

# Redefining the Bachelor Pad

Interior designer Ron Wolz of Bittners marries modern luxury and a cozy mentality

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A native of Versailles whose family tree has deep roots in Lexington, Philip Sallee has studied, worked, lived, and vacationed in cities around the globe. It wasn't until he decided to add to his post-graduate studies with an Executive MBA at Bellarmine University that he fell in love with Louisville. "It's the best of Versailles and Lexington in one," he said.

Over a year's worth of searching for just the right residence with realtor Eric Seltz of Lenihan Sotheby's International Realty came to an abrupt end with a short showing in which Sallee decided he'd found "the one" even before seeing all of the rooms. "I knew going in the home needed to be completely renovated, but I immediately liked it because, although it is large, it reminded me of a cottage," he said of the stately, three-story stone home on a double corner lot near Cherokee Park in The Highlands.

As fate would have it, Sallee's involvement as a member of the Board of Directors for the Louisville Ballet allowed him to make the acquaintance of another board member, Douglas Riddle, President and COO of Bittners. After discussing plans for his new home, Riddle recommended Sallee consult with Ron Wolz, Vice President of Residential Design at the venerable firm.

Wolz was afforded the rare treat of starting completely from scratch, allowing him to have a hand in selecting everything down to the dishes; neatly arranged in the kitchen cabinets. Over the course of a year, all three floors were meticulously restored with an exacting eye for detail. Period details of the 1920's-era home were retained and state-of-the-art audio, visual, and security features were added. "I really can't say enough good things about Douglas and Ron," Sallee remarked, adding he has already retained the firm to outfit a home he plans to purchase in the Siesta Key, Florida area.



Positioned above the fireplace in the living room is an oil on canvas landscape by Kentucky artist Ellen Glasgow. The Barcelona Chair, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in 1929, is one of several iconic pieces of Mid-Century Modern furniture in the room.





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While his childhood home was resplendent with fine antiques, Sallee pointed Wolz in a different direction for the interior design, calling upon a more minimalist and Mid-century modern-influenced aesthetic derived from his time spent studying in Madrid. He also wanted the home to feel cozy, which is where Wolz was able to call on his considerable experience to remove the stigma that contemporary and cozy can't happily coexist.

A center stair hall divides the den on the right from the living and dining rooms and sun porch on the left. Handsomely refinished hardwood floors throughout sport a ribbon of contrasting inlay around their perimeter. A mixed media by Cincinnati-based artist M. P. Wiggins hangs above a mahogany demilune console shelf from Ralph Lauren that is centered on the wall between the base of the stairs and the entrance to the den. All of the original artwork on the first floor was acquired from B. Deemer Gallery.

Once utilized as a bedroom with stark white walls, the paneled den is now a bibliophile's retreat with floor-to-ceiling shelving chock full of lavish coffee table books encompassing diverse genres. Some 400 tomes are in Sallee's collection, with

all but a few dozen sourced from the Bittners showroom. Intermingling with the books are family photographs that serve as a visual history of Sallee's ancestry. Wolz and Christopher Prather, visual merchandising manager at Bittners, selected a dozen or so images from a box that Sallee's mother had provided them. A pair of armchairs with lipstick-red leather upholstery provides a playful contrast to the charcoal-colored walls. "I love this room because it's so cozy," remarked Wolz, who added that the sofa from Hickory Chair is currently one of his favorites.

Examples from icons in furniture design over the past century – Eames, Goetz, Mies van der Rohe, and Noguchi – share floor space in the living room. A pair of chrome torchiere floor lamps, reminiscent of a Milo Baughman design, flank a contemporary sofa designed by Mark Goetz. The sofa's combination of a molded plywood shell and black leather upholstery hearkens to similar elements on the nearby Eames lounge chair and ottoman, which debuted in 1956. Positioned above the fireplace is an oil on canvas landscape by Kentucky artist Ellen Glasgow. An abstract mixed media piece by Tony Saladino is displayed on the wall opposite the sofa.

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The mosaic tiled floor of the inviting sun porch is original to the home. The wall color here and in the adjacent living room is Edgecomb Gray from Benjamin Moore.

A door to the right of the fireplace leads to a sun porch, which retains its original mosaic tiled floor. Bookcases run along the sides and top of a window that overlooks the front lawn; underneath a cozy L-shaped seat is dressed with an abundance of pillows. This is the room where you're most likely to encounter Sallee, enjoying a glass of wine at the end of the day or a cup of coffee at the start of another.

Able to comfortably accommodate 12, the 'Modern Hollywood' dining table from Ralph Lauren was a special order. Simultaneously classic and contemporary, the Venetian glass "Luna" chandelier from Donghia suspended above the table serves as art and utility. Maintaining the minimalist aesthetic, Wolz added Greek key trim to the cream-colored drapery for a timeless twist.

Fashioned from a vintage bar, a butler's pantry in the hallway leading to the kitchen artfully stores party and entertaining essentials. The same Carrara marble used for the bar top is also found on the Eero Saarinen 'Tulip' table in the eat-in kitchen. Surrounding the table is a trio of side chairs, also by Saarinen.

Wolz worked collaboratively with Bittners' Master Craftsman Brian Keenan on the exquisite custom rosewood bed and side tables in the master bedroom. Interesting grain patterns in the Art Deco-inspired headboard call to mind examples from an inkblot test. Plantation shutters, used in this room and elsewhere on all three floors, help maintain the clutter-free disposition.

Outside, the home's large corner lot affords plenty of space for a lush lawn bordered by perennial flowerbeds. Comfortable furnishings emulate those at one of Sallee's favorite getaways, the Montage Laguna Beach. At night, a total of 75 lights are deliberately arranged to highlight the architecture of the home and grounds.

Having spent his formative years in much more traditional environs, Sallee was certain his mother would be less than enthusiastic about his design choices. Much to his surprise, after surveying the living room soon after the installation, she took a seat in the Barcelona chair next to the fireplace and remarked how comfortable it was. **sl**