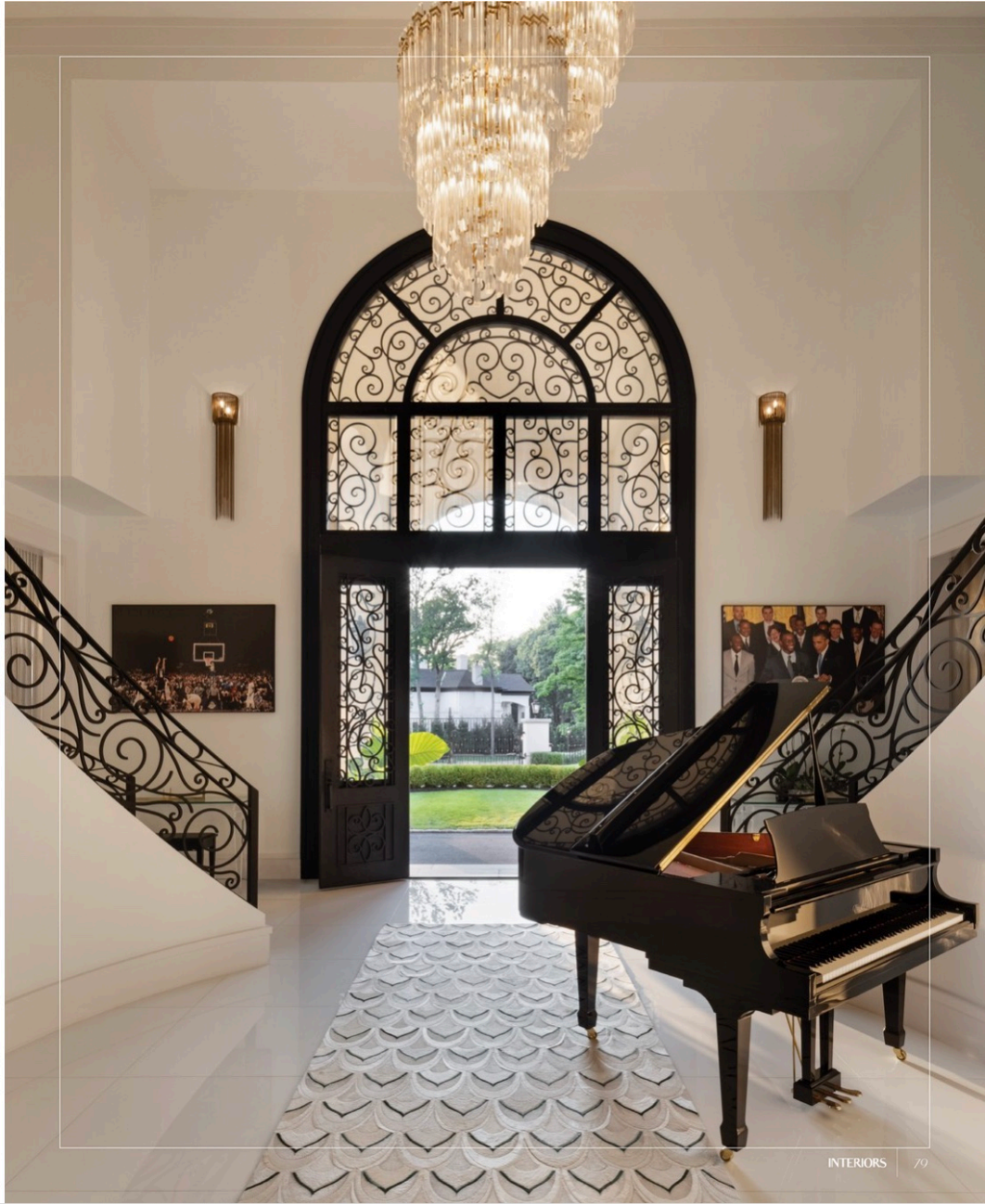




FIT FOR A KING

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For a decade, starting with the condo in North Carolina he'd purchased when he was drafted by the Charlotte Bobcats, four-time NBA All Star Kemba Walker had relied on Devin Taylor to design the interiors of his homes. So when he discovered a palatial home by developer Cindy Stumpo in Boston's Brookline neighborhood, the basketball star turned to Taylor once again.

