

PERSONAL SPACE

The Marin home of Suzanne Tucker and Timothy Marks, founders of the venerable design firm that bears their names, expresses the couple's timeless vision

By ANH-MINH LE Photography by MICHAL VENERA AND EDWARD ADDEO

In the living room, a sofa upholstered in a Rose Tarlow linen damask is situated in front of an 18th-century Spanish chinoiserie leather screen.



A decade after making their professional partnership official with the launch of their namesake San Francisco design practice, Suzanne Tucker and Timothy Marks did the same in their personal lives. In 1996, the couple wed in her hometown of Santa Barbara and purchased a house in Marin that was in need of some TLC. To what extent, however, depends on who you ask.

"Tim assumed it was a light fixer-upper," recalls Tucker. "I was headed toward a complete remodel, and our colleague and dear friend, architect Andrew Skurman, thought it was a tear-down!" The two-year project ultimately involved knocking the place down to the studs, rebuilding the foundation, reconfiguring the floor plan,

enclosing outdoor spaces and relocating the pool.

Although it was a big undertaking, the property checked important things off Tucker's and Marks' wish lists: a garden for her and vistas for him. "We're up on a hill and are very spoiled by magnificent views all the way from Mount Tamalpais to Angel Island and San Francisco," says Tucker. "On a cloudy day, we feel as if the house is floating in the sky and the rest of the world is blocked out." They enlisted Todd R. Cole of Strata Landscape Architecture to design a new garden, which has since been further enhanced by Elizabeth Everdell Garden Design.

Tucker refers to the original structure as "a clapboard California ranch-style house" that suffered from years of unfortunate piecemeal renovations. Husband and wife, along with Skurman, "designed what I would describe as

THIS PAGE: The dining room stuns with silk hand-painted wallpaper by de Gournay and tea paper from Roger Arlington on the tented ceiling.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Marcia Myers' Paolo Uccello fresco on linen graces the double-height entry hall, above a late-18th-century Italian library table.



