

# A contemporary home receives an update

I recently did some redecorating on a unique home perched high on the hillside above Sonora.



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tural Douglas fir beams and tapered oak dowels from Vermont. It has a tall, strikingly beautiful,

natural stone fireplace, oak floors, a pool, tennis courts and Cooper's trademark energy efficient features.

The residence is home to local historian and videographer Frank and daughter June Diggle.

Mr. Diggle, a retired engineer has a local cable show, "Friday's with

Frank." He and his late wife, Eva, had the home built in the '90s and two of their requests for Kessel were to build a home that made the most of the views and was energy efficient. June owns a company that provides business solutions and coaching for small and large companies and is a classically trained flautist, often performing at special events.

The work I do is much simpler than Cooper Kessel's, but it has its challenges and rewards as well. The Diggle home was previously deco-

rated in powder blue, country style checks and floral prints. June called me in to rework the existing furniture with up-to-date fabrics. We were to work around the architecture, the stone, the wood, the traditional furnishings, and, of course, the views.

Once June showed me some of the things she loves (one being her iridescent candle goblets) I had a good feeling for her style. She likes things simple and elegant. My challenge

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## HOUSE

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was finding fabrics to pull the contemporary architecture and traditional furnishings together, and do it in a way that would coincide with June's outstanding aesthetic.

I suggested a color and style scheme that would go well with all of these elements: transitional style fabrics in soft, sage and celadon greens and pale "spun" gold.

### About the fabrics

June and I looked at a lot of fabrics. I love this part of my job, and it's alright to devote the time to it as long as it's for a serious client. I have a lot of fabrics in my own studio, but for bigger projects, like the Diggle's, I usually spend a day at the San Francisco Design Center looking at a variety of fabrics till I come upon two to three "just right" schemes.

The first two schemes I came up with had too much pattern and were a bit too contemporary for June's taste. However, one of the schemes I was able to tweak by replacing a floral fabric with a tone-on-tone stripe in a light sage green.

That stripe went on the tufted, wood framed arm chairs and on the hand-crafted, maple dining room chairs. For their two settees, we had originally planned on a golden ribbed fabric that June loved, but when I threw in an outstanding striated silk in a soft gold color, June loved it and opted for that one instead.

The more casual, gold ribbed fabric was then allocated to the game table chairs.

I found a shimmery green, lightly embroidered fabric with gold undertones that ended up being perfect for throw pillows. The pillows had to be lined because of the sheerness of the fabric, but June and I both love the way they look on the settees. They nicely pull together all of the fabrics.

### About the fabrication

A work room with a minimum 15 years of experience is necessary to get the professional results expected when you hire a designer. I have several workrooms I work with, but the one I use the most has more than 50 years of experience. You'll see the difference in the tautness of the fabric, the straightness of the seams, and the matching of the patterns. Less experienced workrooms show inconsistent work with lumps and bumps. Their work doesn't look "perfect" like an experienced work room.

### Window protection

Originally, the windows had one continuous blue floral valance. June and I both

felt the valance visually detracted from the view but it was being used to conceal the head rails of the existing accordion pleated shades.

With so much glass, protection is a must. In the Diggle home, we opted to replace the window treatments above with semi-transparent, non-decorative sunshades in a warm white. Their UV protection keeps the home cooler during hot times of the day and protects the furniture and floors from fading.

They wrap around light weight metal cylinders and raise and lower on a pulley system. Matching valances conceal the head rail when the shades are raised. Because the valances match the color of the window's wood work they are barely discernible.

The shades ended up being a bit of a challenge. Though it was a company I've worked with for years I had an issue with the quality of four of their seven valances and had them removed and returned. They came back looking sharp, but unfortunately this time they didn't fit. They were removed and returned again, and this time they were replaced with perfect valances.

### Rugs

I wasn't able to find rugs that June liked. She ended up finding them on her own: one rectangular shaped rug for the living room and two matching round ones for under the dining room and game tables. The rugs' muted green with golden tan leaf motif compliment the furniture and fabrics perfectly.

The mark of a good designer can be seen in a project's fabric quality as well as the quality of fabrication. But there's more to it than that. Often time's a client wants to utilize their existing furniture and I always encourage them to do so. At that point we need to understand how to visually pull together disparate elements as we did in this project with its contemporary architecture, traditional furniture and the client's own personal aesthetic. Finding a way to do this requires time and a little decorating know-how.

In the end, it's well worth it to have happy clients.

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