RESORT LIVING
FROM CITYSCAPE TO BEACHSIDE, A VACATION HOME BECKONS

REAL ESTATE NOW
CHICAGO’S DESIGN-CENTRIC OFFERINGS & NEWS TO KNOW

PLUS
SPECTACULAR FAMILY-FRIENDLY DESIGN
BY TRACY HICKMAN & DSPACE STUDIO
SUMMER THORNTON BRINGS A HISTORIC VICTORIAN BACK TO ITS GLORY
UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH ARCHITECT JOHN RONAN & GALLERIST MONIQUE MELOCHE
PERFECT PAIRING

HIGH CONTRAST

By Rhonda Reinhart

What's black and white and rad all over? The latest designs featuring home decor's most classic color pairing. Whether it's the contrasting matte finishes of Arteriors' Vickery chandelier or the blackened steel and hand-troweled plaster of Kelly Wearstler's Melange credenza, black and white make perfect partners, creating chic yet timeless interior touches. The modern masters at Knoll have gotten in on the B&W action too, offering a two-tone version of Harry Bertoia's classic Diamond chair, including options for a white basket frame and black vinyl upholstery.


CLASSIC ROCK Two-tone Bertoia Diamond chair, $1,201, by Knoll at Luminaire, 301 W. Superior St., 312.644.9582, luminaireinc.com; knoll.com

HOT STEEL: Melange credenza, $14,685, by Kelly Wearstler at Primitiv Living + Collecting, 130 N. Jefferson St., 312.573.9600, beprimitiv.com; kellywearstler.com

VELVET TOUCH Ming pillow, $247-$281, by Square Feathers at Bedside Manor, 2056 N. Halsted St., 773.484.1010, shopbedsidemnn.com; squarefeathers.com

SHINE A LIGHT: Vickery chandelier, $2,400, at Lightology, 215 W. Chicago Ave., 312.944.1000, lightology.com

CURVE APPEAL: Elsa side table, to the trade, at Holly Hunt, 222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Ste. 1428, 312.661.1900, hollyhunt.com
HIGH-RISE OASIS

CLEAN SLATE

Designer Gemma Parker helps a couple of transplants start from scratch by completely customizing their new condo and making the most of its view.

By Zlata Koziul Naumovski | Photography by Werner Straube

Splitting their time between Chicago and North Carolina, Gemma Parker’s (gemmaparkerdesign.com) clients were happily ensconced in their French-country traditional home with lovely porches in the South. But a job offer as CEO of a manufacturing company made the move to the Midwest permanent. So they traded up by buying a 3,400-square-foot three-bedroom condo one floor below their part-time residence at 55 East Erie: same building, same view, bigger kitchen, continued...
...continued plus an office space and one more bedroom.

Having moved five times in the past 20 years, the wife was excited to start over with custom furniture and bespoke fabrics. “Usually, I take what I have with us,” she says. But not this time.

“We kept our home in North Carolina so we had a clean slate to work with, which is so much fun,” she adds.

“No furniture or accessories were brought in with them,” explains Parker. “Everything was done from scratch and mostly custom-designed. She wanted comfortable and inviting yet contemporary, and he wanted minimal and as uncluttered as possible.” So the designer went to work stripping down the existing wainscoting and paneling in the library and office while custom-designing the dining room chairs and table, window treatments and two beds.

Working closely with architects from Lichten Craig Architecture + Interiors (where she was director of interiors for four years), Parker renovated the millwork, kitchen, bathrooms and architectural details, such as the fireplace surrounds, as well.

“The condo has beautiful city views,” Parker says. “We wanted to keep the focus on the views and not distract from it.” To complement the natural palette, they chose a mix of neutrals spiked with blues and greens, and accented with subtle Asian influences. continued...

“EVERYTHING HAS SUCH A NICE BALANCE WHEN IT’S CUSTOM-MADE. IT JUST FITS.”

—HOMEOWNER
REFINED LIVING

Clockwise from top left: The home office features a custom shoji-style screen that hides shelving to store a printer and other administrative supplies; designer Gemma Parker worked with architects at Lichten Craig Architecture to design a new, more streamlined fireplace surround; Parker custom-designed most of the living room furniture. The coffee table is by Holly Hunt, while art was sourced through Thomas Masters Gallery.

...CONTINUED

The office, too, references the Far East with shoji screen panels trimmed in wood. No hardware is visible, and one side cleverly stores a printer and other office supplies on built-in shelves hidden behind the panels. "I have a beautiful, clean, tidy space when I'm done," says the wife.

