

A series of photographs by Michal Rovner served as the inspiration for the design of the living room.

LESS IS MORE

Taking a minimalist approach to interior design for maximum impact

Written by Bridget Williams / Photography by Andrew Kung

The trail of possessions that tends to accumulate ten-fold and follow us as we transition from one phase of life to the next, particularly if there are children in the mix, can quickly end up possessing us if we aren't vigilant about controlling the clutter. I know I'm not the only one who has stared wistfully at a stark, minimalist home, imagining myself living there looking as tailored as the rooms, (until I remember I have three dogs and a child who wouldn't be on board with a lack of comfortable spots in which to sprawl out willy-nilly). Lest one think there is no middle ground, in comes interior designer Ron Wolz of Bittners to the rescue. His latest project, an interior design reboot for a chic empty-nester couple, is minimalist in style yet soulful in spirit thanks to careful consideration of what would transition with the homeowners as they changed their style in addition to their zip code.

Wolz has worked with the couple to varying degrees for more than a decade and was particularly excited to help guide them through their most recent design evolution. "For many of us as we mature, less becomes more, with the emphasis shifting to having a few great pieces versus a house full of mediocre things," he explained.

Significant renovations, entrusted to contractor Keith Morley, touched nearly every square foot of the ranch-style home, which is ideally perched on a bluff overlooking the treetops of Cherokee Park. The kitchen and bathrooms were given a comprehensive makeover, rooms were reconfigured, and walls removed to achieve a unique aesthetic that exhibits influences from the mid-century modern period and beyond.

A hemp grasscloth wallcovering is found on the walls in the den. The Glo Ball-F floor lamp is from Flos.



The overall mood throughout the home is quiet and contemporary, with varying shades of white and grey predominate in the color palette. This neutral backdrop is ideal for displaying art, the acquisition of which was guided by the wife's brother, a noted art collector.

Whenever possible, Wolz chose to repurpose pieces the homeowners already owned, such as an antique chest in the entry, surmounted by an abstract artwork created by Michal Rovner. "The juxtaposition of old and new is always exciting to me," said Wolz. A pair of lounge chairs in the living room were also given new life and new grey textured linen upholstery from Rogers & Goffigon, which helps to highlight their handsome lines.

A series of black-and-white photographs by Michal Rovner march across the wall behind the sofa in the living room and served as the starting point for the room's overall design. Wolz singled out the "smart combination" of the camel-colored velvet upholstery on the sofa with the warmth of charcoal wool accent pillows. The homeowners' existing iconic Barbara Barry chair was updated with geometric upholstery designed by Mary McDonald

for Schumacher. Mid-century influences are found in the cocktail table and a pair of stools with fluffy Mongolian lamb cushions placed in front of the fireplace.

Designed with family in mind, the cozy den provides ample space for comfortable lounging when the homeowners' adult children come calling (and for cuddling with Teddy and Piper, their adorable miniature Goldendoodles). The walls are dressed in a grey hemp wallcovering from Donghia, one of Wolz's go-to favorites for its "beautiful sheen"; a variation can be found in his own dining room. Grounded by a geometric Moroccan rug from Anabel's Oriental Rugs, similar colors are found in the deep custom sectional. Favoring a more curated look, the patterned accent pillows on the sectional are purposefully mismatched and underscore the preoccupation with shape and line in photographs by Aaron Siskind on display in the room. Dark gunmetal accents on a post-industrial accent chair and coffee table are a fitting foil to the abundance of linen upholstery. Diffused light is emitted from the iconic Glo Ball-F floor lamp, designed by Jasper Morrison for Flos, that stands next to one end of the sectional.

A newly added pantry between the kitchen and dining room incorporates a wet bar.



The dining table was custom built in the workshop at Bittners. The artwork is by Julian Schnabel and the chandelier is by Aerin Lauder.



Centered beneath a bubbly Cristol pendant by Aerin Lauder, the handsome round table in the dining room – hand-crafted by the wood artisans at Bittners from reclaimed wood with a contemporary metal base – is a work of art in its own right. The table is surrounded by a set of Klismos chairs from the homeowners' previous residence that were given a facelift with navy velvet upholstery from Nancy Corzine. At the ready for larger gatherings, side chairs from Donghia with velvet linen are placed around the perimeter of the room. Positioned on the wall above a mahogany chest with brass ring pulls is a painting by Julian Schnabel. A muted silk and wool rug from India anchors the room.

"There's still something timeless about a white kitchen," said Wolz, who steered the couple in this direction to help them avoid a potential redo as tastes and times change. The space is completely new, from the cabinetry, appliances and Calcutta oro marble countertops to a clever walk-in pantry and bar created from space that had been a home office.

Also the result of reconfiguring, what had been four bedrooms are now a new master suite, complete with his-and-her closets and bathrooms. Continuing the theme established elsewhere in the home, Wolz chose to layer shades of grey, from the bedding to the marble in the bathrooms.

Interior designer Ron Wolz chose a timeless and classic white palette for the renovated kitchen.





A large island enhances the functionality of the pantry, which displays a hint of the industrial edge found in adjacent rooms.



Teddy and Piper lounge in the master bedroom.



The master suite features separate his and her bathrooms. Hers features a hanging vanity and sink with topped with Calcutta oro marble.

The newly built covered terrace takes advantage of the home's elevated view of the treetops in Cherokee park. The all-weather wicker seating is from Restoration Hardware.



Iconic Woods wallpaper from Cole & Son makes a dramatic statement in the powder room.

Designed to take full advantage of the home's treetop siting above the park, a generous, newly built terrace with vaulted ceiling serves as an al fresco extension of the interior living spaces. Grey all-weather wicker seating from Restoration Hardware's Provence Collection is oriented to take advantage of the wood burning fireplace and television mounted above the rustic hewn beam mantle.

In a home full of superlatives, Wolz relished in heeding the smallest details. Case in point is the powder room, where he chose the instantly recognizable Woods wallpaper from Cole

& Son. Instead of the traditional black and white version most frequently spied in fashionable abodes, he selected a dramatic reinterpretation in which the bare branches of the cloudy white trees bear shimmering golden pears and are superimposed on a background of moody twilight grey. Vintage-style scones flank the mirror, which reflects a pair of surrealist nude photographs by Ruth Bernhard that hang on the opposing wall. "It's always fun doing something unexpected and unrestrained in a small space," he explained. Even in a home where "less is more", a dash of "more is more" can be right at home too. [sl](#)