



**SITTING ROOM**  
**The couple like the peacefulness of neutrals but know how to introduce just the right amount of colour and pattern to make a scheme stand out.**  
 Custom sofa, price on request, Furniture Envy. Slate Multi rug, \$1,737.50, Loloi Rugs. Artwork (over sofa) by Kenneth Sloan at ArtHaus Gallery



# Character PIECE

Nina and Brian Johnson's Craftsman house is packed with period features and quite a few wow moments

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**W**hen they found this three-level, five-bedroom 1910 Craftsman house, Nina and Brian Johnson knew it was the right time for a change. ‘We previously lived in San Francisco and while we loved the city, we were ready for a neighbourhood where the kids could ride their bikes and play in a backyard,’ say the couple, who have three-year-old twin girls, Lily and Ruth. Moving to Berkeley - located only 20 kilometres northeast of San Francisco - felt like the perfect decision. But that doesn’t mean it was easy.

‘The Bay Area property market is historically very competitive, but we were able to get this house for under the asking price, as it needed considerable work,’ says Nina. As entrepreneurs with their own businesses and little free time, the couple decided to call on professionals, including constructor Jason Carter of California Aesthetics, architect Maria Anderson and interior designer Whitney Riter Gelinas, founder of Wit Interiors. ‘I have a daughter the same age as their twins, so I felt a kinship with Nina,’ says Whitney. ‘I know how young children can disrupt your house in a blink of an eye and wanted to create a space that even at its messiest, would still feel happy and cheerful.’

The tall ceilings and original features give the house an historical feel - and this is complemented by the structural work, which included the renovation of the kitchen, which now opens onto the dining area to give a more expansive feel. ‘We worked hard to honour the vintage details, such as the



**HALLWAY**  
**A wide opening to the dining room increases the feeling of space.**  
 Go Lightly small chandelier by Barbara Barry, \$699, Circa Lighting. Try the Bill coat rack by Maze, £59.25, Finnish Design Shop



**CLOAKROOM**  
**The statement wallpaper is enhanced by the painted woodwork.**  
 Galileo Glass wallpaper in Shale, from \$114, Eskayel. Utilitaire Socket double sconce, \$215.05, RH Modern



**KITCHEN**  
**Three wooden shelves bring warmth to the white walls and co-ordinate with the floor.**  
 Vintage rug, \$15,000, Tony Kitz Rugs



## DINING ROOM

The rug, which is made from wool and recycled saris, picks up on the colour of the dining chairs.

Marie in Banks Lagoon chairs, \$918 each, Room & Board. Cross table \$5,055, Design Within Reach. Tiger Lily rug, \$4,830, The Rug Establishment. Royalton chandelier, \$6,785, Arteriors



## HOME TRUTHS

### THE PROPERTY

A 1910 Craftsman home

**LOCATION** California

**ROOMS** Sitting room, dining room, kitchen, cloakroom, office, den, playroom, five bedrooms, three bathrooms

**PURCHASED** 2019

### PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in an Edwardian property in Bernal Heights, San Francisco,' says Nina.





**MAIN  
BATHROOM**

**Tiling the shower  
ceiling gives an  
amazing look.**

London Apothecary  
tiles (on floor), \$109.44  
for 24, Clé Tile



**LESSONS LEARNT** *'You can have a white sofa with kids – just pick a performance fabric you can wash'*

large windows, wainscoting and a dramatic staircase lit by distinctive leaded glass windows,' explains Whitney. At the same time the house had to work for this modern family - the designer shared a Pinterest board with her clients throughout the process to exchange ideas.

Whitney stuck to a neutral base and then layered pops of colour and pattern, creating an atmosphere that was welcoming with nothing too precious while still being a stylish space. 'This house gives the illusion of being fancy but at its heart it's very functional,' says Whitney, who convinced the homeowners to introduce some bold touches along the way. 'I wasn't planning on adding much to the playroom, but when Whitney showed me the wallpaper for the ceiling and bookcase paint colour I knew it was worth doing,' says Nina. 'As you can imagine, I've spent a lot of time in that room over the last year so I'm really glad we decided to invest in it.'

In all the spaces, the result is balanced, reflecting the designer's vision, which always had the family's personality and needs in mind to shape this project. 'While the home is approachable, it's fun to have a few 'wow' moments for friends to discover when they come to visit,' says Whitney. 25



**MAIN BEDROOM**  
A four poster adds the wow factor here. Soledad bed, \$4,079.63, CFC Interiors. Side table, \$279.20, West Elm. Camden lamp, \$304.50, Renwil



**GIRLS' BEDROOM**  
The upholstered bed will suit the girls when they are older, too.

Upholstered Avery bed in Rose, \$2,298, Room & Board. Chamomile digital print (above chest of drawers), \$161, Juniper. Reverie Rug, \$643, West Elm



**PLAYROOM**  
Putting wallpaper on the ceiling is a lovely and whimsical touch.

Caitlin sofa, \$2,380, Interior Define. Daydream wallpaper, \$195 a roll, Hygge & West