Additionally, Parker custom-designed the rugs, working with international carpet company extraordinaire Tai Ping Carpets out of its Merchandise Mart showroom.

"Rugs look so much better when they're made to suit the size," notes the wife. "The center lines of the rugs all line up very nicely with the fireplace and millwork." She loves her new living room and the comfort of looking out at the lake and the sunshine: "Everything has such a nice balance when it's custom-made. It just fits."
REVAMPED RETREAT

CHANGE OF STATE

Sculptural furnishings, contrasting textures and a quiet color palette turn an industrial loft-style apartment in Streeterville into a serene second home.

By Tate Gunnerson | Photography by Mike Schwartz

“We added soft edges to a clean and contemporary space,” explains architect Steve Kadlec (kadlecdesign.com) of the modernist one-bedroom pied-à-terre that he designed for a busy Washington, D.C., executive who spends half her time in Chicago. She was instantly drawn to its exposed board-formed concrete walls and expansive vistas of the lake and skyline. “The client has a ...
...continued... very modern corporate office, so the contemporary sensibility was a starting point,” Kadlec explains, “but because it’s her home, we wanted it to have a more personal, feminine character.”

Rather than gutting the unit, Kadlec devised a “surgical renovation,” which involved swapping out the kitchen backsplash, designing a custom rift-sawn oak bed and matching recessed bench for the master suite, and concealing unsightly mechanicals behind a wall of lacquered panels between the living room and bedroom. “Within the panelized wall, we created storage that supports the kitchen,” Kadlec says. “In a compact unit like this, you try to make the best use of every square foot.”

The paneling also establishes the room’s neutral color palette, which has been carried onto a large sectional sofa and a pair of curvaceous Minotti armchairs that are covered in a nubby boulle. “The apartment has a good bit of texture, but it was fairly rigid,” Kadlec says. “We added softer fabrics for texture instead of relying on pattern.”

Although the sectional sofa is large, its arms and back stop short of the ground, creating the illusion that it’s floating. Other custom furnishings, including rift white oak shelving in the main living area and a vanity that Kadlec designed for the master bathroom, have been mounted to the wall to similar effect. “It’s less bulky...” continued...
...continued and gives the illusion of a floating composition," Kadlec explains, noting that he also incorporated appropriately scaled furnishings, like a faux-bois table where the owner enjoys working. "We wanted to enhance that expansive, lofty feeling."

The designer's favorite part of the apartment is actually a black-and-white floral painting over the living room sofa that embodies the play of influences that Kadlec designed into the apartment. "It has a pleasing austerity and repose with a feminine connotation that encapsulated what we were trying to do," Kadlec explains. "We wish every project would be this smooth."

According to the daughter, who lives in Chicago and served as a local liaison during the project, the owner is enamored with the outcome, and as a result, she is spending more time than ever in town. "The apartment draws her here more often, and she extends trips over the weekend with great regularity," she admits. "I get to see a lot more of her, which has been great."
MODERN COMFORT: In the formal dining room, transitional dining chairs were paired with custom benches in an ombré pattern from The Bright Group. "It’s plush, so it’s soft, sumptuous. Here, done on a modern piece of furniture for contrast," Hickman explains.
Tailored furnishings and glam lighting enhance the surprisingly streamlined architectural details in a seemingly traditional suburban home.

By Tate Gunnerson
Photography by Werner Straube

"These clients wanted to bring a piece of the city to the suburbs," explains interior designer Tracy Hickman of the sprawling French colonial-style house in Hinsdale that she decorated for a software executive and his wife, and their three children. "They were willing to take risks," Hickman says, "so we created something that is edgier and a little more modern."

The owners were already working on the design of their new home with architect Mike Abraham, when the wife attended a kitchen walk in Hinsdale and realized the two spaces that captured her fancy were both designed by none other than Hickman. "Tracy and I had such similar taste," the wife explains. "I knew we would work well together."

Instead of the dark, traditional interior one might expect from the home's traditional limestone and slate exterior, Hickman selected a soft palette of gray hues.
NEW TRADITION. A space for playing music and chess, the open living area off of the entry has comfortable seats, furnishings and a neutral color palette accented with splashes of color in the form of pillows covered in Fortuny fabrics.
both frame the view and softly filter the light coming in
the soaring windows along the curvaceous open stairway in
the entry foyer elevate the house to another level of quality
as well.

