



“A sea of beige,” is how interior designer Libby Rush of Bittners summed up the décor of a handsome, albeit boring estate-sized home in Prospect before she was brought in by the current owners to imbue it with some personality. Having spent three decades in their Indian Hill home, the desire for a first-floor master prompted the move, and the house they chose is very conducive to family living. Although the canvas may have been bland, Rush did have some interesting architectural elements to work with, including a fretwork railing and balcony, which meshes with the homeowners’ style: classic with a heavy dose of

chinoiserie. “There are a lot of molding, trim and built-ins that help to humanize the scale of the rooms,” said Rush.

Lively wallcovering and a well-staged tableau in the entry introduces the home’s overall mood and color palette throughout. Illuminating the space is a chandelier that belonged to the husband’s mother. Far East, subtly tropical and exotic flourishes—such as the reptilian-patterned upholstery on a pair of painted chairs with gilt accents positioned on either side of an antique commode—prompt a touch of wanderlust. Blue and red hues found in the lively Suzani rug from Anabel’s Oriental Rugs carry over into the adjacent dining room.





Positioned directly to the right of the entry, existing mottled red wallcovering in the dining room was retained from the previous owners. Libby added a new chandelier better proportioned for the space. The antique sideboard was procured from the Bittners' showroom, while the boldly patterned Soumak rug hails from Frances Lee Jasper Oriental Rugs.

Two panels of finely detailed, hand-embroidered silk displayed in a wood frame in the double-height living room were given to the wife's parents from happy customers in Japan; the business relationship continues to this day. Surmounting the fireplace, the panels served as the inspiration for the design of the room, whose walls are painted an ethereal shade of blue.

A continuation of the repeating juxtaposition of old and new, a contemporary artwork with gilded accents in a burnished gold frame hangs above a Hepplewhite demi-lune near the French

doors leading to the pool and pool house. The piece accentuates the living room's chinoiserie elements and balances the more traditional nature of portraits painted by John Michael Carter of the homeowners' children. Thanks to the enviable privacy of the lot, no window treatments are necessitated, allowing the sightline to extend from the front door and out to the terrace and pool.

Amped up colors and a plethora of patterns are found in the combined kitchen and hearth room. "With punchy patters, the room is lively and fresh but still falls within the realm of traditional," explained Rush. Minimal changes were made to the all-white kitchen; walls painted a soft taupe color accentuate the hues of the granite countertops. Supplementing in-ceiling lighting are classic bell jar lanterns suspended above the island. Decorative trim found on the inside edge of the drapery throughout the space is actually a strip cut from a repeating pattern of Nobilis fabric.



Minimal physical changes were made to the all-white kitchen; walls painted a soft taupe color accentuate the hues of the granite countertops.

Commanding the wall behind the sofa in the hearth room is a custom pastel on paper by Tatjana Krizmanic.



Bench seating at the custom glass-topped dining table is covered in a child friendly all-weather fabric.



Mottled red wallpaper in the dining room was one of the few design elements to be carried over from the previous homeowner. The antique sideboard was procured from the Bittners' showroom.



A family friendly sectional is tucked into an alcove near the kitchen.



The homeowners hand-selected the wood used by the craftsman at Bittners to build the bed in the master bedroom, the design of which was influenced by an antique armoire in the space.

The walls transition to a sandy complexion in the hearth room, which serves as an ideal backdrop for the abundance of color elsewhere. A built-in corner armoire to one side of the stacked-stone fireplace was removed and replaced with a window to add symmetry to the space. Nestled in an L-shaped alcove, a navy sectional provides plenty of space for the grandchildren to pile on. Also child-friendly is the all-weather upholstery selected for the bench-style seating at the custom-made glass-topped dining table. Lighthearted ticking stripe upholstery is found on sofa; the blue hue is repeated in the tufted leather of the club chair and ottoman. Commanding the wall behind the sofa is a custom pastel on paper by Zagreb-born artist Tatjana Krizmanic, who is represented locally by B. Deemer Gallery. Known for depicting ordinary life with a distinctly European sensibility, the homeowners met with the Krizmanic, who included elements of the Pendennis Club in the finished large-scale work. “It is a lively reminder of the good

times we’ve had there,” said the wife. Duck decoys displayed on the mantel reflect the husband’s love of hunting.

A high level of customization is also found in the master bedroom. The homeowners hand-selected the wood used by the craftsman at Bittners to build the bed, the design of which was influenced by an antique armoire in the room. “It’s a very personal touch for a very private space,” said Libby.

Ringed by a dense stand of mature trees that can almost make one forget they are in a subdivision, during warmer months, the pool deck is a hub of activity. An outdoor seating area with wood-burning fireplace is covered under the roofline of the pool house; a copper tri-fold fireplace screen embossed with a Viking motif pays homage to the family’s Icelandic heritage. Utilizing equal parts panache, proficiency, polish and personalization, Libby Rush’s finished design for the home, both inside and out, reflects the warmth and sophistication of its occupants. **sl**