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Stylemaker Spotlight: Matthew Leverone

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Over the past three months, the pressure has been on for interior designer Matthew Leverone. It's his second year in the San Francisco Decorator Showcase, and he is responsible for a prominent area: the family room and adjacent breakfast nook.

"When you work with clients, it's about interpreting how they live," he said. "But with the Showcase, it's really a chance to interpret how I'd live here. It's everything I like."

And what exactly does he like? A subdued palette - including soft gray walls, teak and walnut woods - with yellow as an accent color that visually ties the two spaces together. The major pieces of furniture include a TV unit with linen-wrapped doors and nailhead details, custom stools with Tibetan lamb coverings, an armless leather sofa and Italian 1960s ladder-back dining chairs in the style of Carlo di Carli.

"I'm always looking beyond the obvious juxtaposing of materials and finishes in every job," he said.

Now that the Showcase rooms are complete - the home, at 2830 Pacific Ave., is open to the public through May 25 - Leverone is keeping busy with other residential projects. In his Potrero Hill studio, design boards are propped up on a large table.

Although designers regularly assemble boards for clients, Leverone recommends this approach for homeowners looking to redecorate on their own, too. Pulling together paint chips, textile swatches and photos of furnishings can help determine what works and what doesn't.

The leverone cheat sheet

Little luxuries: "Books. My favorite thing to collect, and they always make a great statement."

Recommended reading: "I really like books about the old masters - 'Jean-Michel Frank' by Pierre-Emmanuel Martin-Vivier, 'Maxime Old' by Yves Badetz, 'Les Décorateurs des années 40' by Bruno Foucart and Jean-Louis Gaillemin, 'Modern Americana' by Julie Iovine and Todd Merrill."

Shop locally: "Ma(i)sonry in Napa (maisonry.com) is a favorite right now. Coup d'Etat in San Francisco (coupdetatsf.com) - I want everything in their shop. Blackman Cruz ([blackman cruz.com](http://blackman-cruz.com)) always has a unique collection of furniture and accessories."

Best indicator of a homeowner's personality: "Artwork - hands down. I like walking into someone's home and seeing a mix of art. It lets me know that they have an aesthetic understanding of design."

Art galleries: "Artwork is so important to a room. To name a few (galleries): the Stephen Wirtz Gallery (wirtzgalleries.com), John Berggruen Gallery (berggruen.com) and Dolby Chadwick Gallery (dolbychadwickgalleries.com). We are so lucky to live in an area where there is an abundance of emerging artists and the opportunity for clients to create a world-class art collection."

Design comeback: "I'd like to see tarnished brass come back - not the lacquered plated brass that's really shiny. The natural brass that has no protection so its color changes over time. It can get a nice, soft patina."

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