The entry makes a wonderful receiving area during
the couple’s many parties. In fact, the entire house
was designed with entertaining in mind. A two-sided
bar outfitted with dark custom cabinetry, for example,
services both the living area and sitting area off of the
kitchen. And on the lower level, Hickman created a
club-like atmosphere by adding another bar and an
upholstered banquette covered in blue fabric. “The
upholstery plays off of the slick surfaces in the bar,”
Hickman explains. “It introduces some drama and
color into the lower level.”

To accomplish the same in the kitchen, Hickman
opted for tall custom floor cabinets inset into the wall
instead of traditional uppers. A band of matching oak
frames the range, which includes a massive custom
hood with exposed rivets. Understanding that most
lighting pendants would get lost in the large open
space, Hickman instead chose a long handcrafted light
fixture made of mottled-iron mesh—a direct contrast
to the slick quartzite waterfall island. “We needed
a heavy, large horizontal light fixture,” Hickman
explains. “It’s a substantial artisan piece.”

Two years after the wife first saw Hickman’s work
on a kitchen walk, she was happy to participate in
the same event, and Hickman’s design earned rave
reviews. Afterward, the owners hosted nearly 200 of
their besties for a catered bash with a DJ, dancing and
a fully stocked bar. “Every space was being used, so it
felt like we were having three parties at once,” the wife
explains. “It all came together so nicely.”

“SOMETIMES YOU
WANT TO CONTRAST
THE ARCHITECTURE,
AND SOMETIMES YOU
WANT TO PLAY INTO IT.”

—TRACY HICKMAN

Soothing Symmetry from
left: The serene, neutral palette
continues in the master bedroom,
which features a custom nailhead-
trimmed headboard, a desk
from C.A.J. Designs and a custom
nightstand with a glazed linen top
and lamps from Casteel. The
ethereal pendant is handmade
from banana fiber from The Future
Perfect. The bedding is all custom-
made from Cowtan & Tout, Holly
Hunt and Holland & Sherry fabrics;
a custom table from Gregorius
Pinao juxtaposes the curvaceous
open stairway in the formal entry.
The oiled and waxed oak floors
add a textural element for balance.
DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE
Single-family home

LOCATION
Hinsdale

ARCHITECTURE
Michael Abraham Architecture
michael-abraham.com

INTERIORS
Hickman Design Associates
hickmaninteriors.com

KITCHEN DESIGN
O’Brien Harris
obrienharris.com

BUILDER
Tiburon Homes
tiburonhomeinc.com

MILLWORK
Creative Millwork
creativemillworklc.com

RESOURCES
Anees Upholstery
Custom sofa, sectional, chaise, bench, lounge chairs, living room console, counter stools, side chairs, kitchen chairs and banquette all designed by Tracy Hickman
aneesupholstery.com

A. Rudin
Dining room light fixture
arudin.com

BDDW
Living room console
bddw.com

BRADLEY
Coffee table, sitting room tables
bradleyusa.com

David Sutherland
Porter Teleo cushions in foyer, Christian Liaigre living room table and console lamps, and Ochre chandelier
davidsutherlandshowroom.com

Donghia
Living room, foyer and kitchen drapery; bedroom cushions; and powder room wallpaper
donghia.com

Holly Hunt
Dining table; John Hutton side chair; Gregorius Pineo lighting, console and side tables; Great Plains fabric on living room sofa, kitchen banquette and master bedroom
hollyhunt.com

Jean de Merry
Living room pillows, bolsters and powder room pendants
jeandemerry.com

Paul Ferrante
Sitting room light fixture
paulferrante.com
MODERN PASTELS
The living room by the front entrance requires a shapely first impression. The mirror above the mantel is custom by Aaron Bixler and features antiqued glass with rounded brass corners. "It is minimal at first glance, but the attention to detail is truly special," says designer Jenray Holliday. The sconces flanking it were found through Kirby Antiques on Tchoup. 
"Ali always loved this house," says John Lynch of the historical Victorian home originally built in 1885 in Wicker Park that he and his wife, Ali, bought three years ago. Coincidentally, designer Summer Thornton also loved this house after seeing it during an estate sale—"I didn't get anything at the sale, but I couldn't stop thinking about the house. It was horrible but magnificent." In a serendipitous twist of fate, when the Lynches were nearing completion of the gut renovation by Rugo / Raff Ltd. Architects, they discovered Thornton's work online and knew she would be the designer they could trust to finish the job. Being busy with two full-time jobs and two young toddlers, "by the time we picked our heads up and realized we needed to hire a designer, we were just a few months away from moving in," admits John. They needed someone who could work swiftly and push them beyond their comfort zone to achieve the traditional bones with a contemporary interior they were after. "I was just so excited to bring this house back to its former glory. I knew it was such a beautiful wreck when they found it," says Thornton.

