



The dining room's custom, hand-painted wallpaper is Porter Teleo. Vintage Murano chandelier bought in Round Top. French 1920s Directoire-style chairs from Jean Marc Frey. Lelièvre fabric. Belgium bluestone dining table from Skelton | Culver | Stefflen. Marilyn Minter's *Puddle* photograph, 2005.

EVOLUTION^{of} DESIGN

ELIZABETH YOUNG'S RIVER OAKS HOUSE IS
A LABORATORY OF IDEAS WHERE SHE EXPERIMENTS WITH PATTERN,
COLOR, AND NEW IDEAS.

BY REBECCA SHERMAN, INTERIOR DESIGN ELIZABETH YOUNG,
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For Elizabeth Young, fashion and interiors go hand-in-hand. "I've always been obsessed with fashion, and there's a huge crossover between the way I dress and the way I design rooms," Young says. "I have a dress by La Double J that I absolutely love that I want to make into a wallpaper if I can figure out how." When it comes to interiors — she opened her Houston design firm in 2008 — she's inspired by French design legends Jacques Grange, François Catroux, and Madeleine Castaing, and Argentine-French architect and designer Luis LaPlace. Young has recently returned from a shopping trip to Paris, skipping the

flea markets this time but hitting the chic boutiques brimming with ideas, including the flagship Pierre Frey showroom and a "tiny shop with exquisite tassels and trim." After Paris, she headed to Morocco to shop the souks for lighting, rugs, and other items for clients; in Marrakech, she fell madly for Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé's opulently patterned Villa Oasis. Ideas gleaned from these trips are already percolating.

"My house is truly my laboratory," she says of the classic brick traditional in River Oaks where she also offices. "I take a lot of risks here — it's a luxury that I don't have in a client's house." She and her husband, Barry Young, who works in wealth management, bought the

house in 2003, with a 3-year-old and an infant in tow. "You wouldn't believe what the house looked like when we moved in," she says. "There were certain things we renovated immediately, like the kitchen and bathrooms, and we added a garage and pool. Now that the girls are in college, there are things we can finish — if you drive by the house now, you'll see 10 people out front redoing the driveway."

There's a benefit to designing slowly. "The interiors have evolved over the past 20 years, and it really gives the house a collected feel," she says. They acquired the first piece of art for their collection decades ago: a 1999 Richard Serra etching titled *Al Green*, from his series on musicians — a similar one hangs in



the National Gallery of Art. The work particularly resonates with Barry, an avid guitarist. “One of the ways we built our collection was to buy a piece of art together as a Christmas present,” Young says. “We don’t always like the same things, but we always agree on what we buy.” Their focus is on works by living artists — many of them women — including Brazilian artist Beatriz Milhazes and American photographer Marilyn Minter. The Youngs, who are on the board of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, recently traveled on a museum-sponsored trip to New York to visit artists’ studios, including artist Sara VanDerBeek. They purchased one of her works: a photo of a classical female bust over-painted with blue L’Oréal Paris eye shadow and watercolors. “We really like art that has a story behind it,” Young says. One of her favorite works is a mesmerizing photograph by Ori Gersht of a smoking iris, just moments before the artist ignites it with a small explosive. “We had been watching his work and let one get away,” she says. “We found this one in Miami, and I removed a mirror over the living room fireplace and placed it there — it changed the entire mood of the room.”

(Continued)

Opposite page:
A vignette in the dining room with French Art Deco commode from Kirby Antiques. Hana Hillerova sculpture from Hiram Butler Gallery. Designers Guild draperies with Scalamandré fringe. Hand-painted Porter Teleo wallpaper with gold leaf.

This page top:
In the entry, an art installation by Paul Fleming through Barbara Davis Gallery. Pat Steir monoprint with glitter, 2004. Elizabeth Young designed the custom rug in collaboration with Carol Piper Rugs. Chandelier found in Round Top, refinished in brass.

This page bottom:
Hervé van der Straeten bronze mirror. Pierre Vandel 1950s console. French 1930s Art Deco lamp from Kirby Antiques. Tommi Parzinger tiered brass tray.





