



DREAMING IN COLOR

By JULIE CATALANO | Photography by MICHAEL HUNTER

It all began with a bedroom. Or more accurately, a picture of a bedroom. Interior designer Betsy Homan remembers a smart, accomplished young woman showing her a magazine clipping of the type of room she wanted in her newly-purchased 1928 three-story home in San Antonio’s beautiful, historic Monte Vista neighborhood. Homan couldn’t wait to see the beauty, but at first glance the home was more of a beast.

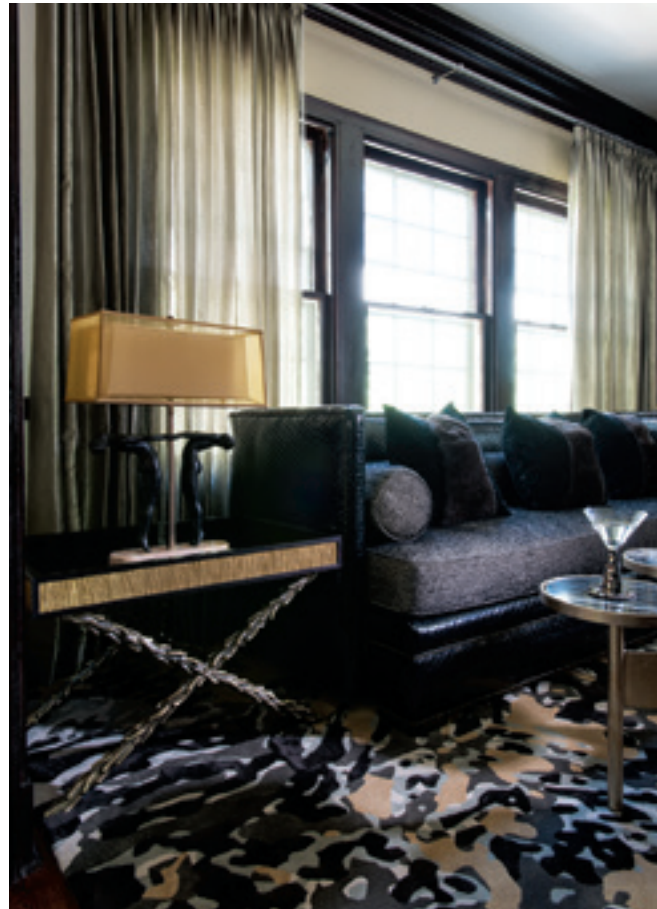
“The old house had many problems and needed lots of TLC,” Homan recalls, describing open gas jets, peeling wood floors, and dark, shiny paint everywhere, including the ceiling. “But I was up for the challenge.”

Homan was up to the task, looking forward to giving a very busy, hard-working entrepreneur a master bedroom that would be a posh retreat. Designer and client texted, talked and met regularly, with Homan pulling fabrics and locating furnishings, lighting, drapes, carpet and accessories. Never having worked with a designer before, the homeowner realized an unexpected bonus about a month into the project: she was having fun, and she didn’t want it to end.

“I was really enjoying the process, and I trusted Betsy completely,” she says. “I told her, ‘You know what? Let’s just do the whole house.’”

It was music to Homan’s ears. Despite a hideous first impression, the four-bedroom, three-bath, 3,800-square-foot home had good bones and a stately presence. Even better, the homeowner knew exactly what she wanted, and why.







“I love color and I love excitement,” says the savvy homeowner. Having lived in places dominated by neutrals, she saw the chance, with Homan’s help, to make her mark. “A lot of people are scared of color and I wanted to prove that it could work.”

Did it ever. The entire house is a palette of pure color goodness, from the red sofa in the colorful, casual family room, to the elegant silvers and blacks of the sophisticated bar, to the pops of color in the homeowner’s collection of lively and lovely artwork from San Antonio’s AnArte Gallery. There was one very special must-have: “I wanted a lavender room,” she says simply. She got it — complete with a magnificent amethyst and crystal chandelier custom made by Thomas Grant. The lavender living room is, not surprisingly, her favorite feature and her favorite room.

Homan was delighted with her client’s fearless approach, and wove perfect hues — sometimes subtle, sometimes bold — through almost everything. Drapes with understated metallic sheen, velvet seats on the classic French dining room chairs that picked up the same lavender shade from the living room, custom rugs of wool and silk, and decorative pillows and accessories that complemented their surroundings. Through it all, Homan had one guiding principle. “The client wanted a classic, cosmopolitan style home, and the house was ideally suited for that. But it had to be young, fresh and timeless.”

It wasn’t all sunshine and rainbows, however. This was, after all, an old house, with all the issues that old houses bring — electrical and plumbing at the top of the list. The house’s single fireplace



had to be redone. Ceiling lights had to be installed and rewired. Contractor Jean Blount of Radiance Homes in San Antonio says one of the biggest challenges was the interior walls, which were tackled by an accomplished painter to recreate the stucco effect common to homes from that era. “We had to texture the sheetrock to make it look like it had always been there, and that we had never been there,” says Blount. Same for the original oak floors that were completely refinished: “There were some places where things had to be patched, and anytime you’ve got repair work, it’s always a challenge to make it not look repaired.”



With all that color in the foreground, Homan used Sherwin-Williams® Kilim Beige, a warm neutral that provided a seamless background throughout. Lighting was another win: the downstairs powder room sconce and the sparkling entry hallway light fixture were more of Thomas Grant's gorgeous work. The showstopper is the dining room multicolored blown glass chandelier by Garcia Art Glass, purchased from Stevens Lighting, that masterfully blends with the colors in the room's signature artwork. The gleaming floor tile is Vein Cut Travertine in Crema Venato from Materials Marketing.

Room after remarkable room unfolds like a walk through a very organized, tasteful kaleidoscope. The most outrageously fun room is the bar — a re-imagining of the homeowner's favorite bar in New York. Here, she entertains friends with after-work cocktails in an upscale lounge-style setting with Homan's custom, ultra comfy embossed black patent leather and chenille sofa as the centerpiece. The homeowner says that newcomers all have the same reaction to the space: "Love. It's what they all say. They fall in love, just like that."

Nothing prepares visitors for "The Scarf Room," a former upstairs sitting room turned master suite foyer with a stunning Lucite round table on a custom circular rug. Homan had just finished redesigning the gigantic wraparound closet with a place for everything and everything in its place, when the homeowner informed her that she had about 50 designer scarves from her travels all over the world. "I took out the shelves in the bookcases, put in pretty brass rods, and hung the scarves," says Homan. An antique mirror, Italian Bombay chest with gold leaf and faux lapis top, and a contemporary bench covered with curly Mongolian sheepskin "adds an element of fun to the room. You can't help but smile when you walk in and see all those scarves."

As for the room that started it all, the homeowner now nestles into a luxurious, uncluttered cocoon of soothing dark blues

with a large statement bed, a beautiful chaise lounge and faux mantel for a big screen television that gives her the perfect respite after a long day. "The house is everything I wanted," she says. Sounds like a dream come true. ❖

DESIGNER Betsy Homan Interior Design
210.824.1959 | Betsyhomandesign.com

BUILDER Radiance Homes
210.872.8125