

21ST CENTURY SALON

A newlywed couple calls on San Francisco's hottest young designer to create an inspiring party pad.

In 2009, while searching for a new home in San Francisco, newlyweds Aditya Agarwal and Ruchi Sanghvi were becoming frustrated because the good ones kept being snatched up as soon as they came on the market. The tech-savvy couple (early employees of Facebook who are about to start their own company) decided to play to their strengths: Agarwal developed a computer program that scoured the MLS and notified him the instant a property with their criteria hit the market. They found their Noe Valley flat before the paint had dried on the For Sale sign.

The open living area provided the perfect space for entertaining, but the drab taupe paint and generic fixtures throughout were definitely lacking in the personality department. Although Sanghvi had intended to decorate the space on her own, the realities of her work schedule and her husband's desire to have a finished home led the couple to seek help. When a techie friend recommended Lauren



Geremia, it turned out that the couple, without knowing it, was already a fan of her work. Having frequented two SF establishments designed by Geremia—Bloodhound and Coffee Bar—they were impressed with her ability to create bold spaces that didn't feel alienating or impersonal. The warm, unrefined materials used by Geremia provided the look that the couple was hoping to achieve in their new home. "Many of our friends were upgrading from Ikea to the next big-box store up the chain," says Agarwal. "We weren't interested in following suit."

Geremia had gained a reputation in SF for designing buzz-worthy hotspots (her projects also include Umami, Taverna Aventine, Citizen's Band and Churchill), but she was eager to expand her residential portfolio. "I love doing commercial spaces, but the turnaround time on those projects is often rushed," she says. "A residential space allows me to slow down and focus on every detail." A graduate in fine arts from the Rhode Island School of Design, Geremia fills her projects with custom pieces she creates herself or commissions from a select stable of local artisans and friends. "A home is very personal, and input is crucial," says Geremia. "I don't want to show people how they're supposed to live. I want them to show me how they want to live."

Not only are Agarwal and Sanghvi happy with the results, they have become vocal advocates for Geremia and the other artisans who worked on the project. It's no surprise that the former Facebook couple's home is now a regular venue for social networking, not unlike a Paris salon in the early 20th century—but here, when potential patrons and artisans discuss the art on the walls, the light fixtures overhead and the custom furnishings surrounding them, they're exchanging contact information with iPhone bumps rather than calling cards.

BY BRYAN ANTHONY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHILIP HARVEY



ARTISTIC INTEGRATION

The white walls in the living area were chosen to create a gallery-like space. "This is a young couple who likes art," says Lauren Geremia. "They should have a space where they can feel free to switch up their art and not feel married to any one piece." That said, the wavy lines at the bottom of the painting *Precision Strike* by Conrad Ruiz mimics the lines on the faux birch-wood console so well, it's likely to become part of the home's permanent collection.



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YOUNG GUNS

The dining area exemplifies the collaboration of the up-and-coming talent that worked on the house. Eli Berland created the farm table, Jess Wainer built the mouth-blown chandelier (designed by Geremia) and the custom purple dining chairs are by Uhuru.



DESIGN TIP:

LEAVE A MESSAGE

The back wall of the dining area was given a coat of dry-erase paint, which Aditya Agarwal and Ruchi Sanghvi like to use when they work from home or want to post the evening's cocktail menu.

PARTY READY

"This is a couple who likes to entertain, so we chose pieces that could take a beating," says Geremia. The Knoll sectional was covered in durable heavy linen, a vintage factory cart came with a party-proof patina, and a porcupine quill mirror from Horchow was hung on the wall surrounded by the sturdy frame of its packing crate. On some nights the party flows to the back patio (above), where an old oil drum has been converted into a gas fire pit.



A PLACE FOR SOLITUDE

Agarwal wanted an old-school home office with a masculine feel—a quiet getaway brimming with books where he could literally disconnect from the world. In a nod to their unexpected inner Luddites, the tech-savvy couple asked Geremia to provide them with a 20th-century typewriter.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

It took a little prodding to convince Sanghvi about Geremia's bolder selections for the bedroom, such as the moth-inspired wallpaper and mirrored steamer-trunk dressers (below). "I thought the dressers were too S&M, too risqué," says Sanghvi. "But now I love how the light shines off of them." The bed—made from salvaged hardwood—and the headlight lamps, however, were immediate hits with everyone.



DRINK DOWNLOAD



Mark Botill, bartender at Pizzaiolo (and Geremia's boyfriend), recreated two of the Oakland restaurant's most popular cocktails for guests at a recent house party.

GIN SNAGGLER

Muddled cucumber and mint
1 ½ oz. Hendrick's gin
¾ oz. lime juice
½ oz. simple syrup
1 oz. sparkling white wine
Serve on the rocks garnished with a cucumber wheel.

DEADLY SIN

2 oz. bourbon
½ oz. Carpano Anitca sweet vermouth
1 bar spoon of Maraschino liqueur
Dash of orange bitters
Serve in a martini glass with a flamed orange peel.

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HEY MR. DJ

Years ago, Agarwal made an offhand comment wishing for a floating turntable. Once they had a home of their own, Sanghvi surprised him by commissioning Eli Berland to create a steel turntable stand hung from the ceiling by industrial-grade wires. Agarwal can be found spinning records during most get-togethers with friends.

