

Home & Garden

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BOOKS



Matthew Williams / © "Remodelista: A Manual for the Considered Home"

Fine tuning the plan

The owners of a home featured in "Remodelista: A Manual for the Considered Home," devised components for the kitchen with specialists at Ikea; their architect then fine-tuned the measurements and drew up the plans. Also pictured: Restoration Hardware's Boulangerie Table and vintage Danish chairs from Circa Modern.

Field guide for home renovators

Julie Carlson, the Mill Valley force behind site Remodelista, shares inspirations in her new book

By Chantal Lamers

When Julie Carlson set out to remodel her Mill Valley home in 2006, inspiration was scarce. Shelter magazines were folding and there were but a handful of design blogs on the Internet. So she found herself constantly on the phone comparing notes with pal Francesca Connolly, who was doing a remodel of her own in Brooklyn.

"We were literally calling each other every day and saying, 'What kind of cabinet pulls are you using in the kitchen?'" says Carlson, who worked at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York, the New Yorker and a San Francisco magazine. "We have the same taste, so she would find something, and we really collaborated on our choices."

Those conversations would ultimately become the

Carlson continues on N6

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Mixologists' must-haves for the bar cart **N4**



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Catherine and Justine Macfee **N5**

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The best time to plant seeds **N2**

HOME



Brant Ward / The Chronicle

Catherine (left) and Justine Macfee in the bar area at Chalkboard in Healdsburg, which they redesigned together.

STYLEMAKER SPOTLIGHT

Catherine and Justine Macfee

By Anh-Minh Le

Justine Macfee's introduction to the interior design world came at an early age: "After school," she recalls, "I would do my homework at my mom's design studio and help out with folding fabric."

Her mother, Catherine, launched her eponymous practice in 1989 (www.macfeedesign.com). Since then, her work has appeared in numerous shelter publications, including *Sunset*, *California Home + Design* and *Mountain Living*. Seven years ago, tapping into her retail past — she once managed the Louis Vuitton store in San Francisco — Catherine acquired Rubicon Collection, a home furnishings store in Truckee. Today, her design office is in the showroom; another studio is located in Lafayette. The firm specializes in residential and commercial projects throughout the Bay Area

and Wine Country, as well as in the Tahoe area.

In 2009, after completing her studies at the California College of the Arts, Justine came on board at Catherine Macfee Interior Design as a design assistant and retail buyer; this year, as the business continued to expand, she was named a partner. Mother and daughter's first official joint endeavor was the interior of the Healdsburg restaurant Chalkboard.

The duo describes their aesthetic as "modern organic luxe," which Catherine says "reflects a lifestyle of casual elegance — using classic styles and mixing in found, salvaged and natural materials to achieve a balance of classic and unique. That to me means quality, integrity and authenticity, with a splash of texture and real life."

Anh-Minh Le is a Portola Valley freelance writer. E-mail: hme@sfgchronicle.com

A few favorites

CATHERINE MACFEE

Antique Italian writing desk: "An aged antique adds so much warmth and soul to a room — whether it's a cherished family heirloom, an item acquired while traveling or something discovered at an antique dealer or yard sale. This special piece is an 18th century Italian walnut writing table purchased for a client at C. Mariani, one of my favorite sources for fine antiques." (www.cmariantiques.com)



David Duncan Livingston

Bolinas kitchen project: "Visualizing what would wash up on the beach and with the intention of bringing the outdoors in, we installed a tree trunk in the center of this kitchen; the trunk's base was wrapped with mooring line. The edge detail and shape of the concrete island was inspired by what a wave would leave behind in the sand. The cabinet doors are antique Indian temple panels with knobs handmade of wire-wrapped rocks found on the beach."

JUSTINE MACFEE

Umpqua scone: "This hand-forged light was created for a client's powder room, and I am absolutely in love with it. I'm drawn to this design and how it kind of looks like a scary tribal weapon, but also has a handmade softness and sense of whimsy. The scones are made to order and are available through our showroom in Truckee and online at Dering Hall." (www.deringhall.com)



Courtesy Justine Macfee

Kravel's Nomadic Chic collection: "I am crazy about this entire collection of fabric and trim — and not only for our mountain projects! There's a great rustic, transitional quality to the colors and textures. One of my favorite pillows I designed recently used the Artisan Chevron fabric in Sundried Red with the Nomad Chic braided tape." (www.kravel.com)

The Macfee cheat sheet

CATHERINE MACFEE

On design decisions: "As designers we curate entire lifestyles for our clients. We are creating the background for family memories, atmospheres for entertaining, architecture and furniture that will be passed through generations. When designing for yourself, think about your own life and style and how you picture that to be as a whole. Next time you go to purchase something, ask yourself if that fits into your big-picture vision. This can help make design decisions a little easier."

Dine about town: "At Wolfdale's in Tahoe City, chef/owners Kathleen and Douglas are passionate about fresh, healthy soulful food with an Asian twist. One of my favorite things to order is the Green Thai Seafood Stew, along with a glass of Flowers Pinot Noir. A little secret: In the summer they have a bocce ball court that you can reserve for a little après dinner game!" (www.wolfdales.com)

JUSTINE MACFEE

Keep an eye out: "As a designer, work and life intermix and inspiration is constantly around if you are aware and open to taking it in. I get most of my design inspiration from studying spaces I enjoy, old and new. Stop, take a minute and just look around, you never know what can inspire you to create. Recently, I was digging through an abandoned gold mill salvaging relics to use as accessories in a project, and the colors and textures of the aged machinery and woodwork were so amazing."

On the slopes: "I am not sure why I am just discovering cross-country skiing, but it is fantastic and everyone should try it at least once. Tahoe City has a great Nordic Center. Mark your calendars because in March they host a Gourmet Ski Tour, which is an on-snow food-and-wine tasting event showcasing local restaurants. If you're not so confident in your skiing skills, don't worry — you can also snowshoe the tour." (www.tahoex.org)



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