



Cue the Color

Emotive hues and playful patterns infuse one Dallas home with a couple's vibrant personality.

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Deftly used color takes on a near alchemical quality, the right shade conjuring atmosphere and character from thin air. Dallas couple Muzzy and Karen

Bass have never shied away from this prismatic potential. Having raised their children in a home equally colorful and joyous for more than two decades, they sought to retain that spirit for their empty-nester abode. The one they purchased—a “true grown-up house,” laughs Karen—exudes innate elegance, its limestone façade flanked by towering trees that filter warm light through French-style windows. In turn, the interiors unfold gracefully with marble fireplaces, crown molding and espresso-dark floors boasting herringbone detailing. However, the ambience “was monochromatic,” recalls Karen. “Bringing in color was important to us.” Seeking such a transformation, the couple fell in love with interior designer Mary Beth Wagner’s artful, layered style—and most all, her refined command of color.

True to form, the designer—alongside builder David Espedal and his project manager, Josué Gómez—embraced the white walls. “It was a blank slate,” notes Wagner. “We wanted to liven it up and create rooms that showcase the owners’ personalities.” A recent renovation meant few architectural changes would be needed. Instead, Espedal’s structural alterations focused on smaller spaces, including installing new tile and cabinetry in existing bathrooms and updating bar areas. Meanwhile, Wagner set about employing color to cultivate various moods—from the main bathroom’s ethereal creamy walls and floral shower tile to the powder room’s ornate dragon wallpaper and rosewood vanity. “Because they don’t need to match, I love designing bathrooms as their own little moments,” she explains.

Wagner further fleshed out the interiors with decor and finishes that embrace a nuanced, harmonized palette with meaning for the family. Many key color cues, for example, emerged organically from the couple’s dynamic art collection, “which set the tone,” notes the designer. Subdued backdrops allowed for more vibrant pieces, with select colors extracted from artworks as accent shades. In the family room, for instance, earthy walls surround a Hunt Slonem parrot painting, “and we pulled that blue hue from

the parrot for the soft upholstery,” she explains. A complementary shade also lines the room’s former media closet, which was transformed into a concealed bar, “so opening up the paneling reveals a fun pop of color,” Wagner adds.

Where the interior designer enveloped entire rooms in color, the family’s favorite hues helped cultivate a sense of belonging. This is especially true for the clients’ grown children, as “it was important they feel comfortable here,” notes Karen. With that in mind, Wagner swathed the daughter’s bedroom with whimsical butterfly wallpaper in her favorite shade of green, while their son helped select his bathroom’s blue-and-silver wallcovering. At the same time, Wagner fully indulged Karen’s passion for pink, “which her husband was also quite comfortable with,” assures the designer. But the rosy tones never feel one-note, instead diffusing through various patterns and textures. Examples include the watercolor-like wallpaper, gauzy draperies and porcelain chandelier in Karen’s light-filled home office. Elsewhere, in the dining room, botanical prints on the rug and wallpaper alongside chairs upholstered in a pale-pink leather (with just a hint of sheen) create an idyllic atmosphere.

To complement the formal-leaning architecture, “furnishings are definitely a play on the traditional,” notes Wagner, pointing to selections like the custom oval mahogany dining table and plethora of bespoke upholstered silhouettes with rounded arms, waterfall skirting and tufted details. However, shapes remain a bit more streamlined to balance the multicolored motifs of the surrounding wallcoverings and textiles. Layered together, colors weave through pastel landscape wallpapers, paisley draperies and Oushak rugs. Textured bouclé, corduroy, velvet and cowhide infuse tactile dimension. And, as color is nothing without light, Wagner also favored statement fixtures comprising brass, sculpted metal, crystal and quartz.

Bright and buoyant, the resulting house feels as kinetic as the life bustling through its rooms. Amidst holidays with their children, rowdy games of Rummikub with friends, and champagne dinner parties in the blushing dining room lavished with new dinnerware (all pink, of course), the couple’s next chapter shows no signs of slowing down.

“It’s a sophisticated house, but it lives and feels young,” says Karen. “We really look forward to creating new memories here.” ■



Gracie’s Silver Silhouette wallcovering wraps the dining room, complementing a rug from Interior Resources. Ironies’ Neblina chandelier glimmers above Keith Fritz’s Chatham table and custom chairs covered in Edelman’s Primrose luster leather. A framed Hermès scarf overlooks the space above a Claire Crowe Collection fireplace screen.



Right: The hidden family room bar reveals cabinets in Benjamin Moore's Bainbridge Blue and Aux Abris' Fortune River wallpaper. A counter from Stone Boutique rests beneath shelving by Betzinger Designs. The faucet and pulls are from Pierce Hardware.

Opposite: Hunt Slonem's parrot painting inspired the family room's benches in Kyle Bunting hair-on-hide, grass-cloth coffee table and Christopher Spitzmiller, Inc. lamp. The Urban Electric Co. pendant lights an Elson & Company rug.





Left: Aux Abris' Fragments wallcovering and an Oushak rug from Interior Resources line the entry hall. A LaBarge Églomisé mirror joins the custom bench in Zimmer + Rohde's Ardecora Visione and lamps from Moxie.

Opposite: A Paul Ferrante chandelier illuminates latesta Studio's breakfast area table and chairs from AF Home in Edelman leather. Draperies don a Penny Morrison fabric from James Showroom. Florals are by Laura Grant.





Left: Holland & Sherry's Abiya Shanasheel wallpaper accents a bar area. An antique mirror backsplash, Waterworks faucet, pulls from Pierce Hardware and brass shelving by Betzinger Designs complete the space.

Opposite: The wife's office features Eskayel's Clemente Sol wallcovering. A sofa's Schumacher Gainsborough velvet in Sea Coral and Ochre's Aquarelles oval chandelier continue the rosy hues.





Above: Walls painted Sherwin-Williams' Alabaster, a Toto zero-gravity tub and Artistic Tile flooring conjure a spa-like primary bathroom. Lighting includes The Urban Electric Co.'s Marlborough sconces and Vaughan's Windermere chandelier. The RH mirror hangs behind a Crosswater London faucet from Pierce Hardware.

Opposite: Caitlin McGauley's Butterflies grass-cloth wallpaper from James Showroom graces the daughter's bedroom walls. The headboard wears Castel Panarea fabric, the lumbar pillow dons Schumacher's Khilana Floral pattern and bedding is from Walker Valentine. A custom sofa sports Zak+Fox's Kaze linen.