The living room, like much of the house, has gone through many iterations. “There’s a lot of wall space, and I previously had many pieces of art with color, and competing patterns on the rug and upholstery,” Young says. “The palette is now more muted than I normally do, and I rearranged the art to let it take front and center. I find

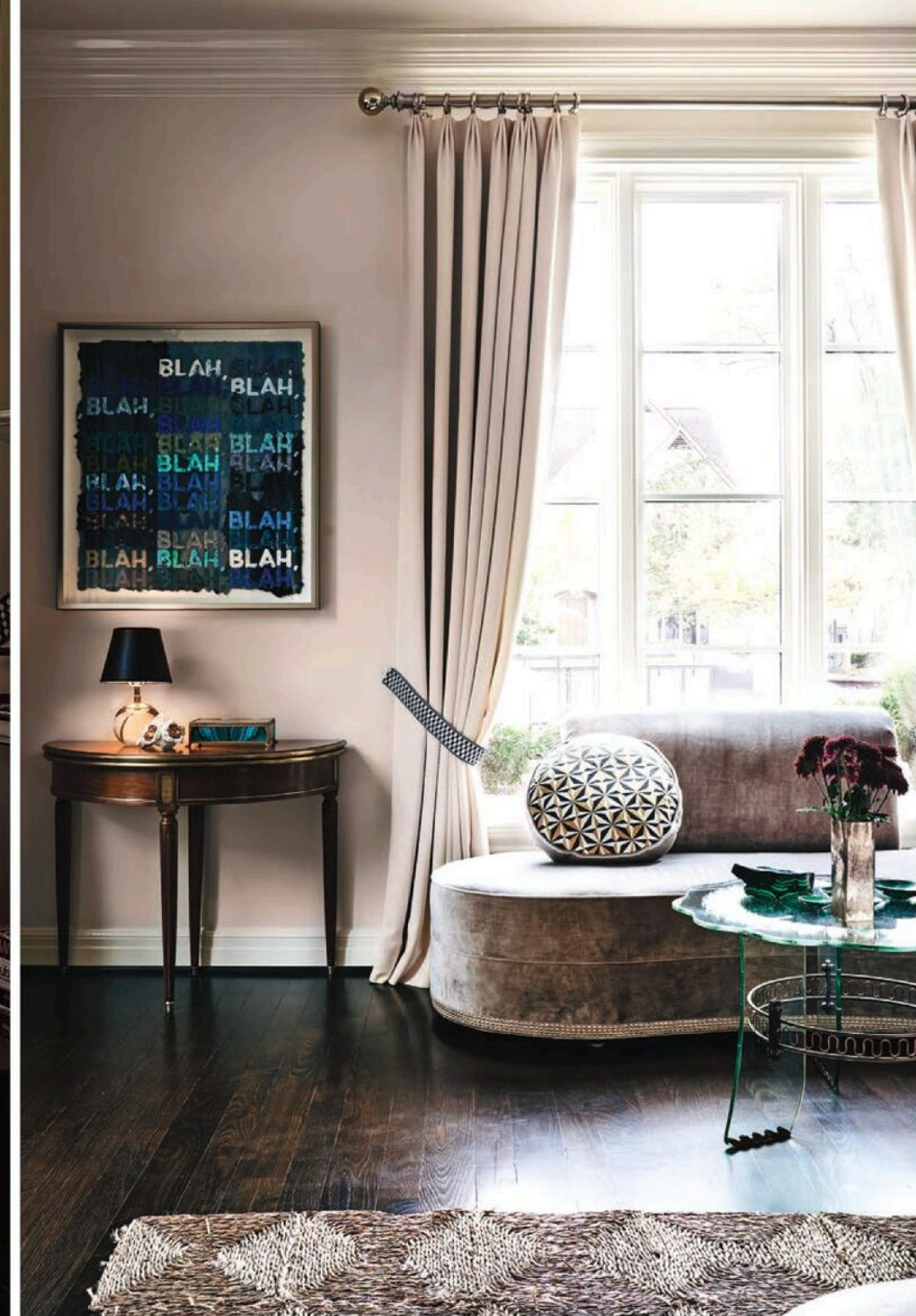
a great deal of peace in that room now.” Furnishings include a 1940s French enfilade designed by French Art Deco furniture master Charles Dudouyt. She discovered the vintage brass art easel at an antiques fair and often changes it up with different artworks or books. A tiny brass side table was a rusted mess when she found it — probably in a field somewhere at Round Top, she says. After refinishing it, the table gleams like a piece of jewelry. “I love the

hunt; I love finding stuff that most people would never look at twice,” she says. Much of the stunning vintage lighting in her house was unearthed and refurbished. The mid-20th-century Murano chandelier in the dining room was brought back from Round Top covered in dirt and grime, but with all the glass intact. Cleaned up and refinished, “the chandelier makes the whole room,” Young says. “Lighting is one of the most important things in a house; I

rarely ever use new lighting because I like it to have a history or a story, and that takes time.”