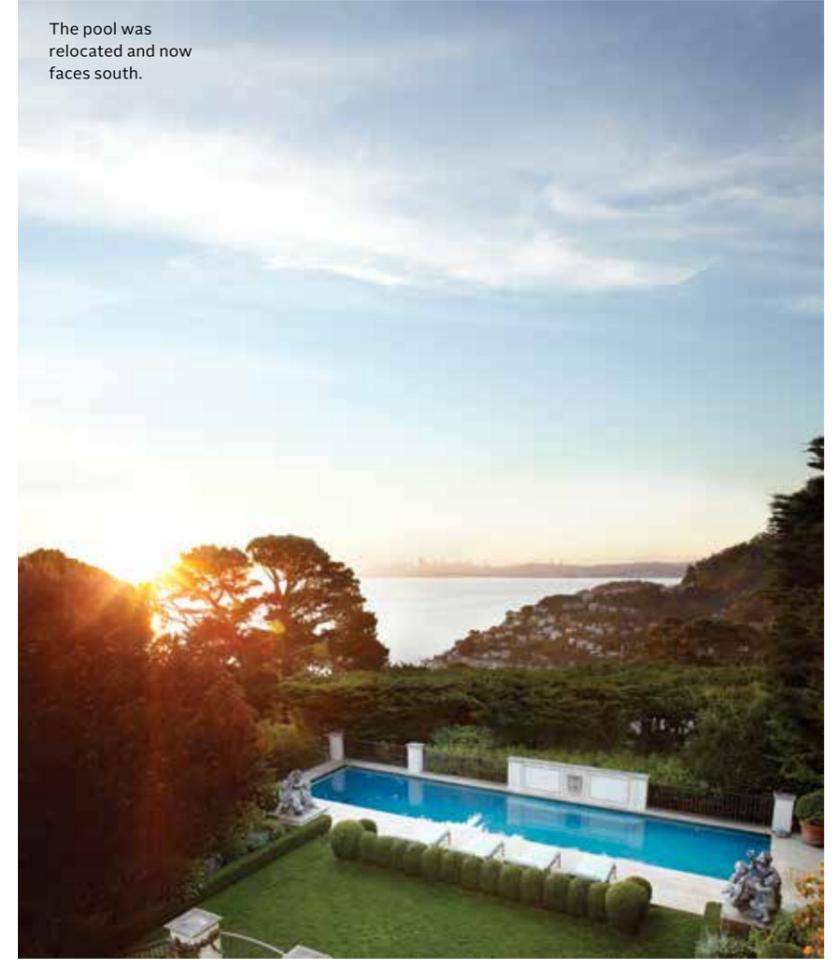


ABOVE: Tucker's passion for shells and tide pools is evident in the powder room, which includes a Michael Taylor mirror. **RIGHT:** An upstairs landing is appointed with an André Brasillier painting that belonged to Michael Taylor, a sunburst mirror plucked from a Paris flea market and an 18th-century French console. **OPPOSITE:** The master bedroom is sheathed in a woven hemp wallcovering from Donghia and includes an Italian sunburst mirror from Christie's Albert Hadley sale.

Piper lounges sit near a Gustavo Ramos Rivera painting and Michael Taylor marble octagon table.



The pool was relocated and now faces south.



a Mediterranean *je ne sais quoi*—a little bit French, some Italian and a good dose of my Santa Barbara roots,” says Tucker, who met Marks in the early 1980s through a mutual friend. Both later worked with legendary designer Michael Taylor. Following his death in 1986, they acquired his interior design business and formed Tucker & Marks. She handles the design side, and he’s in charge of business operations.

Tucker had landed at Taylor’s firm in 1981, after studying interior design and architecture along with textile design at UCLA and working in London for a few years. “His mastery of scale and proportion, his use of color and light and his knowledge of furniture and antiques were greatly influential to me,” she says. “I’ve definitely done my own thing, but every once in a while, I’ll still ask myself, ‘What would Michael do in this space?’”

Indeed, Tucker has become a design icon in her own right. Her 33-year-old firm has transformed all manners of residences in the Bay Area and beyond. She recently completed a 1920s Spanish compound in Pebble Beach, a family vacation home at Yellowstone Club in Montana and a pied-à-terre in New York City. Thanks to her participation in numerous San Francisco Decorator Showcases as well as her refresh of Napa Valley five-star resort Auberge du Soleil, it’s not only her residential clients who are privy to her talents. There are the books she’s authored, too: *Rooms to Remember: The Classic Interiors of Suzanne Tucker* and *Suzanne Tucker Interiors: The Romance of Design*.

Since she approaches her house as a decorating laboratory, fabrics of her own

design appear throughout. “Many of the antique textiles I’ve collected over the years have become the starting point for a new Suzanne Tucker Home textile,” she says, referring to the home furnishings company she debuted in 2010. “I also often volunteer one of my pieces for ‘test upholstery’ when we’re working on a new textile design.” Case in point: the Onda chenille that covers a lounge chair in the family room. (Tucker has also created dinnerware for Royal Limoges and outdoor furniture for Michael Taylor Designs, among other collaborations.)

Meaningful elements populate every room. “I’m quite sentimental about family pieces and furniture with provenance,” says Tucker. “Besides my husband’s and my own inherited pieces, I’ve intentionally bought pieces related to designers and people whom I admire.” The master suite, for instance, features a working fireplace with an 18th-century Régence limestone mantel found in France. At the foot of the bed is an 18th-century painted bench that once belonged to Tony Duquette.

Even after all these years, Tucker and Marks continue to marvel at their environs—with their favorite spots in the house tied to the views. Although the outdoor shower he initially wanted wasn’t possible, the master bathroom shower has been an excellent substitute: “The shower has a full-length picture window that opens completely,” says Marks. Tucker’s preferred perch is her study, “as it looks out over the garden and out to the bay and the city in the distance,” she says. “It’s small and cozy and I can happily spend the whole day there.”