



Classic Hollywood

INTERIOR DESIGN: JOAN BEHNKE
TEXT: ABIGAIL STONE
PHOTOGRAPHY: KAPYN MILLET



We started with a plain white box. It was white, white, white and more sconces than you can imagine," laughs interior designer Joan Behnke, remembering her first impression of the Mediterranean-style home in Beverly Hills. There were enormous crystal chandeliers. The curved staircase sported a shiny silver railing. But, under her tutelage, the home morphed from gaudy to gracious. (The staircase's crystal behemoth would soon be swapped for a delicate waterfall of Atelier Alain Ellouz's alabaster Sumatra cylinder lights, its railing dulled down to a deep bronze.) "A big part of our job was paring it down, adding color and giving it a sense of quality," Behnke says. "

They'd had these incredible experiences in these spectacular places," says Behnke of the clients, Robert Greenblatt, the former chairman of Warner Media Entertainment and of NBC Entertainment, and, currently, an executive producer on HBO's "The Gilded Age," and his husband, real estate agent Stephen Loguidice. "That set a high bar for us, and we tried to surpass it." Behnke and Jen Mazziotta, the senior designer on the project, began by layering in elegant wall treatments. "It was a bit of learning curve for them," Mazziotta notes. Adds Behnke, "You understand your clients' comfort zone, but then you push them, so it's not what they've always known." Apprehension quickly gave way to enthusiasm. "They understood that the finishes gave a richness to the rooms that would have been lacking if we hadn't done that," Mazziotta says.

Greenblatt and Loguidice turned out to be quick studies. They found the Pelle Designs chandeliers in the dining room, the Aux Aubris wallpaper in the primary bedroom and the watercolor Holly Hunt design in the downstairs powder room. Once Behnke explained how jewel tone rooms come alive at night, they agreed that the bar would be enhanced by a rich French blue lacquer: Greenblatt had his piano similarly refinished. "So there's an example of pushing their sensibility where they not only end up embracing something, they bring ideas to the table," says Behnke, who's well-known for encouraging clients to participate in the process of creating their home. "After all, the home is the story of their life, not ours."

The couple's collections—the posters showcasing Broadway hits and classic films from Hollywood's Golden Age, their assemblage of Tiffany lamps, and the movie and television memorabilia Greenblatt had acquired over the years—dictated the design and established the subtle hint of Art Deco that threads through these rooms. "There's a real sense of history there," says Behnke. Seamlessly integrated into the decor—an enlarged film still that captures the first recording of MGM's Leo the Lion's roar; a well-known portrait from the set of *Will & Grace* that the producers had gifted Greenblatt as a thank you for championing the series reboot; an old telephone plucked from *Auntie Mame*—they give the home soul.







Subtle repeats in color and shape reverberate from room to room. The same Alex Allen Studio chandelier is used in both the living room and the family room. The bar's French blue pops up on a vase near the living room's fireplace and slithers through Toyine Sellers fabric used for that room's throw pillows and the Holland & Sherry fabric used on the bespoke lounge chairs in the family room, and spreads over the dining room's head chairs, its guest chair pillows and its sideboard. That cabinet's starburst design converses with those found on the vanities in the primary bathrooms, while the weave of the Lance Woven Leather paneling on the bar's facade is mirrored on the family room's ottoman, using a leather found at Holland & Sherry. Branches, both barren and flowing, abound: Pelle Design's Pris Horizon fixture in the kitchen, a Lindsey Adelman fixture in the breakfast room, a Bocci design in a guest room. Circles roll throughout the house: on the leather-hung alabaster Atelier Alain Ellouz lights that illuminate the front entry hall, the trio of cascading Hervé Van der Straeten lights in the primary bedroom and those Alex Allen Studio Chord fixtures. One terrace's configuration, with Holly Hunt Scarab lounge chairs and Salamander sectional covered in a rich Kerry Joyce textile, references the living room and family room layouts. This symphony of echoes settles a sense of intimacy over the house that makes its spaces seem welcoming rather than cavernous.

The handcrafted furniture and lighting that Behnke and Mazziotta chose contribute to the home's allure and warmth. Witness that dining room sideboard, fabricated by French artisans from Jallu Ébenistes, utilizing a centuries-old technique wherein individually applied pieces of straw mimic the effect of wood marquetry, or the Bob Lorimer lighting in the bar. The Irish artist manipulates bronze to create a honeycomb-inspired design that refracts light around the room. "These things and the incredible craftspeople make for great stories, but, even more importantly, they offer an understanding of workmanship that we love to preserve and share with clients," says Behnke. "That attention to detail and beauty and history is very reflective of who they are as individuals and as a couple," adds Mazziotta. "We guided them, but it's their space and their home." ■
Joan Behnke & Associates, joanbehnke.com



