

## The Home Designer Fall in Love

By Brandon Neff

Fall – shorter days, cooler nights, and for many, a time of transition. Lazy summer getaways spent dreaming and relaxing give way to thoughts of cozy spaces, family gatherings and rooms designed for nesting. As the season moves forward, you notice the light shifting and you find yourself reaching for that extra blanket to drape across the bed. For many of my clients, autumn also signals a season for reevaluating the way they live, what they surround themselves with, and for discovering new ways to love their home. Once overlooked or ignored rooms can be transformed into a favorite place to entertain, to lounge or to simply escape. We evolve – why shouldn't our home?

This isn't just about new trends because I don't believe in trends when it comes to good interior design. This is about living at your best, and designing a home that reflects your best life. This speaks to falling in love with your home all over again, and looking beyond the walls and rooms and discovering what connected you to your house or apartment in the first place. Ask yourself, does your home make you smile when you walk in the door? Does your space represent who you are and what you're passionate about? It can.

This week's project really speaks to how thoughtful choices and a passion for reinvention led my clients to re-imagine their home into a very personal expression. Lisa and Richard's home in Lafayette was, at first glance, unremarkable. It was large with spacious rooms centered on an expansive lot – the grounds reflecting more about their passions than the interiors. Much of the furnishings seemed to crowd the rooms, and the layout denied the main room's proper flow. (Did I mention the foosball table in the living room?)

Much of the “eclectic” furniture was a hodgepodge of pieces collected over years in different homes, former lives as parents and durable seating that they couldn't part with because it still did the job. Er ... sort of. People, durability does not a well designed home make. Sure, it's nice when things last, but hanging on to the past can limit your creativity. Rather, think about a functional home that serves your life in the present and build a space that caters to how you live today.

Clearly, my clients were eager to create a home that spoke to their lives now – newly empty-nested and ready for rooms that they could spread out in. The chal-

lenge they presented me was to uncover a fresh perspective on the home they wanted to stay in, while respecting their tastes as a couple, as well as imagining a welcoming home that worked for entertaining. Not a small task!

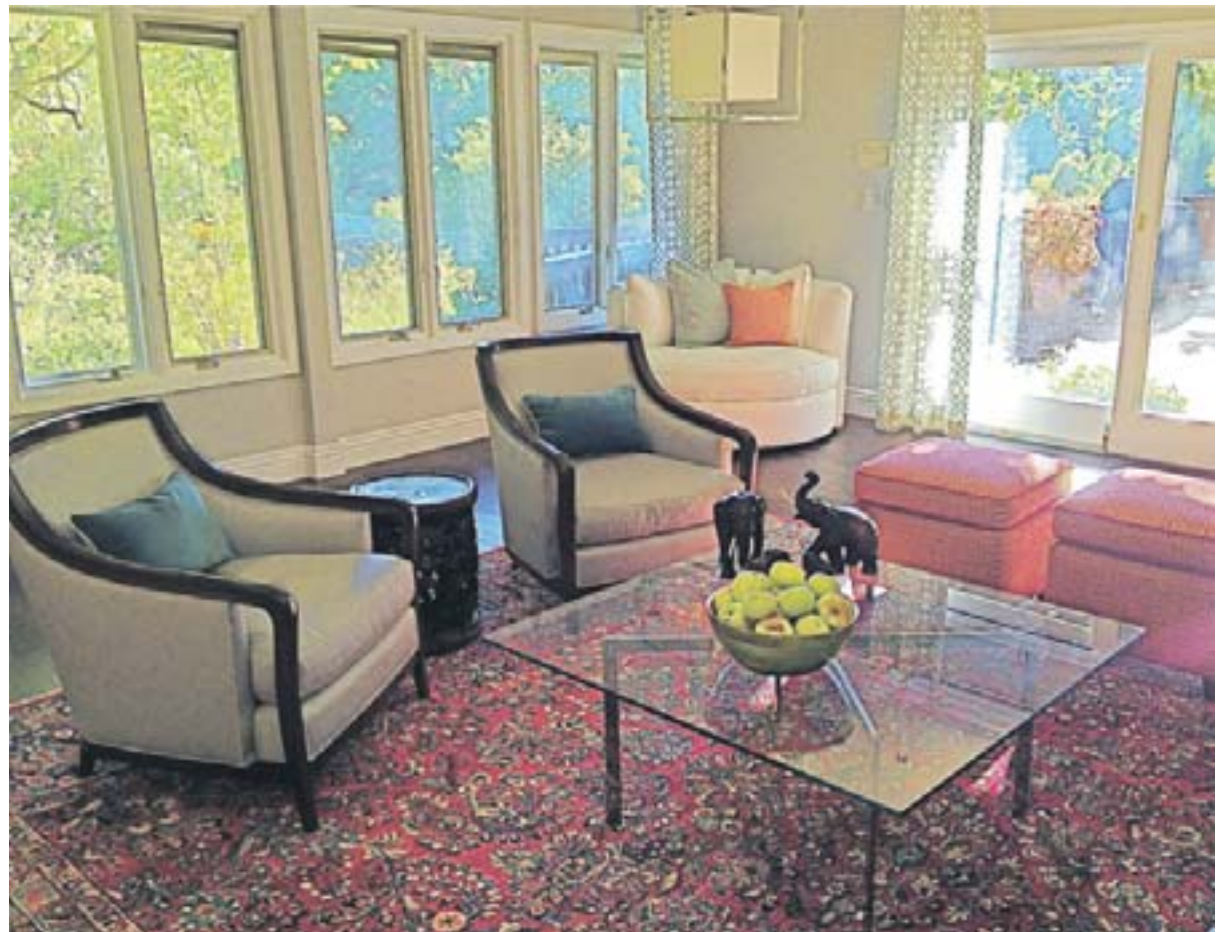
The project was less about a gut job, and more about peeling away old layers to create new vistas. Lisa and Richard loved the views to their tree lined backyard, and wanted a better vantage point to enjoy their combined love of nature. (Did I mention the foosball table in the living room?)

The best part about this project was my clients – this couple has charisma, and not a small amount of knowledge of design. Rarely, do I get the opportunity to discuss the likes of Stark, Miller, Nelson and Wormley with clients who can hold their own.



*Before – low slung beams, dated tile and a choppy floor plan work against the views.*

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*After – an open plan invites conversation while a separate nook for bird watching and lengths of fabric compliment the park-like views.*

*Photos courtesy Brandon Neff Design*