

DESIGNER SHOWCASE



SITTING PRETTY

The make-up table in the master bedroom features a custom vanity upholstered in shagreen. The mirror and bench employ a twig design in gold leaf.



LUXE MATERIALS

The sinewy carved bed, undulating reflective side tables, and soft green color scheme continue the organic feel of the home. The silk bed and window drapes, along with the mohair sofa in the same soft hue, create the femininity and elegance the client desired.



Diedre Shaw Interiors

Talk about creative inspiration. Diedre Shaw, owner of Diedre Shaw Interiors (DSI) in Burlingame, California, received her formal training at the University of California–Berkeley’s design school. But her passion for design was fueled by earlier creative endeavors—she worked as an international model, earned a teaching degree in ballet, and picked up another degree in literature from UCLA.

TEXT BY **FREDERICK JERANT**
PHOTOS BY **DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON**



A SPLASH OF COLOR
The master bathroom's thick glass sink vessels are blue and brown, contrasting the space's natural stone color palette.



Top Design Elements of the California Modern Residence

1. **The Clarence House vanity bench** “uses a twig motif, gold leaf, and velour for a look that’s very organic, elegant, and feminine,” Diedre Shaw says. The bench was made by Ironies (ironies.com).
2. **The master bedroom’s clover side table**, also by Ironies continues the outdoor motif; the legs suggest tree branches while the tabletop is covered in authentic sharkskin.
3. **The Santa Barbara four-poster bed** is a dramatic dark-walnut piece, from Artifacts International (artifactsinternational.com). It features clean, simple lines and a “straight-from nature” appearance. The organza king pillows and sage-silk bed draperies are both from Kravet (kravet.com), and the Euro pillows are from Lee Jofa (leejofa.com).
4. **A Monaco chandelier** from Laura Lee Designs, Inc. (lauraleedesign.com) draws attention while complementing the living room. The antique bronze-over-wrought-iron finish creates a rustic vibe, and it is accented with onyx “sleeves” over the light bulbs. Similar Laura Lee light fixtures appear throughout the house.

SHAW’S DISPARATE EDUCATIONS contributed to her own philosophies about what makes a good interior. “Home is where your most memorable experiences take place,” she says. “The settings add so much to those life events, and that’s why I create beautiful spaces for my clients.”

Shaw obtained her first client while she was still at University of California—Berkeley (UCB). That job was the initial link in a chain of referrals, and she took her business full-time in 2004. “I’ve been working on my own ever since,” she says. DSIs’ market niche is high-end residential work, primarily in the San Francisco area, from the Peninsula to the East Bay. The city is home to a mélange of architectural styles—everything from Mediterranean to Victorian to modern.

“I’m responsible for the whole scope of the design,” Shaw says, “planning the space, selecting materials, choosing colors and patterns—just about everything except drawing up the architectural

plans.” Planning and certain other services—such as upholstering and cabinetry construction—fall to a long-standing pool of vendors. And according to Shaw, “I know I can count on them to do excellent work and be good representatives of my firm.”

Client input is essential to Shaw’s projects. “Your home should reflect your best self,” she says, but she acknowledges that every client’s needs and desires are different and that determining them can be challenging. “Often, people can’t get there themselves, and they need to be prodded about their passions.” To help with this, during successive client meetings, Shaw asks plenty of probing questions, and at the same time, she helps her clients expand their comfort zones.

“One of my clients strongly preferred landscape paintings; modern art was off the table,” Shaw says. “But three weeks after we visited some galleries in San Francisco, she spent \$100,000 on contemporary paintings.”



GIANT JACUZZI

The California Modern home's hot tub area was converted into a spa-like tub room that now adjoins the master bathroom through French doors. The retreat includes a 10-foot-wide circular whirlpool tub and travertine flooring.



