

NEW YORK

LUXE.

interiors + design®



GOLD LIST

DESIGN 2019

\$ 9.95 A SANDOW PUBLICATION | LUXE SOURCE®

02 >



0 71486 03366 0

JAN/FEB 2019 | DISPLAY UNTIL 03/04/19

HITTING HOME

A 19TH-CENTURY VICTORIAN HOUSE IN NEW JERSEY IS UPDATED TO SUIT A COUPLE THAT HAD LONG ADMIRED IT FROM AFAR.

WRITTEN BY BLAKE MILLER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURA MOSS



Designer Uma Stewart took advantage of her clients' rectangular living room by creating various seating arrangements that encourage conversation. A distressed Bernhardt leather bench with channel tufting and a sleek metal frame serves as a segue between the white Caracole sofa covered in a Giant Textiles fabric and two matching ottomans by Kathy Kuo Home.

Sam and Jenny Khichi weren't looking to move. The couple, who lived in Westfield, New Jersey, were happy with their current home. But when a circa-1870 Victorian stunner they'd been eyeing for the past several years went on the market, they knew they had to take a peek inside. "We've always loved the architecture," says Sam. It took one visit to the property before the Khichis made an offer.

Though the couple was smitten with the home's original bones and architectural details, its finishes and palette were dated and dark. "One of the reasons we fell in love with the house was that it has a great energy," explains Sam. "There's a vibrancy to it, like it was an old soul, and we wanted to keep that feeling but update it." To help them achieve a look that combined their love of color, pattern and texture influenced by Sam's Indian culture, the Khichis enlisted the help of designer Uma Stewart. "They really wanted to marry the old with the new but put a personal touch on it," she says. "It was about respecting the character and the Old World charm of the home while instilling a more modern feel to the design."

With that in mind, Stewart went to work pulling together fresh textures and furniture with traditional elements to complement the existing architectural details. She began in the entryway; the long corridor, which runs from the front door to the back of the home, was in need of a complete face-lift. "It was pretty uninspiring," she recalls. "In a hallway that dark, neutral walls can make a space feel dingy." To help brighten it and add interest, she used a linear series of dramatic light fixtures with glass detailing reminiscent of Indian design elements. "I really wanted to set the stage with the lighting and focus on that before addressing the walls," she says. "The light fixtures are the centerpiece."







Above: An all-white living room served as a blank canvas for Stewart, who layered in colorful artwork by Montclair, New Jersey-based artist Ariana Hoffman to complement the tufted gray velvet Baker tuxedo sofa from Schwartz Design Showroom. An antique brass floor lamp from Visual Comfort and a hand-knotted wool-and-silk rug from S&H Rugs complete the look.

Opposite: Homeowners Jennifer and Sam Khichi wanted to subtly incorporate Sam's Indian background into the interior design, so Stewart sourced fabrics from India and used them as throw pillows and as a blanket in the living room. A glass-plate Mr. Brown chandelier and a Thayer Coggin burl wood coffee table with a brass metal frame add a dose of modernity to the space. The wood-frame Palecek armchairs are upholstered in Romo fabric.





Opposite: The Khichis purchased the previous owners' custom-made dining room table and chairs but were unsure if they would work with a more transitional interior design scheme. Stewart, however, fell in love with the pieces, knowing they would lend a wow factor to the room. She embraced the traditional lines and added a Ralph Lauren crystal chandelier from Visual Comfort and custom draperies in a Holland & Sherry wool fabric.

Below: The dining room also includes nods to Sam's Indian heritage. The Cole & Son wallpaper's subtle print is suggestive of traditional Indian patterns. Designed after salvaged doorways from Rajasthan, where Sam's family is from, the mirror is from Made Goods. Brass-and-crystal stem sconces from Decorative Crafts and blue pottery from Williams-Sonoma Home complement the traditional pieces.







The previous homeowners had renovated the once dark and dated kitchen, and both Sam and Jenny fell in love with how light and bright the room was. "We love how the old blends with the new in this kitchen," says Jenny. The modern counter stools with metal detailing are from CB2.

Sky-blue grass cloth imparts texture as well as a dose of much-needed color. Framed artwork from Rajasthan, where Sam's family is from, lends a personal touch. Stewart, who had recently visited India, explains, "Sam and Jenny didn't want an overwhelmingly Indian feel, so this was a great opportunity to add a touch of that to the home."

In the adjacent study, the designer took more liberty by nudging the couple outside their comfort zone. "The homeowners' style skewed a touch more traditional than modern," she says. "But I really wanted them to see what could be achieved in a room as warm and welcoming as the study. I knew that for them to get their heads around a color, it would need to feel different enough from what was already there." To achieve this, Stewart painted the existing paneling and walls a sleek gray with a hint of blue to accent the grass cloth in the adjacent entryway. A new carpet complements the olive-green velvet sofa. "I wanted to bring in the tones and patterns that you often see in Indian architecture and design," she says of the dramatic shade of the sofa. "I wanted it to be very rich and regal."

Nearby, the living room "was an odd yellow," says Stewart, but the designer opted to take a different approach than she had in the study and entryway. "I like to have contrasting spaces that are lighter and darker, colorful and neutral," she says. "In such a big room, doing a dark color—or any color, really—can be overwhelming. White just felt like the best fit." Textured fabrics in varying shades and patterns that Stewart sourced from India add depth to the overall look.

Opposite: Stewart opted for a steel-gray paint—Wall Street by Benjamin Moore—on the walls of the study. A Vanguard sofa swathed in a bold green velvet Kravet fabric works well with the Vanguard swivel armchairs in cognac leather and the wood-frame coffee table with Danish midcentury styling, also from Vanguard.

Below: The long, narrow entryway was an uninspiring beige, so Stewart added sky-blue grass cloth by Phillip Jeffries to enhance the traditional millwork and crown molding. Mercury glass lanterns from Currey & Company coupled with framed artwork Stewart found in Rajasthan create a linear design to draw the eye the full length of the space. A vintage runner from ABC Carpet & Home softens the look.





The Khichis used their existing outdoor furniture from Frontgate to furnish their open-air entertaining and lounge area.





The layering continued in the dining room. The Khichis purchased the previous owners' dining room table and chairs, custom pieces that are traditional in scale and detail. "Sam and Jenny weren't sure if the furniture fit the home's modernized style," says Stewart. "But as soon as I saw it I thought, 'This has the potential to become a dream dining room.' We just had to do something that would complement pieces that are traditional but would look sharp and current." Here, Stewart opted for a wallpaper reminiscent of Indian designs. "I was looking for something that felt traditional but was streamlined,"

she says. "This pattern felt as though it was keeping with the Victorian feel of the home but also modernizing it." A mirror from Rajasthan featuring carved-wood Indian details is complemented by a traditional chandelier.

Overall, Stewart was able to pull together the Khichis' love for old with their desire for new without sacrificing comfort and practicality. "Nothing in this home could be so precious that people can't enjoy parts of it," says Jenny. "What Uma did is create a home that's meant to be lived in and really represents who we are as a family." ■

While the couple was drawn to the traditional bones of the circa-1870 Victorian home, the façade was redesigned by architect David Bailey of Forefront Designs, LLC.