

BY SUSAN KERR

design without borders

UNIVERSAL APPEAL—EXOTIC PALETTES AND
DESIGN STYLES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO IMAGINATIVE INTERIOR

designers is the opportunity to artfully break rules—to dissolve boundaries between inside and outdoors, to play boldly with color, texture and shape, and to experiment with creative abandon while always in pursuit of a harmonious balance between function and form.

An essential element of that quest is the latitude to reach far and wide for inspiration and influence. Here in the South Bay we associate our area with technological daring, and maybe not so much with inventive design. Yet few locales offer as much cultural diversity—more than a third of our population is foreign born. Since Silicon Valley boasts a well-educated, well-traveled populace, the influence of our neighbors and our travels has seeped into our homes. Due in large part to that visual and tactile mélange of global influences, we find ourselves at the vortex of breakthrough décor trends.

Take a look around you and chances are you'll find the bold color choices with a nod to ancient traditions of China, or the minimalism of Japan and its rich, black lacquered wood furnishings, or the metallic finishes and earthy, spicy colors of Morocco, not to mention the warmth of a Spanish hacienda.

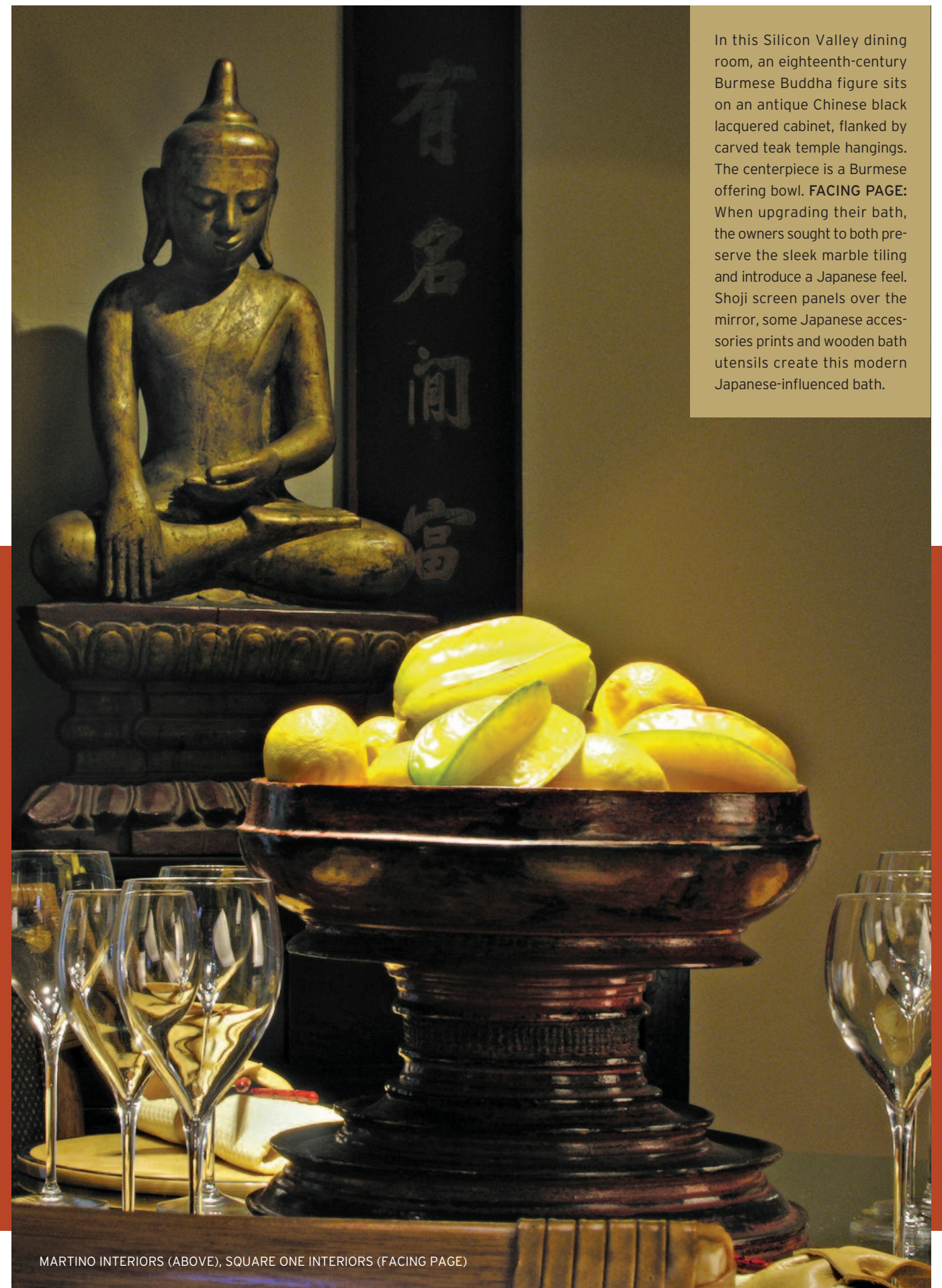
This merging of designs and the incorporation of fabrics, textures and furnishings from cultures around the world inspires adventurous designers. Ron Martino of Martino Interiors in Los Gatos says he doesn't go into a home with the desire to be multicultural. Instead he lets the environment speak to him, and uses the objects that work from his extensive travels around the world.

