



A former lava lamp factory becomes the most inviting of homes thanks to the creatives at PROJECT. interiors.

By *J.P. Anderson* // Photographed by *Aimée Mazzenga*

Surprise & **Delight**

Lariat pendants by Apparatus add a chic touch in the kitchen.

From top: In the open living room, a Bradley Hughes bone concrete table paired with Knoll Warren Platner dining chairs beckons; an intriguing globe lamp sourced from Noir is just one of the subtle touches that add impact.



THE CLIENT

From the site (a former factory in Ravenswood) to the location (a hidden street tucked against the Metra tracks) to the vision of the client (who originally wanted to perch a shipping container on the roof for an office), there was nothing cookie-cutter about this recent undertaking by PROJECT. interiors—which is exactly why owner Aimee Wertepny was thrilled to take it on. “At PROJECT., we love reimagining unconventional spaces,” she says. “The minute we heard ‘factory,’ our collective heart skipped a beat. It’s a uniquely special property, and we got excited to design around its inherent element of surprise.”

THE PRIORITY

The main goal, notes Wertepny, was to take this very unique, workable space and “breathe a third (maybe fourth) life into it for their family. Personally, I get a lot of satisfaction out of spaces that have a soul, a history and a perspective—and this space had all three.” The family also prioritized the space’s flow to make for effortless entertaining, creating an indoor-outdoor oasis in the city. “From the kitchen with two big dueling islands and a built-in banquette to the outdoor courtyard where no detail was spared across a big service bar, an outdoor kitchen and lounging/dining zones to the basement rec space with guest suite, it’s a home that’s set up for coming together and making memories.” Lastly—and since the family has a background in furniture making—material selection and custom millwork details were key. “We worked closely with O’Brien Harris for the custom cabinetry in the kitchen,” explains Wertepny, “and there are custom furniture and millwork details throughout. The result is that everything has a place, all spaces are maximized and the furniture is built around their large-family lifestyle.”



From sophisticated drapery by Jab Anstoetz to an arresting light fixture from Lindsey Adelman Studio’s Branching Bubble collection, the dining room is a feast for the eyes.

From left: A sleekly outfitted backyard creates an outdoor urban oasis; the backyard's intimate dining nook.



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—AIMEE WERTEPNY



THE CHALLENGE

The property’s history as a factory meant that it was built with a structural 10-foot-by-12-foot column grid. The team was able to bury most of the columns in the new walls during the architectural phase. “However,” notes PROJECT. director of design Lauren Warnock, “we did have to make the hard (and expensive) decision to remove two columns for the main living area, which meant installing a steel I-beam to carry the roof load—and allow us to enlarge and maximize the living room/fireplace/TV area. It was an interesting exercise in being efficient, structured and deliberate in the room allocations and space planning.”

THE DETAIL

For Wertepny, the project’s most successful elements are threefold: the blending of old and new (“I’m proud of how we were able to take the elements that we inherited and incorporate them into a modern, creative and thoughtful design plan”); creating space for the client’s art collection with ethereal, neutral backgrounds “so that the saturated colors across their modern art collection could pop”; and

The primary bedroom features a custom felt-upholstered headboard with vertical stained wood accents that house integrated sconces by Haute Living. Opposite page: The client's existing Arne Jacobsen egg chair and ottoman were reupholstered in a graphite velvet by Knoll.



finally (and most dramatically), the home's unique points of entry. "At PROJECT., we love a cool transition—smaller spaces that move you through the house via contraction and release. We created a deep steel portal entry from the primary bedroom into the bathroom that creates a dark tunnel in the transitional space. From the butler's bar to the kitchen, the glass door transitions from clear to smoked. The overscale exterior doors and windows we chose make you feel small in a good way. Even the entry into the home from the garage through the mudroom feels very experiential. Space transitions like these, when thoughtful and surprising, can move you through a home in a manner that is both comforting and warm, even in a home that is distinctly modern."

THE OUTCOME

Says Warnock, "We went on to work with the homeowner's sister on her Chicago condo, and then with their parents as well on their Gold Coast condo. The fact that we received these inner-circle referrals speaks volumes about how the client feels about the finished product." ■

DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE
Single-family home

LOCATION
Lakeview

ARCHITECTURE
Wheeler Kearns Architects
wkarch.com

BUILDERS
Bulley & Andrews
bulley.com

INTERIOR DESIGN
PROJECT. Interiors
projectinteriors.com

LANDSCAPE DESIGN
Scott Byron & Co.
scottbyron.com

MILLWORK
Holland Woodcrafters
hollandwc.com

RESOURCES

APPARATUS
Kitchen chain-link lighting
apparatusstudio.com

BAKER FURNITURE
Primary bedroom Kara Mann free-standing nightstands
bakerfurniture.com

BASIA FROSSARD DESIGNS
Window coverings throughout
basiafrossard.com

GLOBAL VIEWS
Various accessories
globalviews.com

KNOLL
Dining room Saarinen armchairs
knoll.com

LIGHTOLOGY
Backyard lawn lights
lightology.com

MAYA ROMANOFF
Hall wallcovering
mayaromanoff.com

MODERN INDUSTRY
Dining room table
modernindustrydesign.com

MONTAUK SOFA
Living room and den sofas
montauksofa.com

O'BRIEN HARRIS
Kitchen cabinetry
obrienharris.com

