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PHOTOS BY JASON WELLS

# *Haute* RESIDENCE

## PARISIAN JEWEL ON NOB HILL

*A Francophile's Dream Apartment Now for Sale in San Francisco*



THERE ARE MANY STUNNING PROPERTIES IN SAN FRANCISCO, but rarely does an apartment like 1001 California Street #3 come on the market. This fully-furnished 3,640 square-foot two-bedroom, two-and-a-half bathroom home is located on the top of Nob Hill across the street from iconic landmarks the Pacific Union Club, Grace Cathedral, the Fairmont Hotel, and the Intercontinental Mark Hopkins Hotel. The apartment takes up the entire third floor of a classic Beaux-Arts building that dates back to 1914. In the late 1990s, the entire unit was gutted and completely remodeled by renowned architect Andrew Skurman (who has earned the French distinction of Chevalier of Arts and Letters and five Julia Morgan Awards from the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art) and award-winning interior designer Suzanne Tucker. The duo worked closely with a previous owner to

create a unique, incredible French-inspired space that is indeed unlike any other apartment in the city.

"When we first got the job, it was a very tired apartment so, we gutted the entire unit, down to its bones so we could see where the structure was, and really understand all of the possibilities for the sizes of the rooms, the shapes of the rooms, and the storage possibilities," Skurman recently told *Haute Living*. "The building is a French design, so it was decided to go with French interior architecture, and we used details from the 19th century in Paris, which is called the Haussmann period. This was a period when Baron George Haussmann rebuilt Paris and made the streets straight and created the beautiful apartments that proliferate Paris at this time. We wanted it to look like a Parisian apartment. We created

shapes of rooms inside that fit the exterior of the Beaux-Arts building.”

The apartment is a series of round rooms. Upon arrival, one walks through a curved gallery into a circular entrance hall. The dots on the floor are meant to resemble cabochons traditionally found on rings—a detail that Skurman and Tucker pulled from the Paris’ Bibliothèque Nationale. “We completely reconfigured the floor plan, creating an elegant flow for living and entertaining, capturing light and views from every window,” Tucker explains. “Inspired by the curves of the building’s two bays, we drew up a circular foyer as a uniquely inviting space and curved hallways connecting the bedroom suites.”

The first thing Athena Blackburn, the current owner, did was to paint the walls of the entryway and foyer in cerulean blue with gold accent trim to mimic many of the European chateaux she has visited. Her favorite room is the large round dining room with a circular table, a gold-domed ceiling, beautiful chocolate color lacquered walls, mirrored doors, and a chandelier with 24 wax candles. The chandelier can be raised and lowered to light the candles. “As far as I know, we have the only real candle chandelier like this in San Francisco. When you close the doors, you dine in a cozy and intimate setting—although this is a very spacious room.” Blackburn says.

No detail was overlooked, and everything, from the



*The foyer*



*The entry to 1001 California*



*The view from the apartment includes the Fairmont Hotel*

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The guest bedroom



dining room's parquet flooring to the kitchen's raised paneled cabinet molding was inspired by French design. "There are exquisite craftsmanship details throughout hand-scraped parquet de Versailles floors, lacquered walls, hand-painted finishes on cabinetry and paneling, antique mantel and light fixtures," Tucker says. "Coco Chanel's apartment on the Rue Cambon in Paris was the main source of inspiration for the interior details: beautifully detailed, very well-tailored, and French in feeling—down to the 12-panel Coromandel screen, collectible antiques, French stones, glazed walls, etc." Adds Skurman, "All the doors are very authentically French design, all the hardware, and the parquet flooring as well, was newly made, but hand scraped white oak to make them look like it had been there for centuries."

The resulting home is very opulent, but also cozy. Hidden closets provide plenty of storage space. The guest bedroom is a suite with a den, full bathroom, and walk-in closet. The television is disguised behind a wall of books. The large kitchen center island is covered in black granite with a massive hood that is reminiscent of the Eiffel Tower. Skurman's team had to bring the hood in through the window. Also, the black granite island conceals a water purification system underneath. "The kitchen is a dream with the center island, and the chic Chinoiserie touches in limed white oak," Tucker says.

The award-winning master bathroom, designed by Tucker, features a gorgeous bathtub in the middle of a Tonneau-shaped space. "Tonneau means barrel in French, and Cartier makes a Tonneau watch, which is barrel-shaped, with two long curved sides and two short flat ends," Skurman says. "That bathroom was inspired by a Cartier watch." Tucker describes it



The family room



The library



The master bathroom



The master bedroom



The dining room



The dining room table faces into the library



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like this: "The master bath is amazing with the center tub, intarsia marble floor pattern and the pair of curved Art Deco-inspired mirrored vanities. His and her dressing rooms add to this luxurious space of sensuous serenity."

The powder room used by guests is another lavish space. Decorative Dutch painter Willem Racké expertly painted the room in a faux tortoise-shell pattern. "The jewel box is undoubtedly the powder room—my dream to step inside of a tortoiseshell tea caddy," Tucker says.

The building has recently undergone a \$10 million complete restoration. Every aspect of the structure—the roof, walls, decks, doors, balcony railings, etc.—was redone. Luckily, as Olivia Hsu Decker, listing agent and co-owner of Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty, notes the new buyer, "Doesn't have to live with three years of scaffolding and pay millions in cost!" The future homeowners will get to enjoy the apartment in all its glory.

Blackburn hopes that whoever purchases her beloved French-inspired apartment will enjoy it with passion. Skurman says that the apartment is perfect for a Francophile: "Someone who appreciates French architecture. You have all of these incredible shapes which is highly refined French that's very unusual in the United States. The combination of the shaped rooms and all of the details—the flooring, moldings, paneling, and French windows—combine to transport you to Paris." The apartment is laid out perfectly for entertaining with rooms flowing from one to the other. Blackburn loved inviting 12 people over for dinner. But it is Tucker who, perhaps, describes it best, "Truly, it is the most enchanting, breath-taking, and utterly delightful apartment in every way."

Learn more at <http://www.1001californiafloor3.com> or by emailing [olivia@sanfranciscofinehomes.com](mailto:olivia@sanfranciscofinehomes.com)



The Eiffel Tower-inspired hood



A men's closet



The powder room