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Personal Space

Faraway lands and a love of color inspire this bold town house that perfectly suits its adventurous owners. BY LISA H. SPEIDEL



Consider them words *not* to live by: “My aunt used have a saying, ‘say nothing, wear beige,’ ” recalls the homeowner. “She meant, do the opposite.” The homeowner took that spirit to heart—in life, and in her new house: be bold, embrace color, send a message.

It was 2016, she was recently married, and had just bought a five-story 1880s town house in Boston’s South End. With architect and designer Michele Kolb leading the way, they set out to transform a beautiful—albeit beige—interior into one that reflects the couple’s travels, the wife’s love of color

Among the many knockout pieces that designer Michele Kolb chose for the living room are the gray/blue suede Exhibition daybed from Modern Classics, which was inspired by Mies van der Rohe’s popular Barcelona couch, and the Stilnovo Bovet chandelier, a sculptural fixture with adjustable bronze arms.



and art, and her seize-the-day attitude. “I once traded a water bottle for a gourd in Tanzania,” jokes the homeowner, explaining her often-arbitrary way of acquiring the cool objects and art that dot her home. “I’m so eclectic and random, and Michele creates order out of it.” Kolb relishes the challenge, and the result: “It’s simultaneously cohesive and eclectic,” she says. “There’s a nice dichotomy going on.”



LEFT: Colorful textiles in vibrant patterns from Material Culture in Philadelphia accentuate the Moroccan theme in the library; the comfy Mongolian sheep Snoopy lounge chair is from Eleanor Rigby Home. **ABOVE:** A reinterpretation of the iconic Egg chair in orange brocade is the star of a reading nook in the kitchen; the multicolored blown-glass fixture above is from the owner’s collection.

Take the library, for instance. Armed with research from a derailed trip to Morocco and a pair of vertical wall hangings, the homeowner had a theme in mind. Kolb took it and ran: Delia roller shades in the Moorish Arch pattern, colorful pillows and textiles in authentic Middle Eastern fabrics, a faux-painted turquoise ceiling, and gold ottomans.

In contrast, the inspiration behind the dining room was decidedly local: a painting by Dedham, Massachusetts, artist Percy Fortini-Wright, coupled with the owner’s love of turquoise, acted as the springboard. Kolb answered with floor-to-ceiling sheers that accentuate the room’s height and an over-dyed

"I love turquoise," says the owner of the inspiration for the dining room's palette. To balance the bold hue, Kolb selected a neutral velvet fabric for the curved banquette, and the custom-made chairs have backs fabricated from a hand-script upholstery by Design Legacy. The bronze Sputnik chandelier adds a dose of glamour.



In the husband's "man cave," Kolb achieved a rugged vibe by incorporating various materials and textures, from the authentic barnboard wall and the cowhide ottomans to the leather sectional and Mongolian sheep chair. The side table is a repurposed Japanese sake keg, and the horn wall sconces are from Arteriors.



oriental rug to ground the space. Intent on celebrating the existing architecture, she searched near and far for a curved banquette to fit the bay window. (In the living room, Edition Modern's curved Polar sofa, inspired by French modernist Jean Royere, does the same.)

Kolb's deft hand is also seen in the husband's "man cave." She sourced a custom whipstitch bison-leather sectional from Eleanor Rigby Home and paired it with a mohair-cushion-covered industrial cart to rest tired feet. On the barnboard wall hangs memorabilia—a framed piece of debris from a fire, a letter from a man rescued after a fall—honoring the

ON THE BARNBOARD WALL HANGS MEMORABILIA HONORING THE HUSBAND'S DAYS AS A MARINE AND NOW A FIREFIGHTER.

husband's days as a Marine and now a firefighter. There are also cheeky pieces, like the classic image of Jack Nicholson blowing smoke rings. It speaks to the nice dichotomy Kolb referenced. Here, at this home, there's always a place for the personal—so long as it's not beige.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

**INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE
AND DESIGN:**
Michele Kolb, Kolb
Architects