

COOL AND COLLECTED

*Interior designer Jay Jeffers takes us inside his charming Napa Valley home—
and shows off an uncommon collection*

By AMBER GIBSON Photography by IKE EDEANI



EARNEST DESIGN

"The portrait over the fireplace reminds me of Oscar Wilde," says Jeffers. "And on the wall that is reclaimed barn wood. This home was my experiment to do white walls everywhere, but I had to have some texture on one wall. The couch in front of the fireplace is my own design, and we sell it through Cavalier."



UNUSUAL FINDS Clockwise from top left: "The fireplace mantle of blackened oyster shells is by an artist out of Austin, Texas," says Jeffers; in the master bedroom, the bulbous copper lantern hails from Morocco, while the portraits are another collecting habit of Jeffers and his husband; the wooden chair with a wicker back is one of a pair—"They felt very Napa Valley to me," says the designer; the bar cart is steel with an enamel top. "We found it locally, in San Francisco," Jeffers says. "I thought it was unusual to find a big enamel piece like that."

JAY JEFFERS has had a big year. The San Francisco-based interior designer—known for his “luxurious but livable” approach and named by *Elle Decor* to its A-list of designers—recently published his first book, *Collected Cool: The Art of Bold, Stylish Interiors* (Rizzoli). Design aficionados can’t seem to get enough of his chic “mountain modern” aesthetic, on view at three Jeffers-appointed homes at the Ritz-Carlton Residences, Lake Tahoe.

Homes are important to Jeffers. That’s why it was such a treat when *Rhapsody* was invited to see his design philosophy in action at one of his most prized and personal creations: the weekend retreat he and his husband, Michael Purdy, own in St. Helena, California.

In Jeffers’ opinion, a home should reveal a little of your soul as well as reflect the locale. His Napa Valley domicile does both. And while the place is more wine-country casual than mountain modern, its design is flexible. “I could see our house transferring up to the mountains very easily,” he says. “I might throw a cashmere blanket on the beds and change the draperies, which are all oatmeal-colored linens, to a heavier wool-oriented fabric.”

Jeffers is a master at blending the rustic and the contemporary, and he manages to have a sense of humor about it, too. He explains, “It’s about bringing in some industrial pieces and reclaimed wood to give you an intimate, homey feeling without feeling like you have to live with a bearskin rug or antler chandeliers.” >







PATIO LIVING "We wanted something clean and easy on the patio," says Jeffers. "I like the form of the concrete but with the juxtaposition of a little bit of wildness and color. That's why we had the flower bed put in behind the pool. It's a great casual spot."



A good way to avoid this cliché is by collecting your home over time—as Jeffers has done—so that it is timeless and not of any specific genre. A couple years after buying their place, in 2009, Jeffers and Purdy gutted and remodeled it, with Jeffers designing much of the furniture himself. (Several of the pieces can be purchased at his home goods boutique, Cavalier, in San Francisco.)

One decorative high point that isn't as easily purchased is Jeffers' idiosyncratic collection of vintage creamware. A cabinet crammed with hallmark examples from the 1930s to the 1950s is the design centerpiece of the dining room. Jeffers and Purdy have been collecting pieces for more than a decade, primarily at roadside antique stores from Austin to Atlanta.

"We like to find a deal," he says. At an antique mall or small store, mint-condition creamware might sell for \$40, while prices can jump as high as \$140 at nicer shops. Presently, the still-growing collection includes between 50 and 100 pieces.

The jumble is displayed in a vintage cabinet that Jeffers stripped and refinished in lighter tones. "I don't know what possessed me to start putting the pieces in there," he says. "I didn't want them to just be sitting in the cabinet, so I started turning one on its side and it evolved into this topsy-turvy stacking."

The traditional shapes and color of the creamware reflect Jeffers' traditional side, he says, while the Jenga-like stacking prevents the collection from becoming dull. "The way they're displayed has an element of surprise, and it's a little whimsical," he says. "That's part of who I am. I want people to walk into a room and be surprised by something in the space." ☺



EVERYTHING IN ITS RIGHT PLACE *Left: The vintage creamware cabinet; above: Jeffers' kitchen. "It's a very finite space," he says. "I wanted it to be super clean and very tailored; I knew exactly where the range and fridge would go. We love having little dinner parties, having people over for barbecues and cocktails"; top: a front-porch swing from Austin, Texas.*