



## TEAM PLAYERS

Joy and Alan Ohashi are husband and wife as well as business partners in the Berkeley-based Ohashi Design Studio. Both successful architects with private residences and commercial interiors under their belts, Joy, 49, and Alan, 51, enjoy the unfettered fun of furniture, crafting signature pieces for Conde House. (They're pictured with the Boxx table and armchair.)

Their constant collaboration appears a relaxed one. The jumble of miniature chairs and tables, all models, crowding their North Oakland home's mantel indicates it is prolific as well. How do they work together? Neither takes the director's credit.

"We throw ideas off each other," says Alan. "I'll have a brainstorm, and Joy'll say, 'Nah.'"

"I throw it back again," Joy says.

This give-and-take has been going on for a while. The pair met at UCLA and left together to study architecture at UC Berkeley.

Joy was born in Japan; Alan, into a Japanese-American family. They say they're influenced by their ancestry, but point out that post-war L.A. was equally important. Today, a persistent fount for new ideas bubbles up from Bay Area restaurants and their ever-changing interiors.

"You go to Aqua, to Il Fornaio—the exuberance and the quality of their design is just so evident," Alan says. (The couple have tried their hand in this area, resulting in Dante's on Pier 39 and Kirala,

a Japanese restaurant in Berkeley.) Their furnishings for Conde House reflect both a cerebral and a sensual side: dark and light, restrained and playful. An Ohashi is hard to peg.

"We strive for a contemporary element that's also..." Alan pauses.

"Classic," Joy says, invoking a partner's privilege to insert a word mid-sentence.

"And balanced, with a kind of mystery," Alan finishes, nodding thanks to his wife. Joy points out examples: A table's mass is disguised by the thinness of its beveled edges; a chair's slats let light in at inviting angles. What might sum it up?

"We like surprises," Joy says. AVAILABLE THROUGH CONDE HOUSE SHOWROOM, (415) 864-8666.

## joy and alan ohashi



niki bed



ohashi chair



boxx buffet