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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

PLUS
**A TOUCH OF TUSCANY
IN LAKE FOREST**



BY MONICA GINSBURG

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Grouped seating in a neutral palette, Chinese garden stools, shoji-inspired screens, bluestone pavers, and a sleekly modern fire pit make the side yard a serene space.

Designer Matt Lorenz
creates an elegant, family-friendly
home in Lake View.

URBAN OASIS

The homeowners bought the pastel drawing that hangs over the front stairway on a trip to Paris after watching the artist work on it outside the Musée d'Orsay. "Everything in the house has a history, especially the artwork," says the wife. The marble-topped Deco-style table is by William Switzer. **OPPOSITE** In the living room, a crisply geometric fireplace is finished in black marble; a Richard Ehrlich photograph hangs over it.



HOW

ow do you turn a standard-issue builder house into a chic space suitable for both entertaining and family living? That was the challenge for a Chicago couple who bought a spec home on an oversize lot in Lake View, six blocks east of the house they'd been living in with their three children. Working with interior designer Matt Lorenz, they focused on creating what Lorenz calls "livable beauty," selecting fabrics and furnishings that combine a luxe look with an ability to withstand wear and tear.

"A lot of thought was put into the materials," says Lorenz. "Cowhides on floors in the family room and kitchen, for example, are a great look and will last for 30 years. Mohair [on the leather-trimmed sofa in the family room] is one of the most durable fabrics and also one of the most elegant. It's functional for their sophisticated lifestyle but also for a family home."

The centerpiece of the living room, a Mattaliano tête-à-tête sofa, is covered in a synthetic fabric that looks like linen but is sturdier and less likely to wrinkle. A Watson Smith rug was chosen for its pattern and dark color, both good for hiding stains. Luxurious lilac silk pillows pair nicely with unfussy glazed-linen draperies.

Two embossed leather chairs with brass hardware, bought at auction in the 1980s, were refinished with black



lacquer. "We loved them and wanted to keep them so we updated them," the wife says. An Art Deco sideboard and clock were purchased on a recent trip to New York.

"It looks like an elegant room but it's completely livable," says the wife, whose children are 9, 11, and 13 years old. "Nothing is off-limits."

In the dining room, hand-painted and embroidered silk wallcovering in a cherry blossom pattern, decidedly not kid-friendly, was hung above the wainscoting to avoid dings and fingerprints from small hands. "I wanted a fancier wallcovering in there, so we were careful where we put it," the wife says.

Michael Berman leather chairs are detailed with horse-hair insets on their backs, adding subtle texture. In front of each window, consoles made of bronze and cast glass hold adjustable easels that make it easy to rotate artwork. A glittering chandelier adds a touch of glam, while pale linen Roman shades tone down the formality of the room.

Throughout the house, Lorenz went with a palette of light gray and cream for a unifying—and calming—effect. "Interesting textures and simple design make the rooms timeless and inviting," he says. "The home is evolving; it's never really done. There are lots of places for things to go and they'll keep adding to it. They're a young family and that's how it should be."

Resources: See Buy Guide, page 96.





"The living room can be intimate when it needs to be, like when I'm listening to my kids play piano, or it can be filled during a party," says the wife, who frequently entertains in a big way. A custom-made two-sided sofa anchors the room. The 1928 Steinway grand piano has its original ivory keys.

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DETAILS

1. In the master bedroom, luxurious Holly Hunt silk drapes (which hide windows behind the bed) create a cocooning effect. A day bed by ML Design Studio provides a cozy place to lounge. The ceramic elephant table was purchased in Hong Kong by the wife's parents. **2.** The round walnut table echoes the shape of a softly illuminated cutout in the ceiling. "I always envisioned a dining room with a grand chandelier with lots of sparkly crystals," says the wife. **3.** In the kitchen, limestone tile was laid in a basket-weave pattern for a backsplash over the Wolf range. Countertops are granite; the oak floor was finished with a custom stain. The kitchen and adjoining family room have open floor plans. "Everyone can do what they want and we can still be together," the wife says. "It's where we spend most of our time." **4.** There is seating for 30 on the garage-top deck, where the homeowners entertain friends and host fundraising events. **5.** The David Sutherland teak-topped bench in front of the house is a perfect place to wait for the school bus.



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