"It's really tricky there because everything tends to be very New England, very traditional and small," says Taylor. "Cindy Stumpo does a really great job of mixing beautiful, grand limestone exteriors with airy interiors, so they feel more modern." Given the home's size—11,000 square feet—making it feel inviting was important. "Also, because so much of the downstairs is open plan, we had to work to make it cohesive," she says. Taking her cue from Walker's fashion sense, which offsets polished European tailoring with playful accessories, Taylor relied on furniture with strong lines and a controlled palette of black, white and gray as the foundation for her design.

Certain details were inspired by hotel amenities, a touchstone for an athlete who spends a good deal of time on the road. "I think about what he might have in his room, and what he's gotten used to and how things work," Taylor says. In the bedroom, she tucked a refrigerator into a cabinet in the room's seating area to hold snacks and beverages. Throughout the house, automatic shades can shroud rooms in complete darkness when rest is on the agenda. Durability is also a consideration. "He's a young bachelor who loves to entertain," Taylor says. "Everything needs to be accessible so that if we have to replace something, it's not a big deal." That means hardy rugs, high-performance fabrics and foregoing custom pieces in favor of those readily available through showrooms and high-end retail outlets. In the great room, that criteria is met by Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams' Franco sectional. "He was hooked on the idea of a bed sofa," Taylor says. "He can push them all together or separate them depending on what he needs." Teal accents, including occasional tables from Arteriors, offer a rambunctious blast of color.







In the dining room, Bernhardt's Decorage dining table expands to welcome a crowd, and is complemented by a sideboard from the same collection, and the brand's Gustav metal side chairs. The formal living room's sofa and chairs—sourced from Stumpo's CS Signature Collection for Lazzoni and perfectly scaled to host Walker's lanky teammates—and the acrylic Patrice counter stools by Interlude Home that cluster around the kitchen's capacious island highlight the subtle Art Deco influence that runs through Taylor's work, a byproduct of her Los Angeles upbringing. "I definitely have that vibe in me," she acknowledges.

Against this crisp backdrop, Taylor deftly layers in elements that speak to Walker's passions. "His home is an opportunity to enjoy and share the things that he loves," she notes. There is the sprawling closet, meticulously outfitted to accommodate the considerable collection of clothes, hats and accessories that keeps Walker on the media's list of best dressed basketball players. His burgeoning interest in art is apparent in the portraits of Bob Marley and Michael Jordan he commissioned from John L. Hill, an artist Taylor discovered through Instagram. Highlights from Walker's career are woven throughout the home: the ornaments in the custom 500-gallon aquarium in the bedroom pay homage to both his Bronx upbringing and his alma mater, Rice High School; another acrylic, also by Hill, captures Walker as a high school athlete; his high school jersey has been memorialized in a frame. The custom Kelly green and white hide that spans the entire length of the front hallway owes its color scheme to Walker's time playing for the Boston Celtics; the prints that line the upstairs hallway document his family's first visit to Africa during his time playing for USA Basketball.

The photos that flank the front door capture Walker's game-winning shot for UConn that clinched their 2011 NCAA Men's Basketball Championship and his subsequent visit to The White House; that trophy, alongside other memorabilia, are displayed in the tall cabinets in the great room; and, tucked into the space between the double staircases, is the glossy Steinway baby grand on which he practices—and shares his newfound enthusiasm for the piano, lit by a trio of Circa Lighting's Adele three-tier waterfall chandeliers overhead. "You do things that make sense for the house and how someone lives, and then you do things that are just pure desire," says Taylor. "It's when you have that perfect intersection—of a want, the means to do it and the creative people willing to pull it off—well, that's really the sweet spot, isn't it?" ■ Devin Taylor Designs, devintaylor.com

