



Fine Points

A family-friendly Birmingham home brims with exquisitely subtle details.

Lynne Konstantin | Design Writer
Beth Singer | Photographer

Details, details, details,” says Pamela Singer Nodell, designer and owner of Pamela Singer & Associates in Orchard Lake. “Every single aspect and nuance of this house is so well thought-out” — which resulted in a home that drips with elaborate design elements yet appears to have a simple, almost rustic, always seamless flow.

The home, originally purchased for its rare combination of a large lot and proximity to downtown Birmingham, was gutted by the homeowners, a Jewish family who tapped Ben Heller, residential designer and partner of Morgan-Heller Associates in Pontiac, to bring their family-friendly yet striking vision to life.

“It’s all about good design,” says Heller. “When you’re doing a renovation, it’s about making the space smart while making it seem like it wasn’t renovated. We tried to create good flow and a cohesive feeling throughout the spaces so that each room doesn’t feel like a different house. We do that with the details.” □

Fine Points on page 48

The kitchen’s eating area is anchored by a window-length banquette, which Nodell covered in neutral stripes by Jane Churchill, then had finished in a family-friendly matte lamination. “Adding the banquette allowed us to push the table up to the wall and gave us a lot of extra space, plus storage,” says Heller. “But it’s also really comfortable. We wanted it to be the favorite seat, not the one that no one wants to sit in.” The surrounding chair backs are detailed with star-shaped cutouts. The balanced design surrounding the windows pops with jewel-toned vintage seltzer bottles, which Nodell found in antique shops; and the custom iron chandelier, with light-hearted floral appliques, offers the perfect union of sculpture and airiness.

Do you have a home you’d like to share with the community? Contact Lynne Konstantin at lkonstantin@thejewishnews.com.

Fine Points from page 46



Brimming with contrasting traditional, modern and textural styles yet seamlessly united by impeccable design, the kitchen bursts with subtle personality. During demolition, the team discovered a couple of inches to gain in ceiling height. "We made it a design detail," says Heller, who collaborated with Nodell to create a stepped ceiling with cove molding and lengths of beadboard. Precise recessed lighting prevents the ceiling from "looking like Swiss cheese," says Heller, while creating a well-lit workspace. A walnut-topped butcher-block island is centered between cabinets finished with glassed-in corners by John Morgan at Perspectives Custom Cabinetry in Royal Oak.

The breathtaking, award-winning detail of precise floor-to-ceiling paneling – not a cover-up shoe molding in sight! – throughout the expanse of the foyer and main corridor is broken up by a mirrored niche across from the stairs, "so when you come down the stairs, you can check yourself before you go out," says Nodell. The Beacon Hill bench is covered in a French-inspired fabric studded with brass nailheads. A pair of antique sconces were scooped up at Judy Frankel Antiques Centre of Troy.

Top left: "We broke the kitchen up into vignettes and gave the cooking area its own wall, which really draws you in," says Heller. A series of sunken arches creates a cooking niche that shimmers with a handmade subway-tile backsplash surrounded by a smooth expanse of mitered Calacatta marble and more slabs of the same marble. Barstools, backed with heavily grained but subtly washed wood, and seats, woven with rattan, bring a comfortable, organic quality to the space.

Top center: The butler's pantry, which is the pass-through from the kitchen to the dining room, is dressed up like a little jewel box: A recessed cabinet with leaded glass holds the stemware, an Art Deco-style beaded chandelier is an antique (as are the candelabra and silver tray) picked up by Nodell and crystal knobs stud the cabinetry (which conceals an ice machine and liquor). Iridescent mosaic tiles line the countertop and backsplash, and a single coffered detail in the ceiling echoes the design in the kitchen.

Top right: Nodell designed the powder-room vanity, which she topped with a copper farmhouse bowl sink; the faucet is attached directly to the whitewashed frame of the mirror. A faux bois wallpaper, with a soft, ashen finish, is meant to look like wood paneling. A pair of Italian tole wall sconces are inset with mirrors.