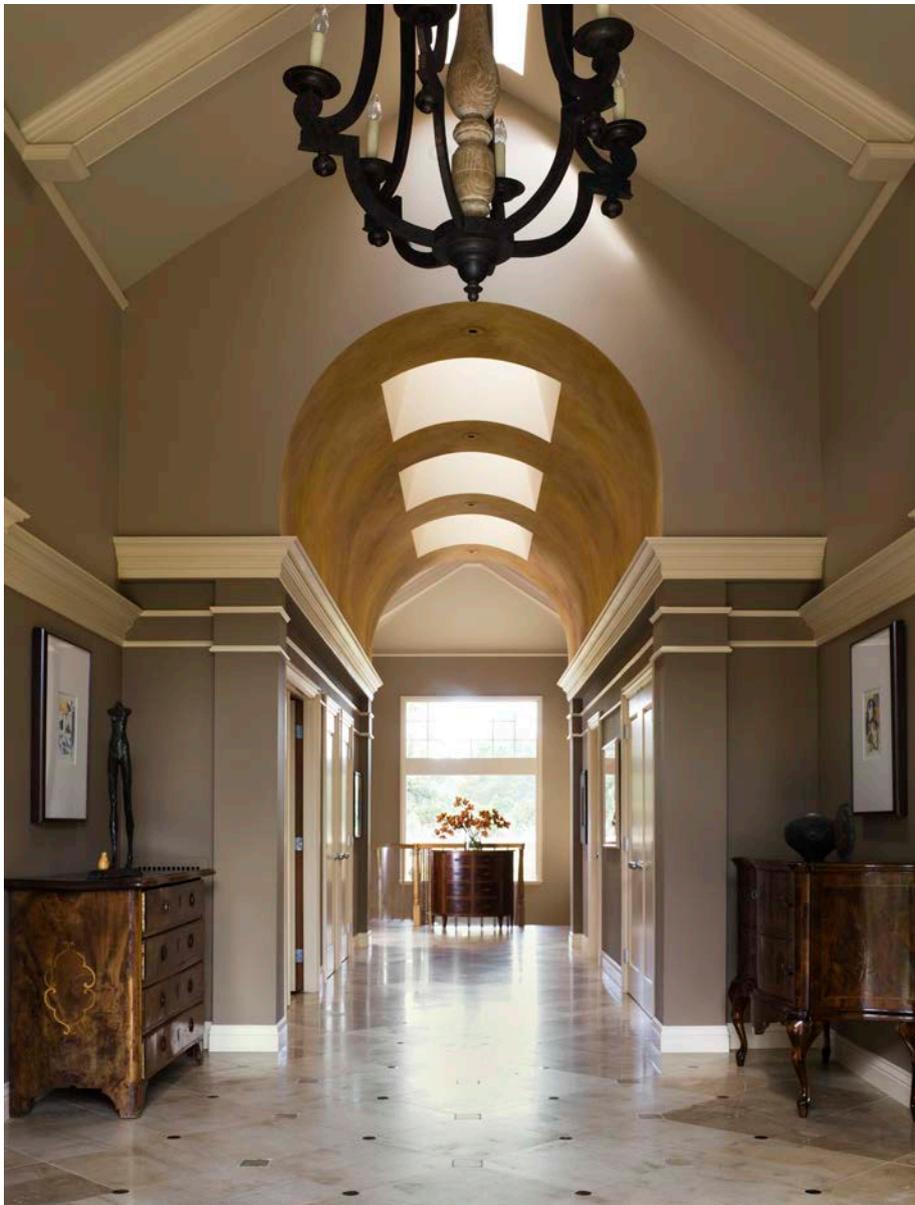
STAND-OUT DESIGN

In the spacious, classically designed Mediterranean Traditional home, symmetry and a monochromatic color palette allow the clients' modern art collection to pop.

Top Design Elements of the Mediterranean Traditional Residence

1. **The dining room table**—a 60-inch circular Italian number with an inlaid Firenze, design by Artitalia Group (artitaliagroup.com)—expands to 83 inches to accommodate as many as 12 guests.
2. **The “Walking Nude with Pear” sculpture**, made by Corbin Bronze (corbinbronze.com), offers an interesting contemporary counterpoint to the classical lines of the owner's antique Italian chest of drawers.
3. **The Tavolo “Urbino” coffee table** is made of Italian walnut, with an inlaid panel by Artitalia Group (artitaliagroup.com), and it reflects the owner's taste and heritage and echoes the clean lines of the fireplace and ceiling.
4. **A chest of drawers**, made by Charles and Charles Bombay, is made of burled Italian walnut wood, which replicates and balances the antique piece on the other side of the hallway.
5. **Sanibel living-room sofas** from Kravet (kravet.com), covered in Hermitage mohair from Joseph Noble (josephnoble.com), provide plenty of seating when the owners entertain. Also, their symmetrical positioning helps draw attention to the modern art above the fireplace.





CLASSIC VS. CONTEMPORARY
 In the expansive front hall, an antique Italian chest of drawers—a family heirloom—is complemented by newly acquired demi-lune chests, also from Italy. Old World pieces are juxtaposed with modern art pieces throughout the home.

“I want to design rooms that are actually useful and not just attractive.”

DIEDRE SHAW, OWNER

That client had contracted with DSI for a major remodeling of her 4,000-square-foot home. “It was a real mix of traditional and modern elements,” Shaw says, “with a motif of bringing the outdoors inside.” In the living room, a side table rests on a fur rug. The table’s cast-bronze legs resemble gnarled twigs, and its top is covered in sharkskin. A large painting on one wall incorporates falling leaves set within seven layers of wax. It is all quite elegant yet maintains a definite earthiness. The bedroom is an exercise in a sage-green monochrome, but contrasting materials—

mohair, linen, and silk—bring visual and tactile variety to the limited palette. An tree theme is carried through lamps, and the bedroom’s dressing table, bench, and mirror all contain arboreal elements. Even the mirror’s sidelights look like branches. The dining room mixes hand-carved java wood, neutral silk chairs, and light woods, all resting on a modern shag carpet.

Shaw’s penchant for mixing it up is further exemplified in an 8,000-square-foot traditional Mediterranean home in Hillsborough, California. The interior had been beautifully decorated by a well-known designer some years previously and featured a then-popular color palette and furniture set.

“My clients wanted a complete home makeover,” Shaw says. The husband is proud of his Italian heritage, so Shaw used traditional shades of rust, olive, and taupe throughout the house. A large modern painting above the living room fireplace is enhanced by the room’s subdued color scheme.

Clean-lined mohair sofas and antique walnut fireside armchairs with silk upholstery and galloon trim comfortably share space with an inlaid walnut coffee table and an animal-print tufted ottoman.

A centuries-old burled Italian walnut chest (a family heirloom) in the main hallway contrasts with a Corbin bronze sculpture and other modern art; it is balanced by a replica chest crafted by Charles and Charles. And the dining room includes Louis side chairs in rust and red brocades as well as an expandable round Italian inlaid table that can accommodate up to 12 guests

Currently, DSI takes on a steady flow of three or four projects at a time, which Shaw sees as a comfortable number in the tough economy. She is able to continue offering complete interior remodeling services from the ground up while ensuring that each space meets her own rigorous standards, which go beyond mere aesthetics. As Shaw herself says, “I want to design rooms that are actually useful and not just attractive.” ■