



# The One-of-a-Kind Designs of Roger Harned

By Melanie Chatfield





San Francisco



Rancho Mirage



Carmel

He holds a PhD in political science and taught at the University of Arizona, but Roger Harned knew that interior design was his true calling. So, in 1970 he went to Paris where he stayed for two years, traveling and taking classes at the Sorbonne. Returning to the U.S., Roger moved to San Francisco where he began fulfilling his dream. With several successful projects under his belt, he established his own design firm in 1978.

“Many of my early projects were my own homes,” says Roger. “I’d redesign and sell them and move on to the next challenge. I still do that when I can.”

His general approach is to form a clear image of what a client wants and needs in a home. “Then I try to refine, clarify and embellish or edit that image,” he says. “Through experience and access to resources, I guide clients toward the aesthetic they have in mind. Once the client and I have a clear concept, the design flows naturally from there.”

To ensure that a design remains exciting, Roger aims for a mix of colors, textures and scale, as well as flexibility. “This makes it simple to move furniture, add flowers and art and redirect lighting to create new experiences,” he says. “I try not to over-design or over-furnish a space, but leave room for those ‘must have’ finds.”




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Roger’s partner Sven Hoffmann, a professional chef turned kitchen designer extraordinaire, handles the design of the kitchens and often cabinetry in other areas of the home. “He’s absolutely masterful in crafting highly functional kitchens that are beautifully designed,” says Roger. “He has a gift for coaxing storage and efficiency from every space possible.”

During his initial days in San Francisco, Roger designed a home for a couple in Pacific Heights. That led to a friendship and business relationship that continue to this day. In this article, we showcase Roger’s work on three homes that the couple owns today—



*The striking metropolitan city-scape complements the contemporary feel of this penthouse.*





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a penthouse condominium in San Francisco, a Rancho Mirage villa and a cozy Carmel weekend getaway—the latest of the three projects.

“They use all of the homes,” says Roger, “so each design had to create a different experience.”

Their penthouse was purchased as the high-rise building was going up in 2003. Modern high rises can be “brutal” and need to be softened, according to Roger. The first element he added was the vivid Cinnamon Slate color for the walls of the main living spaces. Floors are maple with a gray wash and adorned with fine rugs. Windows that afford exhilarating city views line most of the rooms. “The design had to be dramatic to hold up to the views,” says Roger. Since privacy is not an issue, windows are dressed in iridescent gold/purple fabric that drapes in long panels on the sides. “They soften everything and add a great splash of color.”

Given its desert location and the fact that it serves as a winter and weekend retreat, the Rancho Mirage property offered a completely different set of challenges. Overlooking the golf course of a private, gated enclave, the villa includes a main house and two guest cottages built around a central courtyard. Interior and exterior flow gracefully from one to the other. Neutral, soft earthy hues and natural materials of leather, bamboo, stone and plaster achieve a casual and artistic feel.



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Acquired 16 years ago, the Carmel home was ready for a makeover. His clients invited Roger to meet them in the lobby of Casa Palermo in Pebble Beach. Roger was intrigued when they said, “this is what we want. The room was bigger than their entire house and yet they wanted to transform the interior into an old-world European country lodge,” recalls Roger. “That notion had to be translated into a much smaller space. This was a true ‘concept’ house, where the other two were less defined.”

The exterior and footprint of the home were left untouched. All creative energies were focused on the interior spaces. The primary challenge was rearranging and restyling the space to achieve the look of refinement that

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comes with age. Walls were taken down, rooms reconfigured, new windows and doors installed. “The smaller kitchen they have now has more storage than the larger kitchen did,” Roger says. “That’s Sven’s trademark.”

Everything—from custom-made draperies, upholstered pieces and lamps to lighting, furniture, fixtures, flooring and wall treatments—was selected by Roger. Hand-forged iron railings and a “distressed” treatment for the many built-ins accentuate the 18<sup>th</sup> Century European lodge sensibilities the owners wanted.

### RESOURCES...

Roger Harned, Allied Member, ASID  
Roger Harned Design  
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(831) 626-1770  
[www.harneddesign.com](http://www.harneddesign.com)

Accents Windows and Walls  
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John O’Keefe  
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“For me, it’s always a matter of interpreting the client’s vision to create a beautiful and functional space,” Roger says. “My favorite projects, like these, have been

collaborations with clients who both want to be involved and have great taste. Together, we achieve results that would be impossible on our own.” ■