



A by-product of the currently tight real estate market means that prospective buyers often must possess X-ray vision that enables them to see past décor decisions of days gone by to the potential of good bones. A perfect case-in-point is the transformation of a spacious but sleepy ranch-style home prominently positioned atop a verdant hillside parcel in East Louisville. The clients, who connected with interior designer Ron Wolz of Bittners via builder Keith Morley of Don Johnson Contractors, are transplants to the Bluegrass from New York City and enlisted Wolz to impart aspects of their Big Apple aesthetic into their Kentucky home.

While the children adjusted to new schools and ample elbow room, their parents got to work, leaving the original footprint

untouched while adding their own joie de vivre via new flooring, wallpaper, steel windows, paint, and fixtures. As the homeowners brought next-to-nothing from their New York apartment with them, Wolz was in the advantageous position of getting to start from scratch, following the couple's direction of "light, bright, and bold." "Almost everything he suggested got an immediate 'yes!' from me," said the wife.

The drama begins in the foyer, where hardwoods replaced the terrazzo-style tile. Accentuating the gentle curve of the rear wall is an ebonized wood veneer wallcovering punctuated by thick "cracks" of hand-applied gold leaf, recalling the art of Japanese wabi-sabi and whose organic lines repeat in the triple-arm chandelier.







Harmonious high-contrast gets top billing in the reworked kitchen with steel-colored lacquered cabinets, crisp white subway tiles, and a white oak island.



The lacquered finish of the walls in the wife's office took six weeks to complete.



Wolz chose unique lighting fixtures throughout, such as the frosted glass linear chandelier suspended above the Italian-made surfboard table in the casual dining area.



The Mick Jagger artwork in the formal living room came from the Bittners showroom.





An abstract collage in shades of green enlivens the primary bedroom, with colors pulled from the print for the drapery and upholstery on the window seat.



In the family's "hangout room" just off the kitchen, a generous slab of richly veined marble surrounds the fireplace and splits sections of white oak paneling.



A pair of black Barcelona chairs in the formal living room speaks to an overarching emphasis on mid-century styling.

A wide doorway beckons guests into the formal living room, a study in contrasts. Painted black, the wall surrounding the hearth highlights a pair of armchairs with lively orange upholstery and a punchy Warhol print depicting Mick Jagger. Procured from the Bittners showroom, the wife spied it reflected in a photograph of a mirror Wolz had sent her. Bridging the transition to the opposite wall, painted ecru, is a graphic black-and-white upholstered sofa. Built-ins on either side of the doorway, updated with white oak and black hardware, along with a pair of black Barcelona chairs, serve as threads in an overarching tapestry of mid-century design.

The graphic touch takes a softer turn in the dining room, with hand-painted wallcovering displaying watercolor-like strokes of pale blue. Providing seating for eight, the timeless lines of the Bittners'-made rosewood dining table, commissioned by the husband, means that if the homeowners' style changes, their table won't have to.

Harmonious high-contrast gets top billing in the reworked kitchen and casual dining area, with steel-colored lacquered cabinets, crisp white subway tiles, and a white oak island. Each room's light fixtures serve as conversation starters, particularly the popsicle-stick-shaped pieces of frosted glass that comprise the linear chandelier suspended above an Italian-made surfboard-style plinth dining table and wishbone chairs in the dining area.

Wolz added smoked glass mirrors to the upper cabinets in an existing wet bar, bridging the space between the kitchen and the family room. In the latter, a generous slab of richly veined marble surrounds

the fireplace and splits sections of white oak paneling. A round plinth table pulled up to an existing window seat updated with blue velvet upholstery is ideal for family game night. A sectional with linen-colored upholstery offers seating without detracting from the etherealness.

The wallcovering Wolz selected for a pair of powder rooms and the primary suite answers the homeowners' call for drama. An abstract collage in shades of green enlivens the primary bedroom, with colors pulled from the print for the drapery and upholstery on the window seat. The spa-like primary bath turns down the volume with a palette limited to shades of white and grey and accentuated with gold hardware and fixtures.

Just as the wife knew she wanted high gloss cabinets in the kitchen, she also opted for the labor-intensive finish in her office, which took six weeks to execute, finishing the day before Christmas Eve. The family had become so accustomed to having the painter in their home that the wife joked about adding a stocking for him on their mantle. The curves of an existing spiral staircase that leads to a sitting loft are echoed in a lacquered Italian-made desk and tub chairs separated by a tulip-style side table.

While the wife remarked that adjusting to some aspects of a slower pace of life in Kentucky has been easier than others, she quickly cites one bucolic bonus. "This city girl has already made friends with the wildlife," she remarked. To underscore her point, she laughed while acknowledging that she knows the food preferences of a finicky raccoon who stops by daily for table scraps. **sl**