

46 GREAT THINGS  
TO DO THIS SEASON!

HOLIDAY  
GIFT GUIDE

SCANDAL IN  
THE SUBURBS

Plus  
HOME+  
GARDEN  
SPECIAL

# CHICAGO

BIG CITY. BIG STORIES.

DECEMBER 2014

## CHICAGOANS OF THE YEAR



Little League  
champs Jackie  
Robinson West



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# CHICAGO

COVER  
STORY

DECEMBER 2014

VOLUME 63 NUMBER 12

## CHICAGOANS OF THE YEAR (20th Anniversary!)

**86** Since 1994, this magazine has paid homage to the brave, the altruistic, and the inspirational. This year, *Chicago's* highest honor goes to a decorated Latino activist, a doctor who wants to build a medical ark in central Africa, a literary "genius," a tough-as-nails nun who scares even Rahm, and an amazing team of Little Leaguers.

BY NOAH ISACKSON, ESTHER KANG, JANET POTTER, AND JOEL REESE

### AMERICA'S TEAM

**92** Jackie Robinson West's dramatic run to a Little League U.S. title uplifted a city and captivated a nation. Here's the inside story of how these South Side kids pulled it off. **BY BRYAN SMITH**

### HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

**100** Ranging in price from \$6.75 to \$3,600, these 44 great picks—women's wear, menswear, stuff for kids, and more—were all designed or made right here in Chicagoland.

EDITED BY CARLY BOERS

### HOME + GARDEN SPECIAL!

The winter installment of *Chicago's* quarterly magazine within a magazine (after page 120) includes sneak peeks inside a Trump Tower pied-à-terre and a modern Lincoln Park house.

EDITED BY GINA BAZER

### THE TROUBLE WITH ROBBINS


**108** Inept police, backroom deals, rampant blight—how the historic black town was laid low and why it's so hard to fix.

BY BRYAN SMITH

Jackie Robinson West



PHOTOGRAPH BY TAYLOR CASTLE



The walls in the octagonal dining room are layered with burlap strips installed by artist Anna Wolfson.

# Clean Slate

A Lincoln Park house revamped by a designer who loves starting fresh.

BY KARI RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY BOB COSCARELLI STYLING BY JOHANNA LOWE

**A**my Kartheiser is not one to get overly attached to a house. Along with her husband, a private wealth manager, and their young daughter and son, she has lived in three different ones—plus a high-rise—over the past nine years.

“I get a bug,” says Kartheiser, 45, a designer and principal of Lincoln Park-based Amy Kartheiser Design. “I just get this feeling about every five years that I’m ready to move on to something else.” Her latest project, a gut rehab of an 1880s Queen Anne in Lincoln Park, completed in May 2013, was done in partnership with Sullivan, Goulette & Wilson Architects and home-building



**Above:** Amy Kartheiser worked with Lagomorph Designs to create Shaker-style cabinet doors that could support large hardware. **Left:** To encourage sit-down family meals, she opted out of stools around an island in favor of a large kitchen table. **Far left, top:** Grates in the upper cabinets of the butler’s pantry are from Brass Grills U.K. **Far left, bottom:** The front porch of the 1880s Queen Anne house was once painted purple, green, yellow, and white.



Not a fan of bookshelves flanking a fireplace, Kartheiser created her own millwork design.



An antique lime-green tub, original to the house, got a facelift for this elegant master bathroom.

firm Crescent Rock. Together they brought order to a choppy interior (the 4,300-square-foot house had been used as a two-flat) by reconfiguring all the interior walls. The exterior is mostly unchanged, save for a family room addition in back and a new garage.

You might ask what draws Kartheiser to a process—construction and moving—that many people dread. For one thing, each project is a chance to start fresh and to test new design ideas. “With this house I wanted to let the furniture and artwork speak

for themselves,” says Kartheiser, who finished most of the first-floor rooms in the same neutral wall color from baseboard to ceiling, allowing singular pieces of furniture and artwork to shine.

She typically starts fresh with furniture, too, selling existing



**Top:** Instead of “a humongous master bedroom with a lot of wasted space,” Kartheiser designed a small master suite for herself and her husband. **Bottom:** A calfskin rug gives her son’s room a bit of cowboy fun.

pieces on consignment or passing them along to nieces and nephews who are heading off to live on their own.

For this house, she worked with Chicago-based furniture design firm Aaron Bladon to create many new pieces, including a steel and rift-sawn white oak cocktail table with an opaque gray stain for the living room and a pair of steel-framed mirrors for the master bath. Texture and layering reign throughout the interior, from mohair-wrapped stools in the living room to a striking burlap wall covering installed by Chicago artist Anna Wolfson in the dining room.

Kartheiser’s bag of design tricks is always at the ready. Many unusual items, including a pair of antique brass pendant lights in the entry, were sourced from 1stdibs, an online marketplace for antiques from around the world.

But perhaps what Kartheiser enjoys most about each new dwelling are the serendipitous discoveries and moments when inspiration strikes. One such happy turn of events this time involved a lime-green turn-of-the-century bathtub that had been in a first-floor bathroom. After reglazing it in black and white, it has become a favorite detail in her new master bathroom.

“I think what I like best are the surprises,” Kartheiser says. “They force you to think on your feet.”

These days, the designer says she is feeling comfortable in her new home—perhaps a little too comfortable. It’s obvious to everyone, including herself, that it won’t be long before the moving bug bites again. ●