic leather upholstery to an antique Récamier chaise — Jimenez adds, "I love combining romantic and architectural pieces in a room; they make a space feel spontaneous and original."



The majestic, 10-story Bently atop San Francisco's Nob Hill was built in the Art-Deco style in 1924. Photo by Michal Venera

INTERIOR MOTIVES: One item used frequently and for various purposes are screens, exceedingly doable thanks to the ceilings that soar 12 feet upward. In the master bedroom, for example, the custom screen is positioned not only to add depth and interest, but to hide an off-center window behind the headboard. In addition, their scale anchors the room and gives the bed and side tables a sense of place.

In the living room, pulling triple-duty is a pair of French 1920s gilt-wood screens. Allowing natural light in, they also shade the room from intense afternoon sun and disguise a less-than-picturesque view into a neighbor's stairwell.



LIVING ROOM DETAIL: A charcoal nude by Russian artist S. Holiuko hangs left of the 19th-century French chest of drawers. Topped with marble, it's used to store wine.



LIVING ROOM: A 1950s Italian Stilnovo chandelier with handblown glass shades casts a warm glow on the room at night. The sofa is from the 1960s. The beveled mirror dates to the 1920s. A vintage Beni Ourain wool rug purchased in Morocco adds a flourish to the original 1920s hardwood floor.

An irrepressible pattern blender – the living room captures this magnificently – Jimenez reveals that, “A bold combo of patterns and textures has a way of punctuating a room. I’ve always liked the look of different animal prints and vintage hides in classic rooms.”



SITTING ROOM CORNER: A black-lacquered, mahogany-and-giltwood, cane Regency armchair and Italian, gold-leaf mirror, add formality to the sitting room. On the wall are photographs from American Jeffrey Conley (top) and (bottom) Nicolet for Studio Isabeau, Paris.



BEDROOM: Anchoring the bedroom is a Williams-Sonoma Home Greek Key rug. The whimsical size of the heels adds flair to the classical furnishings. **ENTRY:** Farrow & Ball's Plummett Gray unifies the entry and hallway sparked by the Williams-Sonoma Home secretary and pops of turquoise. **BATHROOM:** Original sink and fittings play against a Louis XVI carved giltwood mirror and Restoration Hardware light fixture with Edison bulbs. The side table is gilt iron. **OPPOSITE KITCHEN:** Completely overhauled, the kitchen now features new architectural details, custom wood shelves, a polished stone countertop and polished nickel hardware.

In 2015, Jimenez moved to Paris to lead the brand reinvention of a historic French company with over 100 years of expertise in high-end stationery and printing. He concludes, "My San Francisco home had an eclectic mix of styles that included lots of French furnishings. It's been fun to arrange the same pieces in my new Paris apartment located near the Champs-Élysées."