



In the bedroom of a Cole Valley project she's working on, Jeannie Fraise tempers bold patterns and colors with pure white; her Hayes Valley shop carries vintage furniture, like this 1950s chair (below), which she's updated with a retro striped fabric from Robert le Héros in Paris.

FRENCH TWIST

JEANNIE FRAISE OF SAN FRANCISCO'S LOTUS BLEU DESIGN GOES OVERSEAS TO PIECE TOGETHER HER FRESH, VIBRANT LOOK. BY LYDIA LEE

Sitting on a brightly striped chaise in Jeannie Fraise's Hayes Valley store, you feel as if you should be holding a tall glass of strawberry lemonade. Or perhaps a mango smoothie. Packed with fruity hues in crisp patterns, the tiny 350-square-foot Lotus Bleu boutique is unabashedly pretty.

It's a bright new setting for Fraise, who started her interior design business in 2003 and opened the shop last October. A former curatorial assistant at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, she moved to this coast to pursue a doctorate in art history at Stanford. At first, decorating her home with finds from her travels in Southeast Asia was just a pleasant break from working on her dissertation. When friends started asking, "Where did you get that?" Fraise decided to try taking her arts career in a different direction. "I'm a big color person," she says. "I love the mix of modern colors and lines with traditional workmanship."

To that end, Fraise travels to Vietnam and France to find textiles and crafts reworked in contemporary shades and motifs. Think stripes and abstract florals, in fabrics like jacquard, silk and wool felt. At Lotus Bleu (the name comes from a book featuring French cartoon character Tintin), you'll find printed table linens and window panels by Parisian design team Robert le Héros; graphic wool-felt pillows and rugs from Muskhane, a company run by a French designer who works out of Kathmandu; and colorful paintings by contemporary Vietnamese artists.

"If there had been a contemporary Asian arts program, I think that's what I would have studied," says Fraise, who—luckily for her clients, including the modern and contemporary art curator of Stanford's Cantor Arts Center—decided to drop the Ph.D. and give design a full-time chance. ■