Young is a self-taught designer with a genius knack for color — a talent she developed from a lifetime of following fashion and from studying the work of such designers as Madeleine Castaing, who was known for putting together unusual combinations of hues. The dining-room walls are covered in a custom gray Porter Teleo wallpaper with

fine, irregular lines hand-painted in gold leaf. Gray is an unexpected yet elegant color for a dining room, made all the more sumptuous with citron draperies at the windows. In the den, Young built a luscious blue-and-green scheme pulled from colors in the Beatriz Milhazes paintings. The walls are lacquered in rich navy, and the plush blue velvet sectional she designed is set off with plump, emerald-green velvet pillows. “I wanted it to feel super cozy, because



Opposite page: In the living room, a 1940s French enfilade by Charles Dudouyt from W. Gardner. Vintage brass art easel. Art Deco armchair in Pierre Frey velvet. Custom club chair in Pierre Frey bouclé. Maison Jansen coffee table from InCollect. Art in grouping: Izima Kaoru disc photograph, 2006; Sara Vanderbeek classical female painting, 2021; Johnny Abrahams painting, 2021.

The living room’s custom banquette is in Lee Jofa fabric, Métaphores, Paris, pillow. Vintage table from Malachite, New Orleans. Italian 1940s glass coffee table from Kirby Antiques. Silver vase from JF Chen. Mel Brochner’s *Blah, Blah, Blah*, 2009.



In the family room are a custom sofa in Pindler velvet with Rubelli velvet pillows. Giacometti-inspired side table from Kirby Antiques. Italian 1960s floor lamp. Beatriz Milhazes' *Sa* diptych, 2010. Vintage nesting coffee table.



This page top: In a corner of the family room, Niki de Saint Phalle's *Nana* inflatable from her show at The Menil Collection and an Ellen Berkenblit painting. Vintage turntable and vinyl collection.



Right: Gabriel de la Mora's *Right-Left*, 2017, from Sicardi/Ayers/Bacino.



it's where we spend most of our time," she says. The mid-20th-century nesting coffee tables — another vintage find that Young had restored — makes for the perfect spot to eat meals in front of the TV. A corner of the den is stocked with guitars and serves as an impromptu spot for Barry's jam sessions with their 19-year-old daughter, who's in an all-girls band.

When a client is reluctant to embrace new ideas on a project, sometimes Young will bring them to her office at home, where a 1960s plaster floor lamp from France wears a boldly striped shade and a sofa is upholstered in fabric with black stripes running in different directions. Above it, a large painting by Houston artist Susie Rosmarin dazzles with optical illusions created by repeating patterns and layers of color. "I try to open clients up to new things and show them how something unexpected works — and how patterns can live happily together," Young says.



Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Elizabeth Young in her home office. Custom sofa in Schumacher fabric. Plaster floor lamp, 1960s. Susie Rosmarin painting from CAMH auction.

Young designed the breakfast room's steel-and-brass table made by Peck & Company. Vintage chandelier from 1stDibs. French Louis XVI-style dining chairs. Hand-painted ceramic vase from Moda Operandi. Brass tea set from Morocco.

The powder bath's sink and fixtures are from Fixtures & Fittings. Mokum wallpaper. Marilyn Minter *Prism*, 2009.

This page: Ori Gersht's *Iris Atropurpurea*, 2017. Vintage brass andirons from 1st Dibs. Small table is a refurbished flea-market find.



“I HAVE A DRESS FROM LA DOUBLE J THAT I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THAT I WANT TO MAKE INTO A WALLPAPER IF I CAN FIGURE OUT HOW.”
 — Elizabeth Young

In the primary bath, tub and fixtures are from Fixtures & Fittings. Kalmar 1960s ceiling fixture from 1st Dibs. Sigurdur Gudmundsson glazed porcelain wall sculptures. Elizabeth Young designed the ottoman in Schumacher fabric.

This page top: The landing’s salon grouping of art includes works by Barbara Kruger, Donald Baechler, and Julian Lorber.

Right: In a daughter’s bedroom, House of Hackney wallpaper. Vintage chiavari chair in Schumacher velvet.

