

# SFC&G

San Francisco Cottages and Gardens

COTTAGESGARDENS.COM | SEPTEMBER 2014

*Sexy  
Fall  
Style*



NOB HILL  
BELVEDERE  
ST. HELENA  
SUNSET



**Interior Drama** A bronze pendant from Maison Gerard hangs over a circa 1962, Warren Platner-style table and chairs. Dwell Studio drapery fabric is Robert Allen. See *Resources*.

# NOB HILL NOIR

Designer Eric Cohler brings cinematic  
glamour to a Nob Hill penthouse

BY SHARON KING HOGE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN MERKL

E

VER SINCE HE WAS CAPTIVATED IN HIS EARLY TEENS by *Dark Passage*, the 1947 Bogart crime drama set in San Francisco, interior designer Eric Cohler has been fascinated by the city's film noir atmosphere. "It's such a mysterious place," says Cohler. "The fog, the thirties storefronts and that sense of a glamorous era when people dressed for dinner." Now, the designer has brought that sensibility to the penthouse of what has been called San Francisco's "most desirable" apartment building, the Chambord atop Nob Hill.



**Sublime Seating (LEFT)** A Louis XVI fauteuil chair from 1stdibs is covered in a vintage silk. **Double Vision (OPPOSITE PAGE)** A pair of George Kovacs white enamel lamps stand sentry at the entrance of the living room. Photograph is by Czechoslovakian artist Tereza Vicková. White LC2 chairs from DWR cozy up to a Karl Springer coffee table. Rug is through Stark Carpet. See Resources.

A longtime East Coast resident, Cohler was working on several Bay Area projects when he happened upon a “for rent” sign on the landmark building and, just out of curiosity, called for an appointment. Once inside, however, he was awestruck by “everything you could want in a San Francisco apartment: panoramic views, French doors with Juliet balconies, an outdoor terrace, three fireplaces, 12-foot ceilings and a library with Julia Morgan period details. All I could think was: ‘oh my god!’”

Cohler promptly took the space and transformed it into a cosmopolitan apartment where a modern day Nick and Nora Charles would feel utterly at home. With the exception of a glamorous living room that he left bright white, he established the atmosphere by enveloping the walls in dark, dramatic hues, painting the fabulous rotunda dining room glossy black, and the cathedral-ceilinged bedroom a deep navy blue. Sartorial elements like flannel drapes and a zebra-patterned rug evoke debonair midcentury style, and, to achieve a sober mood in an apartment that is flooded with afternoon light,

Cohler winnowed through his art collection for pieces with a bit of brooding.

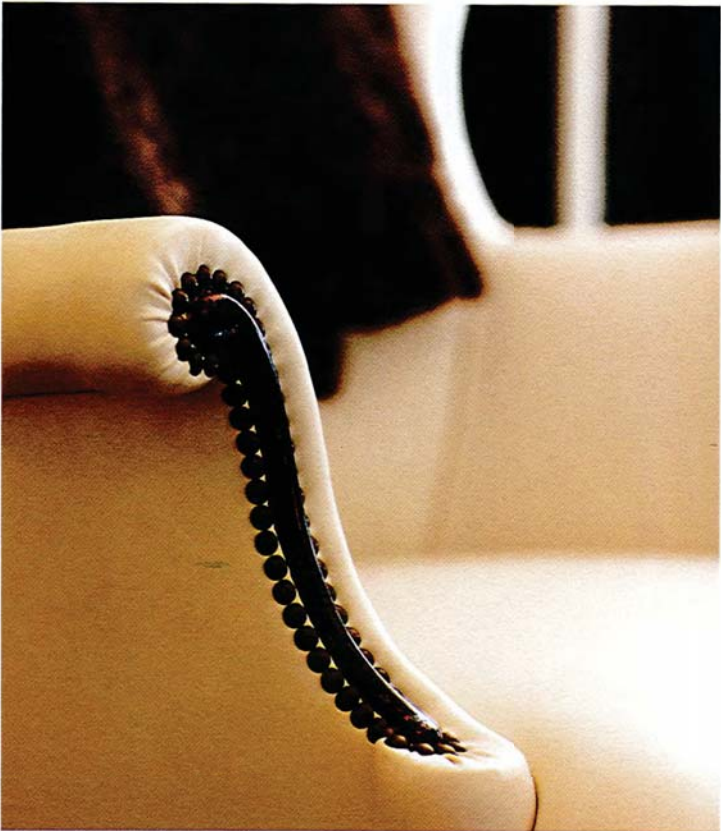
Striving for an alchemy of old and new, Cohler also tracked down fun vintage and flea-market finds. The black linen sofa and python end table were found online. An Art Deco airplane cigarette lighter was found at the Alameda flea market. A set of 1930’s-era translucent pink and violet Murano lamps were spotted at the San Francisco Antiques Show.

And as a designer with clients who are among Silicon Valley’s elite, Cohler incorporated a full complement of technology, but kept it hidden. In the library, for example, a secret panel opens to reveal a flat-screen TV; a gesture, Cohler says, that demonstrates “you can embrace technology, but you don’t have to let it overtake your space.

“I want to show that you can bring the past with you wherever you go,” he adds. Watching the fog roll in and envelop the spires on Grace Cathedral next door, Cohler can enjoy knowing he achieved visual drama every bit as intriguing as Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, which was shot just a few doors down. ✪



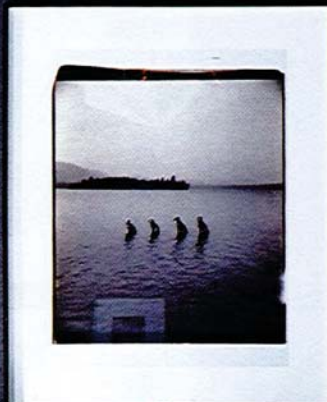




**Glamor Quotient** (OPPOSITE PAGE) In the salon, an antique slipper chair is covered in a Rogers & Goffigon fabric and sports an Hermès blanket. The blue Soho ottoman/coffee table is through Lee Jofa. Zebra-patterned area rug is through Stark Carpet. **Studied Details** (ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) Vintage barware from the designer's collection; balloon ceiling fixture from Keith Langham; fireplace detail; wingchair, circa 1930s, covered in white leather. See *Resources*.







AMERICAN LEONARDO  
COOL GRAY CITY IN LOVE  
R.M.S. QUEEN ELIZABETH  
MARISA BERENSON  
MODERNISM  
MODERNISM

ASSOLINE  
TIGERTUS  
Z-Z-Z  
HARMONY OF THE HOUSE  
VOGUE LIVING HOUSES, GARDENS, PEOPLE  
Portraits

VOGUE LIVING HOUSES, GARDENS, PEOPLE  
VOGUE LIVING HOUSES, GARDENS, PEOPLE  
VOGUE LIVING HOUSES, GARDENS, PEOPLE  
VOGUE LIVING HOUSES, GARDENS, PEOPLE  
VOGUE LIVING HOUSES, GARDENS, PEOPLE

“It’s such a mysterious place,” says Cohler. “The fog, the thirties storefronts and that sense of a glamorous era when people dressed for dinner..”



**Suite Dreams** (OPPOSITE PAGE) In the master bedroom, an antique bed from Anthem pops against walls painted in Benjamin Moore Hale Navy. Pillows are Hermès. Marble table is midcentury Italian. The designer’s eye extends to the master bathroom (ABOVE LEFT), where a collection of handsome objects tops the shelf. Photograph and print (ABOVE RIGHT) on the master-bedroom wall from the designer’s personal collection. See *Resources*.