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DIVINE DESIGN SPECIAL





SHANGRI LAKE SHORE *Design nirvana is achieved in a LSD pied-à-terre*

BY GINA BAZER PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM HENEGHAN AND MIKE KASKEL

Twenty-five years in the design business have made Deb Reinhart, owner of North Shore-based Design Odyssey, wise—almost guru-like. “The secret of interior design,” she says, leaning forward intently, “is to help the client find their taste within their architecture. The right juxtaposition of inanimate objects, architecture and the occupant’s personality will support human life. If all are in alignment, the design can be healing.”

It’s no wonder that a prominent Chicago Indian family with a strong sense of history and spirituality would find Reinhart’s sensibilities appealing. They met years ago when she decorated their first home, on South Lake Shore Drive, where they raised their two daughters. Now, as their daughters are getting closer to their college years, they decided to invest in their second home, two combined condo units in a new construction project on North Lake Shore Drive.

“My wife and I both grew up in Bombay,” says the global marketing executive, whose wife is a school teacher. “We lived in highrise apartments filled with light, and we spent about 15 years in the same places, until we went to college. In America, people tend to think of houses as homes, but that’s not how we lived. Even though we were in an apartment, it felt as homey as a house. So, we told Deb we wanted an elegant home, not a place that felt like a condo. And it should be filled with classic furniture that won’t go out of fashion, so we could enjoy it for a long time.” The other direction the couple had for their decorator was that they wanted their home to “have touches of the East—not look like Little India.”

That was two years ago. Since then, Reinhart has overseen every last detail concerning this charge, from the moment the contractor called her and asked her where she wanted her outlets, to just recently when she picked out the linens for the guest bathroom. Everything in the home is of the highest order. Most of the furniture—if not from Holly Hunt or DessinFournir—is custom, reproduced antiques from William Switzer & Associates, known for producing “heirloom quality furniture for the next generation,” says Reinhart. The lighting is the best Reinhart has come across in her entire career, including four crystal chandeliers from France that had to go through Homeland Security and required a nine-page document for clearance. And the attention to the smallest embellishments is extraordinary: No less than 30 trims were considered for CONTINUED...

Keeping in mind her clients’ request for classic furniture that would stand the test of time, Reinhart chose William Switzer & Associates as one of her main vendors for the project. The bed, writing desk and chair are all from Switzer, with the bamboo bed frame and chinoiserie desk providing an Asian feel and the swag chair counterbalancing it.



THE LIGHTING IS THE BEST REINHART HAS COME ACROSS IN HER ENTIRE CAREER, INCLUDING FOUR CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS FROM FRANCE THAT HAD TO GO THROUGH HOMELAND SECURITY



...CONTINUED the tassels on the boudoir chair in the dressing room; only friendly animals were to be etched into the chinoiserie writing desk in the bedroom.

But, it all began with a blank canvas—which, fortunately, the client helped fill in from the start with her instant enthrallment with several styles of Odegard rugs. “She loved the colors, she loved that they were hand-woven in Tibet, she loved the company’s philosophy of not using child labor,” says Reinhart. “She chose eight of them, with different color palettes, and those became the foundation of our scheme in each room. Color was our best friend in this project.”

Indeed, the most striking aspect of this home—and, along with the wide-open floor plan, a major part of what makes it feel like a house, rather than a white box in the sky—is the use of color. The warm, embracing red in the foyer sets a welcoming tone from the first step CONTINUED...



Left: The pimento and gold Odegard rugs and the Clarence House-upholstered klismos chairs by Artistic Frame from Design Atelier anchor the entire 3,700-square-foot home. The black crackle chinoiserie coffee table is from DessinFournik. The Textstyle couches are upholstered in mohair velvet by Gretchen Bellingee. Above: With its red Venetian plaster walls by Penumbra Decorative Finishes, the foyer is a showstopper. The crystal chandelier was imported from France. The bronze bench is from Holly Hunt.



THE ATTENTION TO THE SMALLEST EMBELLISHMENTS IS EXTRAORDINARY. NO LESS THAN THIRTY TRIMS WERE CONSIDERED FOR THE TASSELS ON THE BOUDOIR CHAIR



CONTINUED... inside the front door. Rendering the color even richer is the fact that the walls are Venetian plaster, "which is troweled on one tablespoon at a time, by the hour, in postcard-sized pieces, then burnished, and polished until it glows," explains Reinhart.

In the great room, just 12 yards of fabric unite the palette of the entire condo: a blue, pimento, black and butterscotch tapestry from Clarence House that covers two charming, classic Greek klismos chairs. But, it's not just the colors. One of Reinhart's many design maxims is that the leg—or lack thereof—makes the room. "It can be Louis XVI or Parsons, or it can be hidden under a skirt, but for me, it defines a space," she says. In this case, it's the aforementioned stout, sabre-legged chairs that pop, but—and here comes another Reinhart rule—the look-at-me pieces are limited to just a few scattered throughout the home, including a stunning five-foot wood-carved statue of an angel in the foyer. "If all the elements are screaming at you, it's not a calming environment," she says. "The elements need to support each other." And thus, support the architecture, which supports the family that inhabits the space. Aha. It's all coming together. Reinhart wouldn't have it any other way. ■

Above: A pastoral painting by Winnetka artist Gloria Conan creates another "window" in the dining room. The table and chairs are from William Switzer & Associates. **Left:** The blue-and-clear-glass dressing table and mirror are by Armand Lee. The stool is by Artistic Frame from Design Atelier.