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A HOME AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR NORTHBAY LIVING



A Touch Of Glass

Area homeowners are in for a treat with glass' many forms and functions

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Plain or fancy. Sometimes we see through it, sometimes we don't. Every year, San Francisco Bay-area artists, manufacturers, and designers find new ways to exploit its beauty and functionality. Glass is arguably the most versatile and artful material used in home design.

On its cutting edge

"In addition to beauty, a top consideration when clients select glass is whether standard, safety, or tempered is best, especially below counter height," says Scott Martin, principal of San Francisco's Blue Plum Design, an art gallery and kitchen design center affiliated with the San Francisco Design Center. Martin uses German, Italian, and American systems and finishes to create custom, environment-friendly kitchen and bath cabinetry. Blue Plum clients benefit from artistic innovation such as unique "green" countertops—in materials from glass to paper and hemp. A popular trend is for artists to embed objects and fiber-optics in glass.

Whether glass cabinet door inserts should be



⊕ Sparkling with personality—the versatility of glass adds glamour and style to any room.

⊕ An ordinary ceiling fan becomes so much more with the added dazzle of glass detailing.

transparent, translucent, or reflective is another consumer decision, as U.S. manufacturers now offer glass styles far beyond the standard reed, water, clear, and frosted. Martin points out that vertically shallow cabinets are easier to light, and many cabinet boxes are being installed horizontally. A German cabinet concept gaining acceptance in the Bay area is all-glass, made reflective by a lacquered back and hung without a visible frame.

It goes with the flow

Carolyn Walker Davis, AIA of CWD/Architects, San Rafael, says it is almost a local stan-

dard to raise the ceiling in local remodel projects to accommodate the 8-foot-high windows and door frames that let in the Marin hillside and water views. She uses skylights in hallways or rooms with fewer than two outside walls for both light and energy savings. "In temperate Northern California, operable skylights are useful—to allow temperature adjustments and air flow," she says.

She personally experienced multiple benefits of a glass barrier when she had a library-style pocket door installed between her dining room and kitchen. "Talk about functionality; the



Ⓜ This artichoke-inspired chandelier provides an elegant glow, as well as a stunning focal point.

glass pocket door helps keep kids in and pets out. It lets kitchen light into the dining room and does an excellent job containing noise and cooking odors," she says.

Clearly beautiful touches

Walker Davis wanted the remodel of her own home to include green features with updated Euro-styling, so her first collaboration with Martin was her own kitchen redesign.

Both architect and designer like richly colored, glass subway tiles. If translucent, as with the matte-finish blues and deep greens locally popular in Asian or spa-influenced rooms, Martin cautions a toothless trowel should be used to install them.

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Glass dividers set in a ceiling channel, similar to, but more elegant than, hotel banquet room-dividers, create temporary smaller spaces in large rooms. Martin says the Swiss innovation is perfect to close off mini-kitchens in cozy, modern San Francisco lofts and in elegant suburban guest quarters when not in use.

Glass is vital to most designer lighting fixtures. Tide 24 energy regulations have spurred manufacturers to create more beautiful fluorescent fixtures in glass, according to Martin. Since every home needs at least one killer light fixture, Walker Davis' favorite is an artichoke chandelier by Danish artist Louis Poulsen. ■

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