

CS Interiors

MODERN LUXURY™

THE NEW SPRING SWING!

Chicago's Glam-est Pads

Shhh! Decorator Secret Agents Revealed

Who's Designing What Where



200 W HUBBARD ST CHICAGO IL 60654



SPRING 2008 \$3.95

PLUS: NEO-NAUTICAL CHIC • THE CITY'S COOLEST ART COLONY
MUST-SHOP HOODS • THE NEW MANTRA: MORE IS MORE





Glam-a-zone

At a prewar, post-beige Lake Shore Drive spread, glitz is in the details

By Lisa Cregan | Photography by Tony Soluri

At the start of a massive yearlong renovation, homeowners Laura Kofoid and David Ricci sat down with interior designer Melanie Elston and gave her three directives: 1) No beige. 2) No beige. 3) Oh, and no beige.

What was the impulse behind all the exuberant color in their grand old Lake Shore Drive apartment? Kofoid and Ricci just laugh when they're asked about choosing such bold—some might say shocking—hues. “We like what we like,” shrugs Kofoid. “Color makes us smile.”

“Laura is very dynamic,” says Elston of her fashion-forward client, who, on top of the distractions of home rehab, just launched her own handbag line, *Laudi Vidni* (which, fittingly, is the word *individual* spelled backwards). “She gravitates toward extremes, in a good way. It’s so much fun.”

What feels like an original, rambling, 6,000-square-foot space here is, surprisingly, the recent combination of two apartments: the couple’s own three-bedroom flat (bought in 1994) and the adjacent two-bedroom unit they purchased more recently. The Evanston-

based architects of Morgante Wilson were the self-described “orchestra leaders” in putting the two places together. They carved out a brand-new kitchen, updated the bathrooms and even added a billiards room, but wherever possible, the architects tried to minimize demolition and lost detail. They recycled hardware, salvaged moldings and creatively repurposed most of the newly acquired apartment’s rooms. The neighbor’s former living room, for instance, now serves as a family room for the couple’s two children, Simon, 11, and C.J., 6.

The result is an enticing soufflé—new spaces and new energy, but with a nod to the place’s prewar bones, a look architect Fred Wilson calls “vintage with flair.”

It’s a fitting label—especially the “flair” part. Take the living room, with its sweeping views of Lake Michigan: It’s got a serious 1927 carved-wood fireplace and even a bona fide jazz-age crystal chandelier. But the room itself is splashed with a very modern shade of teal, a preening peacock of a color that the designer used on walls, curtains, throw pillows, even



OPPOSITE PAGE: Curtains in Scalamantré’s Bamboo hang in the home office, with its view of Lake Michigan, while Gior Eden’s Out of Africa rug warms the floor. Lee Industries’ Bongo Stools tuck under an Elston-designed partners’ desk.
LEFT: Designer Melanie Elston of Elston Interiors.



the four swoöpy Dessin Fournir chairs (covered in ravishing Missoni zigzags) that sit at center stage. "Laura and David asked for a living room that feels like a breath of fresh air," says Elston, describing the thought process behind pieces like the breezy blue-velvet banquette with sparkling metallic fringe that sits in one corner. "Wherever we added a traditional element," she continues, "we contrasted it with a contemporary one—like the acrylic tables and the modern ottoman next to that tufted banquette; they add so much modernity."

Next up, a blast of citrus orange for the new paneled family room and bold magenta curtains to frame the vistas of steel-gray lake outside its windows. "I've always loved the combination of orange and eggplant," says Elston of the room's surprisingly homey palette. The room's eggplant-colored shag rug—OK, it's purple—begs for bare feet, and the orange tweed sofa hides a multitude of sins. "It's a sofa meant to be jumped on and spilled on," says Kofoid, "and these huge corduroy Victoria Hagan chairs are like big envelopes for the kids to sink into." One can't help but notice the lovely silk damask backs on those (kid-friendly?) corduroy chairs. "I thought, they make parachutes out of silk—it must be durable, right?" counters the ever-fearless Kofoid.

Stains aren't the only risks being taken here. A formerly somber

LEFT: The foyer makes a dazzling impression with an elegant Zuber mural and a bench by Christian Liaigre. BELOW: Designer Melanie Elston and the architects of Morgante Wilson preserved original moldings while injecting a fresh dose of modern verve into this Lake Shore Drive prewar apartment. OPPOSITE PAGE: The game room's gold walls offset a mid-century amber glass chandelier and 1950s chairs covered in kelly-green leather.









English mahogany library, now sheathed in glossy black lacquer, became a his-and-hers office with a wild new theme: zebra. "God bless my husband!" Kofoid exclaims when asked if he had any say in the wall-to-wall animal-print rug. "Everybody asks how we had the courage to do this! I say, how do you not?"

Elston was delighted to help Kofoid push the envelope, but only so far. Unifying these audacious spaces required a self-assured eye and careful choreography; with her top-flight résumé, Elston (a Nate Berkus alum) was able to provide both. She says she felt strongly that the apartment needed some quiet areas—little breaks here and there from all the saturated color and intense pattern.

To that end, she wrapped the foyer in a Zuber horse-race scene to soften the action. In this cacophony of color, it seems a busy Zuber mural is actually a neutral. Elston points to its repeating low-key shades of gray, black and white, which she says help make

the foyer "a relaxing transition space."

And the designer says the game room (the former neighbor's entry hall), with its vaulted ceiling, gold strié-painted walls and spectacular mid-'70s light fixture, is another spot she considers "breathing room." With gold walls? "Well, Laura and David walk through here every day, so it had to feel calm," says Elston, "but it also had to satisfy their love for drama." Kofoid just laughs. "I love it. It's not taupe—it's gold! I say, rock on!"

That "rock on" attitude might be the understandable reaction to some trying times the family experienced when Ricci was diagnosed with brain tumors. He's now fully recovered and problem-free. (Family shout-out here to Drs. Raizer and Levy at Northwestern Memorial.)

Still, seen in that light, the giddy energy and high spirits Elston created here couldn't feel more perfect. The entire space is the embodiment of Kofoid's heartfelt personal mantra: "If it doesn't move your soul, forget it!" ■

above: Deep-navy-blue walls in an arched back hallway highlight a 1940s wall sconce and Baker Furniture's Tulip Chair. OPPOSITE PAGE: Warm orange walls in the family room are painted Pratt & Lambert's Spicy. Morgante Wilson added rectangular moldings to create intimacy. Elston upholstered Victoria Hagan's Wainscott chairs in Osborne & Little's Pavlovsk silk (on the backs) and Lee Jofa's durable Cord O'Koi (for the insides). Coffee table designed by Michael Smith.

Elston got three directives from her clients:

- 1) No beige.
- 2) No beige.
- 3) Oh, and no beige.