

# HOMIE

## & Garden

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Section C

KATIE ANDERSON | *Thinking Small*

Photos by DEANNE FITZMAURICE / The Chronicle

Light streaming into the living room used to be blocked by a big wooden stair rail. The remodeling included the clear glass rail that allows unobstructed light.

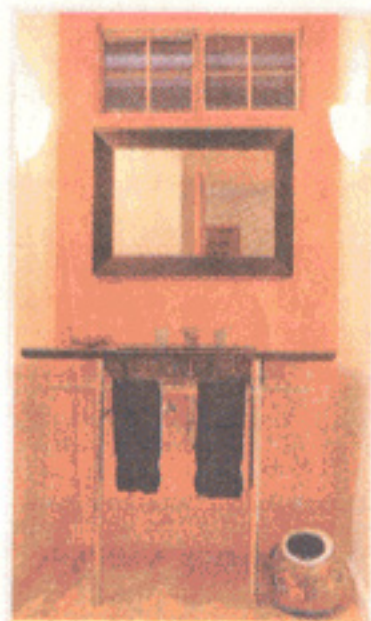
## Minimal changes, **maximal benefits**

Subtle color and fresh finishes give a townhouse a new lease on life

By Mary Jo Bowling  
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The first time she laid eyes on this Marin County townhouse, interior designer Katie Anderson was less than inspired. "It had no style whatsoever. It was a builders' special," she says. "They had used the cheapest possible materials in construction."

Although not tiny, the nearly 2,300-square-foot, two-level townhouse contained ho-hum features such as blue carpet throughout, white Formica cabinets and countertops, faux brass hardware and very few light fixtures. In the dreams of Anderson's client was an elegant home with luxury trappings that were both serene and comfortable. "We started by creating a palette that made sense for the space," says Anderson. "By using the same colors throughout, we created harmony in every space. It makes the space feel larger, because it's not broken up visually."



Orange is one of the colors used by interior designer Katie Anderson to unify the remodeled townhouse.



Relaxation and ease, from softer pieces and unifying colors, are the effect of this house remodel.

The unifying colors are yellow, green and orange — all of them soft and warm. "The colors do a lot to warm up the space," says Anderson. "When it was all white with blue floors, it felt frosty and cold."

The kitchen received a storage and function boost with new quarter-sawn oak cabinets that wrap the room from floor to ceiling on three sides. A peninsula of lower cabinets makes up the fourth side of the room, separat-

ing it from what used to be a nonfunctional breakfast nook and is now an office space. "The layout is basically the same, but we put in much bigger and better cabinets," says Anderson.

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# Unified colors can expand cramped space

► **REMODEL**  
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"The breakfast nook was really too small to use, plus there was eating space in the peninsula and dining room. Making it an office was a good solution in an awkward space."

The rest of the space has new doors and hardware, a relatively small change that yields great design rewards. The flat, flimsy hollow-core doors were replaced by solid oak doors with brushed nickel knobs and hinges. Where appropriate, such as the door screening the laundry area, the doors are outfitted with translucent glass panels.

Another change that gets big bang for the buck is the new stair rail. Before, the stair that starts in the living room and ascends to the bedrooms was big, wooden and obtrusive. A thick banister and multiple turned rails effectively blocked the light that streams in through a landing window. The new stair rail is clear glass and sleekly modern and does nothing to block the light.

Upstairs, there are bigger changes afoot. A cramped, pedestrian bath is reinvented as a spacious, spalike room. Anderson borrowed space from a walk-in closet to enlarge the bath. Before, there was a shower over a bathtub and a single sink over a small vanity. The extra space makes way for a large, walk-in shower; a deep, jetted tub; and two sinks over a

## Resources

**Design:** Katie Anderson Design Consultants, San Francisco, (415) 552-8529, [www.katieworld.com](http://www.katieworld.com).

**Sofa, ottoman, blue chair, coffee table:** Sloan Miyasato, San Francisco, (415) 431-1465, [www.sloanm.com](http://www.sloanm.com), to the trade only.

**Orange chair:** Randolph & Hein, San Francisco, (415) 864-3550, to the trade only.

**Vases:** Gump's, San Francisco, (800) 882-8055, [www.gumps.com](http://www.gumps.com).

**Rug:** Aga John, San Francisco, (415) 553-8504, [www.agajohncarpets.com](http://www.agajohncarpets.com).

**Blue chair:** Donghia, San Francisco, (415) 861-7717, [www.donghia.com](http://www.donghia.com), to the trade only.

**Side table:** A Rudin, San Francisco, (415) 431-5021, to the trade only. Bathroom tile & counters: Eurostone, San Leandro, (510) 895-0881.

floating vanity. Tumbled limestone tile and glass accent tiles make a lovely, delicately patterned backdrop. A more dramatic marble vanity countertop and the view to Mount Tam are the focus. It's a place to relax and renew.

The built-ins tell only one part of the transformation story. Furnishings are just as important in this space. Following the wishes of her client, Anderson kept it uncomplicated. "The shapes are simple," she says. "We wanted to keep



Photos by DEANNE FITZMAURICE / The Chronicle

A peninsula of lower cabinets, above, separates the kitchen from office space. A bathroom expands by borrowing space from a closet and adding a floating vanity, below left. Use of a small, see-through sink, below right, makes it possible to tuck in an extra powder room.

it clean and uncluttered."

One reason the pieces work in the small space is their shapes: Many pieces are round, curved or oval. The signature piece in the living room is a gently curving sofa. It sits in front of a round glass coffee table and chairs with curving arms. The dining room features an oval dining table. The bedroom has a chaise longue with a curved back and arms. "This makes the furniture less bulky," says Anderson. "The pieces are softer and easier to move around."

The combined effect is one of relaxation and ease. "My client works hard all day," says Anderson. "She needed a retreat to come home to."

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