

Take Two < By Deborah Bishop >

A DUSTY OUTBUILDING IS REBORN AS A MULTI-PURPOSE PLAYROOM

For the two boys younger than 6 years old who live here, renovation of the garage-storage shack in their Castro district backyard introduced both a taste of independence and an awesome playroom. For their mom, it meant being able to keep an eye on them while busy in the kitchen.

Architect Cary Bernstein first created an elegant, light-filled berth for cars on the top level, then excavated the lower room to create 8 feet of clearance. "When it came to finishes and furnishings, I wanted the space to be equally welcoming to adults and children," says Bernstein, who built in some surprises that make it fun.

Toys are stashed in the anigre wood cabinetry, which conceals a Murphy bed — ideal for jumping on or offering respite to overnight guests (there is a small washroom on the left). One of the lower cabinets opens into the space around the garage stairwell. Although originally intended for luggage storage, it was quickly claimed by the boys as a secret fort and now houses an elaborate train setup.

The charcoal brown rear wall (from Claridge Products) is magnetized and offers an erasable slate for chalk murals. And interior-grade ipe wood flooring merges with the deck, banishing the boundaries between inside and out. With the Nana folding doors pushed open, the courtyard becomes an alfresco extension of the room, as the steel and acid-etched glass overhang protects from sun and rain. Textile artist Jack Larsen designed the white polyester and Teflon curtain fabric called Cybele, which doubles as a scrim during impromptu performances.

"These people did not want a lot of cheap plastic stuff for their kids," says the architect, clearly relieved. Indeed,



the space transforms easily into a calming retreat for grown-ups — perhaps bolstered by the fact that behind the right-hand door resides the wine cellar.

Deborah Bishop is a contributing editor for Dwell magazine in San Francisco.

Zahid Sardar is The Chronicle's design editor. To suggest a renovation project for Take Two, contact him at zsardar@sfchronicle.com.

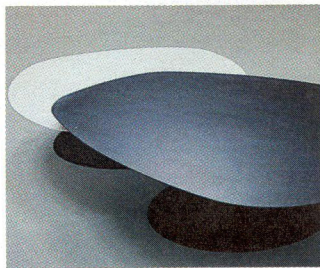
Resources

Cary Bernstein, Architect
2325 Third St., San Francisco,
(415) 522-1907
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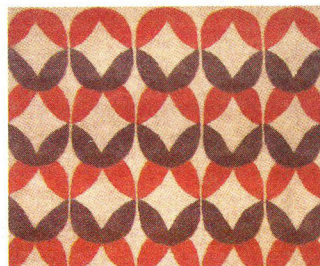
MOROSO PHOENIX TABLE

Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola's coffee table is an ideal height for children, whether they're standing or sitting. The composite top wipes clean and is held steady on a base of powder-coated steel. \$2,178, through Dzine, 128 Utah St., San Francisco; (415) 674-9430, (415) 674-9430, www.dzinestore.com.



FLOWERTREE SHEETS

Known to some as the Ikea of Canada, EQ3 offers decorative bedding that doesn't break the bank. The Flowertree queen-size sheet set, available in multiple colors, includes flat and fitted sheets and two cases. \$99.99 at EQ3, 540 Ninth St., San Francisco; (415) 552-2626, www.eq3.com.



TULIPS FELT RUG

Melina and Dodd Raissia visited Iranian mountain villages to learn the dying art of feltmaking — felt rugs are not woven, but pressed, creating a strong, dense textile. At their fair-trade workshop in Iran, Melina's original patterns are executed from pure lamb's wool and biodegradable vegetable dyes, without chemicals or toxins. The 6-by-8-foot Tulips rug is \$1,680 at Peace Industry, 535 Octavia Blvd., San Francisco; (415) 255-9940, www.peaceindustry.com.



STONES CEMENT STOOL

Maya Lin's monolithic, elliptical concrete Stones seats for Knoll have a slightly concave seat and are made in an array of colors. Child's stool (10 inches high) is \$556; adult size (15 inches high) is \$916, at Zinc Details, 2410 California St., San Francisco; (415) 776-9002, www.zincdetails.com.



BUNNY JUNIOR CHAIR

Available in Easter egg colors such as blue, pink and yellow, these stackable seats are evocative of Arne Jacobsen's midcentury classic Ant chair. The waterfall edge protects thighs as children slip in and out. \$45 at DWR (multiple locations); (800) 944-2233, www.dwr.com.

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