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PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVEN MAYS

Modern Classic

Early-20th-century and modern pieces mix in eclectic harmony

Looking back on his childhood, Michael, the owner of a recently remodeled home in Westchester County, New York, recalls his parents entertaining friends in the living room while he and the guests' kids were relegated to the rec room. In the house he now shares with his wife, Shari, and their three children, however, people of all ages feel comfortable in most every room. "In our circles, everybody has small children," says his wife, Shari, "so when we get together, we all gather together—children, adults, pets."

The couple's decorator, New York City-based Irwin Weiner, kept this dynamic and their personalities in mind when choosing furnishings and finishes for the house. "That meant furnishings that were youthful and had a sense of whimsy without being too hah-hah; that were classic and not easily dated; and that would be practical, since the couple has children and everyone they know has children," he says. Shari agreed with Weiner's vision, and today every room is "on limits" to family and guests.

Designer Irwin Weiner had the new sofa in the living room covered in a silk, large-scale plaid that echoes but does not copy the plaid drapery fabric. An Art Deco armchair from Paris is "perfectly scaled for an average-size woman," says Shari.





A reproduction Chippendale wing chair in the living room exemplifies a mix of whimsy and the classical. A carved, Louis XVI-style mantel surrounds the black-and-gold marble fireplace. SEE BUYING GUIDE FOR DETAILS.



TOP: A part of the living room is defined by a pair of American 1940s-style love seats and Chinese lacquer nesting tables. To stay within the budget, Weiner relied on painting techniques to evoke wall-panel molding.

ABOVE: In the great room, bamboo shades foster a casual feel. The custom-made mahogany armoire serves double duty as a TV cabinet/display unit.



When they moved to the suburbs, Shari and Michael brought just a few things from their New York City apartment, including a contemporary Dakota Jackson mirror that now hangs in their dining room and an enormous wall unit Shari calls “beyond contemporary and hyper high tech. We knew after a few days with it in this house that it had to go,” Shari says.

Indeed, according to Weiner, the couple’s taste had become more traditional over the years. So while the home was undergoing reconstruction, Weiner and Shari went on a search for Art Deco-inspired pieces, as well as those that reflected “1940s Hollywood glamour,” says Weiner. “Pieces of that era and good reproductions are inherently elegant and much in fashion.” Some pieces in the house, including period Art Deco chairs and Louis XVI-style coffee table in the living room, painted a gilt and antique white, were





LEFT: An imposing writing table/desk with hinged leaves—one of many Parisian flea-market purchases—sets the tone in the library. Also found among the bric-a-brac of the Saint-Ouen Clignancourt stalls were colorful Venetian-glass ink wells, dating from the mid-19th century.

ABOVE: Weiner decided that for the relatively small formal dining room, it was best to keep the floor bare as a way to make the space seem larger; an inlaid border adds visual interest. To ensure that the acoustics remain subdued, however, he covered walls in a rich brown velvet found in Paris; the two head chairs are trimmed in the same material.

purchased at the rambling Saint-Ouen Clignancourt flea market in Paris. Although a trip to Paris to purchase furniture pieces might seem extravagant, at the time it served as a way to find distinctive goods for less than they would have paid in the U.S. “I was able to buy things there I couldn’t touch price-wise here,” says Shari.

Weiner defined the formal living room with a mix of pieces that reflect Shari’s taste for the eclectic but also work as a cohesive ensemble. Elements include a new Aubusson-weave carpet, a sofa covered in a silk plaid and a pair of love seats that form a cozy conversational area. Shari admits that the rather formal living room is used only occasionally as a quiet retreat, and that she spends most of the time with her family and guests in the great room. There, the focal point is a mahogany armoire that doubles as a TV cabinet and glass-fronted display unit. A sense of the casual in the room is reinforced by a whimsical though elegant oval ottoman—covered with a patterned cut-velvet fabric and around which are often parked the toys of 9-year-old Harrison, 5-year-old Paige and 2-year-old Laine.

The library is another oasis of quiet—particularly by the red-brick fireplace,



BELOW: In addition to wall-mounted reading lamps, the master bedroom is lit with a delicate French Art Deco glass chandelier whose peach tones echo those on the walls. Other Parisian purchases: a Regency-style bench and dresser. SEE BUYING GUIDE FOR DETAILS

enormous, cushiony chaise longue, covered with a traditional brocade evocative of the 1940s, in which Shari reads to them nightly. The king-size bed features poles painted with a leaf motif that's echoed elsewhere in the house, notably on the living room rug. Among the most intriguing decorative elements in the bedroom, though, is the ceiling. Weiner points out that while its

sloping tray shape is actual, the molding around its corner boxes and central oval is not. "They're painted elements," he says. "And all the wall and ceiling surfaces were glazed for depth and immediacy."

"As a stay-at-home mom," says Shari, "I look at these interiors everyday, all day. But thanks to the effort we've all put into them, they always seem fresh and new." ■

original to the house. Weiner re-covered a reading chair in a vibrant red felt that also appears on drapery trim. He also introduced texture by installing 22-inch squares of a blended-silk-and-sea-grass fabric on the walls, edging them with piping and arranging them in a checkerboard pattern.

Although the family eats many meals in the kitchen, the dining room is hardly reserved for special functions. "We do eat in

there a lot," says Shari, "but that doesn't mean that I didn't want it to have a formal feel." The room is filled with Georgian- and Regency-style elements, including the dining table, six chairs and two matching head chairs. Hanging above is an uncharacteristically simple Venetian chandelier, which, Weiner says, "has a contemporary edge."

In the master bedroom, Michael and Shari's children have a favorite spot—an

ABOVE: In the master bedroom, a television set is concealed within an armoire based on a Dutch *kussen kas*—a piece of furniture traditionally used for pillows and bedding.