Working with designer Jenny Holladay, the duo had a fresh start when it came to choosing furnishings, since the Lynches only had furniture for the basement, which they had brought from John's condo. They started by establishing a color palette
and choosing lighting. “It adds all the charm and character to a room,” explains Thornton. The living room was the starting point and established the ethereal vibe: “It faces north and doesn’t have a whole lot of light, so we wanted to give it a misty tone with pale blues, lilac and a silvery finish,” she says. The same color scheme was used in the family room off the open kitchen but in punched-up tones. As Jenny explains, John was careful to preserve the historical elements of the home; it was apparently originally owned by a ship captain so subtle nods to a nautical theme are referenced in the deeper blues, the chandelier made of rope, the lanterns flanking the banquette and the ship art. Double French doors flow to the outdoor space that features an Old World-inspired indoor-outdoor fireplace.

The kitchen, custom-designed by Rugo / Raff Ltd. Architects, features plenty of storage space in the cabinetry and built-ins on either side—one of which doubles as a china cabinet and wet bar, which gets plenty of use with the couple’s frequent entertaining and hosting family from out of the country. Where they did opt for more drama is in the formal dining room—it provided the opportunity to go bold with color; and the cerulean-blue walls and silvery wallpapered ceiling make for a gorgeous conversation-starter. Ali found the chandelier to which Thornton and Holladay added an oval dining table from Hickory Chair and custom demilune consoles that mirror the symmetry of the windows. “A dining room layout with lots of windows and light isn’t typical in Chicago, but it allowed us to go with such a bold blue,” says Thornton. “It’s my favorite room in the house. I love the color and the mirrors across from the windows that bounce light around and the ceiling that makes it sparkle,” she adds.
The deft mixing of modern and traditional elements is also seen in the moldings added throughout, and in the graphic wallpaper in the entry and upstairs hallway. "A large run of hallway can turn into a dead space, so we wanted something interesting to connect it," explains Thornton. The tone-on-tone reads as a neutral but adds interest, and highlights the tall ceilings and curved walls that make the typically pedestrian space really pretty.

Ali and John both work in finance with incredibly demanding schedules, so a bedroom that felt like a calming retreat at the end of the day was high on their list. Thornton and Holladay opted for shimmery neutrals and minimal furnishings to make it feel like a five-star hotel suite. "I like using wallpaper in a bedroom because it helps with sound insulation, feels cozier and makes it more interesting," says Thornton of the grass cloth that has a slight sheen to bounce light around the room. Leading to a large walk-in closet and en suite that has a tree-filled view of Wicker Park, it is one of Ali's favorite parts of the house. "I wake up at 5am for work, and it's really nice to walk in there and turn on the fireplace and floor heaters. It makes my mornings a little easier," she says.

In fact, the whole house is designed to make their lives smoother, and they couldn't be happier with the transformation. As John explains, "It feels like we restored a work of art in a way, and helped beautify the neighborhood in the process." Anyone that knows the neighborhood would wholeheartedly agree.
DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE
Single-family home

LOCATION
Wicker Park

ARCHITECTURE
Steve Rugo,
Rugo / Raff Ltd. Architects
rugoraff.com

DESIGN
Summer Thornton
and Jenny Holladay,
Summer Thornton Design
summerthorntondesign.com

BUILDER
G. Corp Development
gcorpdevelopment.com

RESOURCES

Circa Lighting
Living room sconces
(by window) and floor lamp
circa-lighting.com

Eli-Wyn Upholstery
Custom upholstery
eliwynd.com

Hickory Chair
Dining room table and chairs
hickorychair.com

Holly Hunt
Wallpaper in powder room, fabric
on throw pillows
hollyhunt.com

Jayson Home
Family room table, chair,
baskets, throw pillows, art and tray
jaysonhome.com

Jonathan Adler
Family room accessories
jonathanadler.com

Made Goods
Living room side table
madegoods.com

Redefined Decor
Living room accessories
redefineddecor.com

Restoration Hardware
Mirrors in dining room, bedding
rh.com

Stark
Hallway runner, living room rug,
master bedroom rug
starkcarpet.com

The Urban Electric Co.
Dining room sconces
urbanelectricco.com

SERENITY NOW
The goal of the master bedroom design was to make
you feel calm as soon as you
walked in. A monochromatic
palette of soothing neutrals was
drawn, along with a grasscloth
wallcovering with a slight
sheen that bounces natural
light around. French辊o table
from the 1960s are painted with
modern pieces like the mirror,
bench and custom headboard.