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# MONTERREY

## modern *The most coveted student apartment in the Sierra Madres*

**T**he nice thing about working with young women coming back from London is that they embrace the modern influence—spare, high-tech, hip,” says designer and architect Jerry Jacobs. “And I was raised in the Bauhaus tradition. We understood each other.”

Jacobs is justifiably pleased with his latest interior effort for a Mexican family that amassed a fortune through the cigar industry. After building homes in both the Caribbean and the Veracruz jungle, he was entrusted with a truly precious mandate—design a college apartment for the two daughters, who were returning from boarding school in London. “It’s very satisfying to have a client keep trusting you, even after you’ve depleted their funds,” Jacobs says. “But seriously, this was the third project, so we already communicated very well. And I knew I was dealing with people who understood and accepted modernism. That’s hard to find.”

With about 4,500 square feet to work with, Jacobs’ design takes what is ultimately a three-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath, six-TV apartment and divides the space into two primary functions—the living/working/entertaining space for the daughters and a small pied-à-terre for when the parents visit. The apartment, one of 20 in a 20-story building by a local golf course, was blessed with fabulous views of the Sierra Madre mountains in Monterrey, Mexico, and little else. A prior owner had started a design but stopped after installing a lot of











































A modern bedroom interior featuring two beds with white linens and blue accents. The beds have dark blue upholstered headboards. The room includes a blue armchair, a patterned ottoman, and a striped rug. The lighting is soft and ambient.

the white in your bed great and you're interested by the view now considered a fairly basic  
two-story house. The two-story house, however, is the most interesting because how often  
it says "And I will love the main room—how the door and dominates the space how often  
I've done something different with the entrance to the powder room or tipped the shower.  
In fact, there was no surprise like I said I had known they liked this or that but I might  
even be a little surprised there are things the designer might have done differently with  
tip out of context.

dimmers control the lights with various mood settings. With wall panel A and television pan-  
els, the movement controls the picture—very slowly has motorized shades. Motor-  
izing room is addition to the bed and bath area of red, black and yellow through  
with a teal paper. The guest room is black and white and the pool deck, which includes



ductwork in the middle of the apartment. "High ceilings are very important, so we ripped it all out," Jacobs says. "Aside from that, there really was no interior, so we started from scratch."

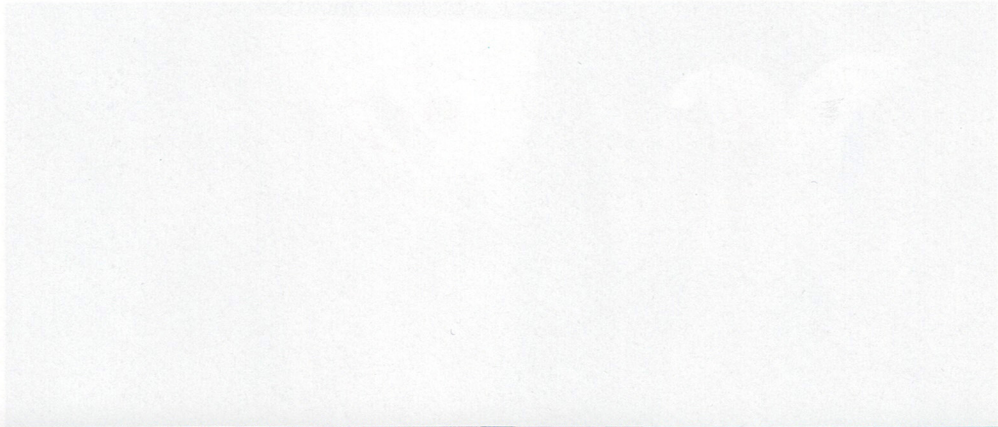
Using basic principals of modern interior design, Jacobs went to work. After meeting the clients one afternoon at the site, he appeared the next morning with the floor plan. "I worked through the night," he says. "And while I was doing that, I had given them a suitcase full of brochures from Italian furniture manufacturers, so they were able to show me what they liked and didn't like. It went fast. Sure, there were some small changes after that, but they approved the overall layout, and I could take it from there." Form would, once again, follow function, but with enough personalized detail to eschew any feeling of monotony with other modern designs. The floors are long boards of washed oak placed diagonally to direct the main entrance flow. Countertops in both kitchen and bathrooms are stained butcher block. The interior columns, integral to the building's structural integrity, are covered in sandblasted tempered glass. "The Bauhaus tradition gives you not only the tools for architecture, but also the influence on interiors," Jacobs says. No unnecessary flourishes, no bulky, dusty draperies, nothing extra.

In an area where typical architecture and design leans toward the conservative and traditional, the Jacobs apartment stands apart. The living room is not solely a place to receive guests; it is the place to study and read, the take-a-break room, the conversation pit for late-night chat sessions with friends, and the dining room. "The father at first was upset because there was no formal dining room," Jacobs said. "But these are college kids. They kept saying 'We want a loft.' It's a different way of living." To emphasize that downtown feeling, Jacobs left the 30-foot stretch of window that runs along one side of the main living space untouched. He covered the window, broken in places by the building's external supports, with a mechanized Roman shade that lets in plenty of diffused light and does nothing to obscure the architecture. "In modern architecture, you ignore the skin of the building. You don't try to work with it by putting up sets of draperies to hide the pillars. You just ignore it," he says. "Besides, it would have been criminal to block any of this view." Jacobs then provided the room with a strong focal point—an enormous bookshelf intended to encourage good study habits. Although massive, the unit's weight is lightened by using shelves of variable lengths to challenge the eye and a library ladder to add a sense of movement. Thoroughly modern furniture, a Christopher Farr rug and the girls' collection of Vitra chair models add color, curves and interest. "It's important to add those sparks of color, particularly with girls. For men, I've done projects that were more minimalist and monochromatic," Jacobs says.

Despite its spare use in the main room, color becomes a key factor elsewhere in the apartment. Each bedroom has a color theme that influences everything from the bedding and the rugs to the adjoining bathroom's countertop stain and glass tile. The master suite is accented with a regal purple, the guest room is black and white, and the pied-à-terre, which includes a sitting room in addition to the bed and bath, gets shots of red. High-tech amenities throughout the apartment complete the picture—every window has motorized shades, master dimmers control the lights with various mood settings (ditto with music), and televisions pop up out of counters.

Even in a simple, pure space, there are things the designer might have done differently with hindsight. "There were no surprises, like 'I wish I had known they liked this or that,' but I might have done something different with the entrance to the powder room, or flipped the shower," he says. "And I still love the main room—how the book shelf dominates the space, how when you walk in you feel great and you're influenced by the view, not constrained" ■ *Jerry Jacobs, Jacobs Design Inc., 169 Stewart Drive, Tiburon, CA 415.435.0520, 800.588.0050*





The kitchen is a masterpiece of modern design, featuring a large, curved wooden island with a rounded end. The island is surrounded by blue and white chairs. In the background, there is a stainless steel refrigerator and a countertop with various items like a bowl of fruit and a vase of flowers. The walls are a mix of light and dark blue panels.