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OBSESSIONS

Seeking the Sublime

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MAISON COUTURE



*UNAPOLOGETIC COLOR AND
FLIGHTS OF WHIMSY CREATE
A FEAST FOR THE SENSES IN
AN HISTORIC HOME.*

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Previous page: A textured wallcovering from Romo, Apparatus Studio sconces, a vintage cocktail table with a zebra hide underfoot, and CB2 chairs covered in a saturated fabric from S. Harris, add interest to the enticing wine room. **This page:** The foyer's stunning custom marble floor embodies the exceptional finesse on view throughout the home. Header molding in Benjamin Moore Gray frames the entrance to the kitchen, where mixed metals, plush fabrics, custom cabinetry in Farrow & Ball Pavilion Gray, a Lacanche range, and a spectacular Arabascato marble wall with complementing countertops, dazzle.



The tiger wallcovering sets the tone—intimate and fun with a hint of formality. An antique mirror from the Paris Flea Market reflects the metallic leather of the Ngala Trading chandelier and plays off the Benjamin Moore high-gloss lacquered ceiling. Urban Electric sconces and chairs in a bold fabric from Schumacher add to the appeal.

Finding a well-preserved, historic home that exudes French charm is no small feat – but when it involves a worldly couple relocating from Chicago to Des Moines, Iowa with their two young daughters, all bets are off. But Eva and Mike Anderson, a pair of creatives with astute business minds, found an overlooked gem – a four-bedroom, 6,000-square-foot home – replete with French-style manicured gardens, fountains, and a heated saltwater pool.

Built in 1949, the three-story home featured 10 feet thick interior masonry walls and classic architectural details. Yet despite its Parisian-like bones, interior designer Stephanie Wirth – co-founder of Chicago-based firm Leo Designs – was impressed with their ability to see past the interiors. “It took vision, it was overdone and dated – and very Victorian on the inside.”

Wirth’s insight proved telling: “I felt an instant connection” she says of their first in-person meeting. “I immediately pulled out a specific wallcovering I had pictured for her – a tiger-themed textural wallpaper from Carlucci – and she said, ‘oh my god, it’s the same paper I had in mind.’” Whether it was the designer’s upbringing in Europe and/or Eva’s time spent studying fashion design and living in Paris – they quickly realized they shared a Parisian-like sensibility.

To ensure maximum impact forthwith, a custom stone pattern featuring Lilac, Chinese black, and Carrera marble was created for the foyer. The addition of header moldings painted in a striking gray act as picture frames highlighting a portion of each adjoining room. Upon entering the home, visitors’ direct line of sight leads into the husband’s office – where a textured, fanciful wallcovering depicting soaring cranes draws the eye. To the right, an emerald console and a vintage settee upholstered in Pavoni python leather and a lush Mokum velvet flank the entrance to the expansive, new kitchen.

“Eva’s decision to move the kitchen into the former parlor was genius,” says Sarah Mellor, Leo Designs’ Design Director. “She envisioned exactly how her family would utilize the space – so challenges aside, we created a functional, proportionate space, with a few thoughtful surprises.” The range hood – a custom design – melds zinc with brass straps and is complemented by the RH brass stools recovered in an alluringly vivid magenta-like chenille. White quartzite countertops and a stunning Arabasceto marble wall add modernity and a serious wow factor.



The bright and airy living room – the epitome of Parisian *savoir vivre* – already had a slew of gorgeous details. From various sets of French doors opening to the outdoors and an intricately detailed fireplace and ceiling – and just a few calculated adjustments, China White paint included – the room emanates light. Once the Jean-Louis Deniot sofas, the custom lilac stone top coffee table, and every meticulously curated piece was incorporated, it became, Eva states, “the most beautifully elegant room in the house.”

The dining room, which so dashingly wears the modern yet classic tiger wallcovering, displays elements of both glamour and whimsy. A metallic leather chandelier, dining chairs upholstered in a playful tiger print fabric, and a high-gloss lacquered ceiling that makes everything glimmer and glow – especially at night – adds to the intimacy. A nearby wine room – a cozy, dark and moody space with a big dose of drama – allows for soirées to continue in comfort. A custom marble fireplace topped by a captivating Francine Turk artwork and a connected, fully-outfitted second kitchen in varying shades of deep rich greens with brass accents, adds to the inviting, clandestine-like appeal.

“Between wallpapers and fabrics, I don’t think I have ever sourced as much with a client” says Wirth. “She has such a refined taste – so textures, colors, patterns, and subtle juxtapositions are very important to her.” Each room in the home satisfies a different mood yet flows seamlessly into the other, unified by the details and marked by a cohesive sense of color and culture.



Clockwise from top: The completely reconfigured, spa-like master bath, which Wirth describes as “immensely luxurious,” features beautiful French fittings, gorgeous marble, and decadent Cristallo Rosa Quartzite marble casing surrounding two symmetrically placed vanity mirrors. The wine room’s ultra-chic kitchen exhibits Verde marble countertops, open brass shelving, and custom cabinetry and trim in Farrow & Ball’s Carriage Green. In the office, Phillip Jeffries’ Flight wallcovering sparks conversation during Zoom meetings. An RH sofa in a soft blue enhances the design.





Leopard chairs in a Nobilis fabric add a lively, unexpected jolt to the serene, effortlessly elegant living room.