

DIVINE DETAILS
From left: The spacious kitchen was designed by Highgate Builders; the art hanging in the dining room is by Bob Sosin.



ROOM TO MOVE

A REDESIGNED GLENCOE HOME GIVES
A FAMILY ROOTS AND SPACE.

By Katie Anne Orr
Photography by Evan Thomas and Werner Straube

When Morgante Wilson Architects tackled the redesign of a young family's Glencoe home, it was all about alleviating transitions—in more ways than one. After living in four homes in seven years while shifting around the country for work, the husband and wife homeowners were looking for the perfect “urban suburb” roots for their three kids—somewhere they could walk to the pool and library, but still be near the vibe and din of the city. Finally, in 2008, they found their permanent home in the North Shore.

The original build was beautiful, but perplexing in terms of spatial design. “It needed to be articulated in both scale and proportion; there were lots of open, vacuous spaces,” says Elissa Morgante, principal at the design firm. “With tall ceilings and way too much circulation, it never felt like you were in a room. It always felt like you were circulating through a room.” Representing one of the more unique aspects of the project, Morgante abstained from opening up the home, but rather created walls to close up hallways and flow-through routes, which provided stronger proportions in the rooms. In doing so, she paradoxically allowed for more use of the space. “The house was so open, but not in a contemporary way—it was very traditional,” says Morgante. “Because there were so many entrances and exits out of every room, it made it very difficult to add furnishings. The homeowners had lived there four years and had never figured out how to furnish it properly.”

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“When I walk past the music room, I love the purples and blues that I see from the side of my eye,” says the wife.



Morgante and her team—including K. Tyler, associate principal for interior design, and Diana Ortiz, project manager—set to work on redressing the entire home from the ground up. The goal: to reorganize the space, create better circulation and create a homey feeling through furnishings. First laying the groundwork, they added electrical elements, reworked cabinetry, installed lighting and walls, and moved the butler’s pantry to accommodate a home office adjacent to the kitchen, where clutter could be tucked away behind closed doors. Once the technical elements were in place, the team focused on creating a simultaneously soothing and eye-catching palette for the home.

“Previously, it had very nice finishes and trim,

but it lacked personality,” says Morgante, who didn’t shy away from using dynamic patterns and accessories to make bold statements and complement the elegant furnishings. The team softened hard surfaces with fabrics and carpet runners. Where portions of the home were bland or without character, the team layered in colors and textures. In the living room, they matched a muted-hue, ornate but contemporary rug by Concept International with a custom-designed plush sofa, decked out in chocolate chenille by Kravet.

The music room, on the other hand, was peppered with vibrant highlights: Schumacher’s custom round wool trellis rug, Kisabeth’s raspberry velvet lounge chairs sitting beside Kravet’s medallion damask wingback chairs, and Diane Schroeder’s signature



colorful artwork. The office exhibits the stunning essence of a Southern gentleman's wooden lounge with a bold, modern twist—largely attributable to the fretwork pattern wool and viscose rug by Delos Rugs. Morgante's fondness for juxtaposed work shines through, with midcentury-modern furnishings alongside bright, fun designs.

Lamps and light fixtures by Arteriors, Sonneman and Robert Abbey twinkle throughout the residence, incorporating glass, nickel and silk into their motifs. Antique mirrors by Notre Monde and Bradley Hughes reflect the hues painted throughout the space: purples, blues, browns and creams—timeless and inviting. All of the art was Chicago crafted, and sourced through Daniel Kinkade art consulting. Bob Sosin's blurry photography softens the look of the formal dining room, where a few key pieces were custom-made for entertaining: A 10-foot concrete-and-mahogany dining table facilitates Thanksgiving dinner, but resists the spills and scrapes of a big family, and a 17-foot-long, wall-hung walnut buffet

behind it accommodates both serving dishes on top and storage below.

The upper hall offered the perfect opportunity to exercise some creativity. Previously, only two small lighting sconces dotted the large wall, which posed the perfect canvas for an artistic statement. Morgante built a purple-gray bench of polished cotton and complemented it with a bright piece of oversize art by Lynn Basa. Both sit beneath a suspended armillary chandelier by Ironware International, a snazzy orb of metal and candles.

Morgante found perfect pieces for making the house a home—and the homeowners finally found their permanent haven. "I'm a lawyer by profession, not a decorator or artist, so the home didn't have much depth previously," says the wife. "The decorating wasn't rich. But now it flows so much better. On a daily basis, when I walk past the music room, I love the purples and blues that I see from the side of my eye. I love the way the light shines in." morgantewilson.com ■

DESIGNING WOMEN
From left: A grand foyer is balanced with striking pieces; Elissa Morgante and K. Tyler are two of three members of the design team that reconfigured and decorated the house. Opposite page: Armchairs soften a sunny place just off the kitchen.