"Rather than identifying a particular style, such as is this Louis XVI," says Rise Krag, head of RKI Interior Design, Menlo Park, "I identify the flow, and ask is this the right size and shape for the setting? You can mix styles if you pay attention to balance, color and texture."

It all comes down to choice as defined by the ability to experiment with motifs, furnishings and traditions from anywhere in the world, and that freedom shows off with beguiling élan in the pages ahead.



INTERIOR (RIGHT) BY BEV VIGIERIE AND RON MARTINO; PHOTOS COURTESY OF (RIGHT) REBECCA KMEZ/BECPX.COM; FACING PAGE SQUARE ONE INTERIORS



In this Silicon Valley dining room, an eighteenth-century Burmese Buddha figure sits on an antique Chinese black lacquered cabinet, flanked by carved teak temple hangings. The centerpiece is a Burmese offering bowl. **FACING PAGE:** When upgrading their bath, the owners sought to both preserve the sleek marble tiling and introduce a Japanese feel. Shoji screen panels over the mirror, some Japanese accessories prints and wooden bath utensils create this modern Japanese-influenced bath.

MARTINO INTERIORS (ABOVE), SQUARE ONE INTERIORS (FACING PAGE)



MARTINO INTERIORS

INTERIOR (LEFT) BY BEV VIGUERIE AND RON MARTINO. PHOTOS COURTESY OF (LEFT) DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON; FACING PAGE: (TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT) HARRELL REMODELING

FACING PAGE: A handpainted tile mural of Our Lady of Guadalupe (seen in the background entry) influenced the colors of this Martino Interiors' Pebble Beach project. The pillow fabric is a Peruvian design, the star table is Moroccan, and a Mexican floor screen completes the scene. **TOPRIGHT:** After losing a house in a fire, Los Altos homeowners turned to RKI Interior Design to create a new dining room that reflects their journeys, and includes carved Indonesian columns, custom lighting from Mexico and a stunning Sultanabad rug from Northwestern Iran. **BELOW LEFT:** Designer Patricia Borba McDonald looked to Africa for inspiration in choosing the glass in this eye-catching cabinet. **BELOW RIGHT:** This sunny Mountain View kitchen was designed by Harrell Remodeling to display family treasures with the help of open shelving commonly seen in European households. ■



RKI INTERIOR DESIGN



ABOVE: PATRICIA BORBA MCDONALD INTERIOR DESIGN



HARRELL REMODELING