

DESIGN & DECORATING

ANATOMY LESSON

Breezy Reads

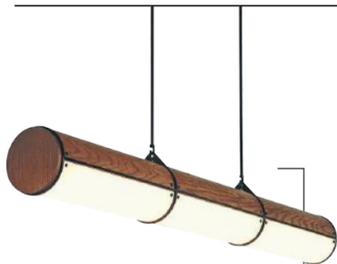
A Tudor home's library manages to nod to tradition without resorting to stuffy mahogany-paneled clichés

BY VALERIE STIVERS

THE YOUNG COUPLE who bought this Portland, Ore., Tudor revival—a piece of 1930s architecture with Elizabethan influences and artful craftsmanship—hired designer Jessica Helgerson to take a less historical approach to the furnishings. But there were some compromises. The husband had grown up in “a very traditional house,” Ms. Helgerson said, and wanted this library to summon his idea of home.

The room's extant architecture provided classic library detail that went a long way toward filling the

man of the house's desires: Douglas-fir shelving, inlay of a schooner over the fireplace and exposed beams. To bridge the design with the more modern aesthetic that Ms. Helgerson ushered into adjacent spaces, she chose furnishings that spoke of past and present. Antique Asian brass singing bowls on the mantel and window sill combine a mellow patina with the clean lines modernists admire. The vintage Oriental rug reads neutral. Where the styling stopped? Book organization: Design-conscious approaches weren't considered. “My dad was an English professor, my mom a writer,” Ms. Helgerson said. “I believe in having books in the order in which you like to read them.”



Turn on a big light

This bold, architectural fixture feels contemporary but also familiar thanks to its oak detailing. Its designer, Jason Miller, said the light, which can be customized to turn corners and come in any length, was inspired by 1970s supergraphics, colorful painted stripes that traveled rooms in unusual ways. Jason Miller Woody Endless Straight-3 Units, \$4,800, rollandhill.com



Update the objets

The proportions of the candlesticks, inspired by the domestic objects of the Biedermeier era of early-1800s Europe, are whittled to contemporary perfection. Meanwhile, traditional landscape art leans on the mantel instead of hanging on the wall. Ted Muehling Biedermeier Candlestick Collection in Oxidized Bronze by E.R. Butler & Co., from \$360, thefutureperfect.com



Split the difference

Bridging the nearly 100-year gap between the room's construction and today, the sculptural wrought-iron coffee table is midcentury modern. By Arturo Pani, designer to the Mexican elite in the 1950s and '60s, it was updated with a custom-cut marble top. Similar vintage items, like this Pani cocktail table, are widely available. A marble top would set you back around \$1,300. \$3,875, 1stdibs.com



Blanket the sofa

Ms. Helgerson made a rectangular couch cozier by custom-upholstering it in a “thick but soft, nubby wool,” she said. (The same fabric swaddles the couple's bedroom headboard.) The sofa's wooden legs echo vintage Asian touches elsewhere in the home's décor. Neri & Hu for De La Espada Frame Sofa, from \$7,580, thefutureperfect.com. Cortina by Larsen Upholstery Fabric in Granite, to the trade



Raise a rad lantern

Reading by oil lamp might seem like taking old-school authenticity a step too far, but the couple keeps these working oil lamps throughout their house in anticipation of any contingency. A stylish evolution from voluptuous ancestors, they include just a wink of ornament on the silver metal cuff. Klong Mini Patina Oil Lamp in black, \$177, finnishdesignshop.com



Wing it

Wing chairs are a reading-room staple, and the room's blue-leather pair break from tradition a bit. Ms. Helgerson traded off-the-rack maple legs with custom ones, stained dark and carved for an elegant look. Her starting point: Wingback Chair in Mountain Spring Leather, \$2,498, anthropologie.com



Top with brass

For accents throughout the house, Ms. Helgerson chose hues of gold, because it's a classic metal “bright and sparkly” enough to enliven rooms with lots of exposed wood. These side tables tweak a Depression Era form with simpler minimalist lines. 1930s Martini Side Table, from \$295, restorationhardware.com

EVOLUTION

A SAWHORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

The table that could be hastily assembled in a barn or on a battlefield gets a digital-age makeover



Antique American Wood Sawhorse Table, sold on 1stdibs.com

THEN From carpentry workbench to triage table for Civil War medics, the sawhorse table served for centuries. This early-1900s version, with its pine top bleached and limed, illustrates the refinement that came as the design migrated from workshop to living area.

NOW “The ubiquitous sawhorse table, a loose top supported by two triangulated bases, conveys ease of set up and abundant stability,” Jeff Miller, Poppin's vice president of product design, said in an email. The company's new powder-coated Key Desk, with a power strip built into a compartment for cords, accommodates today's technology, but the rustic design survives in its workmanlike legs. —Eleanore Park



Key Desk, \$299, poppin.com

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