

# ELEVATED STYLE

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**SFC&G**  
San Francisco Cottages and Gardens

## Designer James Hunter Achieves Lofty Glamour at the Millennium Tower

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN MERKL

**Angular Sensation** The custom 12-foot sofa wears a Donghia wool. Four Randolph & Hein Salon swivel lounge chairs are upholstered in a Colefax and Fowler fabric. The custom wall sconces were made by Dogfork Lamp Arts; shades are by Lamp Shades San Francisco. See *Resources*.



**T**HE CHIC, simple and unadorned style of James Hunter's client, Juli Betwee, inspired his vision for her 2,000-square-foot Millennium Tower apartment. "Her stylishness brought to mind the clean, modern lines

and subtle curves in the furniture Jean-Michel Frank and William Haines designed in the 1930s," says Hunter, a principal designer at the Wiseman Group. "I knew an updated take on that sensibility would soften the space's strong geometry."

Ironically, when it came to hiring an interior designer, Hunter *was* and *wasn't* Betwee's first choice. She had actually engaged another designer, but most of the inspirational images she had clipped came from projects created by the Wiseman Group. She eventually contacted the firm and met with Hunter, who, coincidentally, also lives in the Millennium. "Juli was keen to understand our vision, so we discussed form and materials at length. We combed through books and reviewed the Art Deco architecture that she had grown up with in Detroit," says Hunter, who brought in his colleague Luis Alves as a collaborator.

Two walls of windows deliver an active cityscape into the loft-like living room, so Hunter opted for a minimum of visual clutter. Fabric colors like Hyacinth, Pale Sand and Stone are evocatively calm. His choice to keep all the furniture silhouettes low also contributes to the home's tranquility by leaving open space for the room to breathe. And quiet but contrasting textures—lacquered linen and leather on the coffee table, silk and string on a pair of sconce shades—flatter and flirt with each other. "I think of it as 'intentional tension,'" says Hunter. "It's the harmony of opposites—polished next to dull, nubby next to smooth—and a mix of organic and angular shapes."

Several of Hunter's architectural interventions are downright ingenious. He encased a pair of 10-foot-high circular structural columns in mirror, and discreetly customized their backs with floor-to-ceiling cabinets. Besides visually adding square footage, the



**The Height Of Style** (TOP RIGHT) Designer James Hunter with client Juli Betwee. In the dining room (RIGHT), A detail of the extraordinary drape that wraps the living room, created by French curtain couturier Pietro Seminelli. HD Buttercup's Wilshire armchair is upholstered in Coraggio's Gramercy Park in eye-catching Mandarin. See *Resources*.

**Building Blocks** (OPPOSITE PAGE) In the living room, a coffee table by Antonio's Antiques has five intersecting, maze-like components that enable it to be reconfigured for entertaining. Outside panels are Dualoy leather, inside panels and top are a lacquered linen. See *Resources*.



**White Light** Smooth Calacatta marble and high gloss cabinetry by Studio Becker anchor the streamlined kitchen. Cooktop is Wolf; refrigerator is Sub-Zero; faucet is Hansgrohe. See *Resources*.



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**Shape Shifters** In the entry (ABOVE), a mixed media work by Udo Nöger hovers above a Dutch metal leaf Mondrian console table by Paul Ferrante from Hewn. The wall is covered in a series of shagreen panels designed by the Wiseman Group and manufactured by Out of the Woods, Steve Ulsh and Evans & Brown. In the office (OPPOSITE), an Atlas lounge chair by Minotti is complemented by a Wendell Castle coffee table. The French column glass floor lamp is from RH. See Resources.



**Suite Spot** In a serene corner of the master bedroom (ABOVE), a painting by Jerome Lagarrigue, *Clementine Looking Down*, gazes on Eduardo Martinez's tête-a-tête lounge chair covered in a Donghia wool. Alpaca throw is by Rosemary Hallgarten. Hexagonal column floor lamp in bronze is through RH; string shade by Abat-Jour. See Resources.

mirrors' ever-changing reflections infuse depth and movement into the symmetrical furniture plan.

Another inventive move was installing a sofa into the 12-foot span between the columns. Upholstered in Donghia wool, its chrome legs aren't visible, so it seems to float in front of the windows. The backs of its five sections independently adjust, enabling dozens of iterations: When its cushions lie flat, for example, it serves as a wide banquette and gives guests the option to face the room or the view. And then there's the custom coffee table. Proportionately large, it's a central anchor for the surrounding seating, and thanks to its five intersecting, maze-like components, it can be configured in many ways, making it ideal for entertaining.

Hunter commissioned Pietro Seminelli, a French curtain couturier and origami master who folds fabric into pattern, to create the living room's most poetic gesture, a series of 5-by-10-foot taffeta panels that glide across the windows. During the day, they retract. Then, at night, when they're fully drawn, something magical happens: They diffuse the city lights and transform the apartment into a glowing lantern.

In the bedroom, a mirrored armoire based on a 1930s concept by Paul Dupré-Lafon is full tilt glamorous. When its doors are perfectly angled, it provides the 360-degree view of a dressing room, so it's also supremely practical. All the surfaces and colors are sensual and tactile. Outfitted with crisp Frette sheets, the bed sits between lacquered linen side tables in a niche upholstered in one of Kravet's silvery celadon cottons; bone-colored leather covers a bench; and Donghia wool in a pistachio shade covers Eduardo Martinez's curvaceous tête-a-tête lounge chairs.

After Hunter completed his installation, Betwee's first visitors commented on how accurately the décor resembled her. "It was so gratifying to hear that," he says. "That's what I always set out to do in my work." 🌞



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**Master Class** The master bedroom (TOP AND RIGHT) alcove walls sport Kravet's silvery celadon cotton. The bed is dressed in Frette linens. Bone-colored leather covers a bench by Hilde-Brand; wood finish is by Jafe Custom Finishing. Lacquered linen side tables from Plantation are topped with Croissant lamps from Hutton Collections. See Resources.

