



text: **tate gunnerson**

## take two

Frequent collaborators dSpace Studio and Project Interiors team up to design a modernist family residence in Chicago

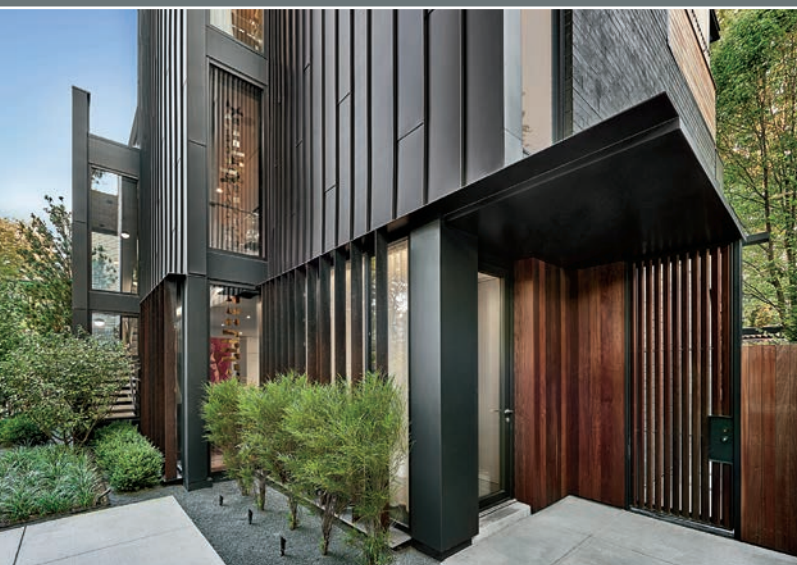


**Previous spread:** A matte-black brass lighting pendant suspended from leather straps illuminates the open kitchen, with Orca marble backsplash and gold-finish bar stools. Photography: Aimée Mazzenga.

**Left:** Standing-seam zinc panels clad the home's exterior; suede-finish concrete pavers lead to the entry. Photography: Tony Soluri.

**Right:** The folded-steel staircase connecting floors two and three is visible from the double-height living area, animated with artworks by Marlon Portales Cusett and Vladimir León Sagols. Photography: Tony Soluri.

**First impressions**, though not foolproof, are often right on the mark. That certainly was the case when designers Aimee Wertepny and Jennifer Kranitz of Project Interiors initially met their client, Stefanie Schenk. “That famous Eames quote came to mind: ‘The details are not the details; they make the product,’” Kranitz says, recalling the colorful fur tassels on her new



client's handbag as well as her brass-studded heels. “I was intrigued and thought the project could go in a good direction; also, I wanted to know where she shops!”

After raising their three children in a typical painted-clapboard house on a double lot in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, Stefanie and her husband, Jared, decided to demolish it and build a modernist structure that better reflected their style. They engaged architects Kevin Toukoumidis and Robert McFadden of dSpace Studio, who recommended Project Interiors for the interior design—their fourth collaboration. Both firms share a progressive, contemporary spirit that appealed to the clients. “We had lived for so long in a traditional space, and we really wanted this house to have special, surprising moments,” Stefanie says. Also on the couple's wish list: “A sense of flow that better reflected how we live.”

Built at grade with no basement, the new 6,000-square-foot five-bedroom residence has a strong connection to the rear courtyard via full-height glass walls. The front facade is more discreet, its three staggered planes clad in standing-seam ➤





zinc panels. The main entrance is located on the side of the house, where sliver windows offer teasing views of the interior. “We created a curated path from the front gate through the garden to the entrance, which isn’t visible from the street,” McFadden says. “As you proceed, the structure opens up and your perspective of it changes.”

A dramatic 9-foot-tall glass door grants entry to a soaring foyer that flows into a double-height living area. Flooring throughout the main level—including the courtyard—is concrete, scored with angled lines to create a trapezoidal motif. “The pattern generates energy,” Toukoumidis says.

Energy is certainly a hallmark of the project. In the open kitchen, for instance, the clients opted for a graphic Orca marble backsplash over a more subdued option. The veiny black-and-white Brazilian stone, which also fronts the vent hood and tops the breakfast nook table, pops against the white-lacquered cabinetry with bronze reveal. “The Schenks welcomed big moves and never played it safe,” Wertepny reports.

As evidenced by their contemporary art collection, which includes vibrant pieces by Beverly Fishman, Sarah Applebaum, and Alexa Horachowski, the clients are also unafraid of color. In the dining room, for example, curvaceous chairs by Cédric Ragot are covered in blush wool mélange with a contrasting zipper detail. The pinkish hue plays off the veining in the table’s marble-inlay top and reappears in the oak bar’s lacquered interior. “Color is dealt in small doses, but there are some fun surprises,” Kranitz explains.

The palette is echoed in the second-floor library overlooking the living area. Along one wall, custom rift-cut oak shelving with acrylic dividers frames a channel-back banquette in rosy mohair. Suspended from the ceiling, a sculpture of brass geometric shapes cascades through a cutout in the floor down into the piano gallery below. ➤



*Clockwise from top left: The stair leading to floor two pairs European oak treads with steel-plate handrails; photography: Tony Soluri. In the master bedroom, a hand-blown glass pendant illuminates brass-inlaid rift-cut oak paneling; photography: Aimée Mazzenga. A suspended brass sculpture by Gold Leaf Design Group sluices through the library floor; photography: Aimée Mazzenga. In the ground-level office, walnut paneling complements a cotton velvet-upholstered banquette and a Warren Platner table in polished nickel; photography: Gianni Franchellucci.*

*Opposite: The dining room seats six on wool-upholstered Cédric Ragot chairs and more on a mohair-covered custom bench; above it is a painted-fabric triptych by Gina Dorough. Photography: Gianni Franchellucci.*





**Left:** Full-height bronzed-aluminum-frame glass doors slide open to connect living spaces with the adjacent courtyard. Photography: Tony Soluri.

**Right:** Viewed from the second-floor deck, the courtyard side of the house has beveled apertures shaded with Ipe louvers. Photography: Tony Soluri.



“We wanted to both honor and highlight dSpace’s ingenious use of negative space,” Wertepny says.

Brass threads throughout the interior. In the master suite, thin bands of the metal are laid into the dark-stained oak head-board wall (in an angled pattern that mimics the street facade’s step-backs) and the bathroom’s porcelain-tile floor. Brass panels also line the tub niche, reflecting the sunshine that spills in through the skylight above. “This house keeps unfolding,” Kranitz says. “What’s fun is the discovery.”

The master suite boasts a double-sided fireplace that can also be enjoyed from the adjacent Ipe deck, outfitted with a hot tub, built-in seating, and an entertainment system. “The indoor-outdoor experience here is truly extraordinary given the city location,” Toukoumidis says. Indeed, the glass walls of dining room, living area, and breakfast nook glide open to the courtyard—a lush space, planted with Hakone and other ornamental grasses, that boasts a covered outdoor kitchen and a pergola with integral sofas surrounding a concrete fire table. Slab-on-grade construction, which positions living areas and courtyard at exactly the same level, further promotes the easy rapport between the spaces.

A couple who enjoys expressing themselves through fashion, art, and design, the Schenks say it’s been rewarding to realize a house that reflects them so well. “The design is a little bit ➤

“The clients let us dance with them and create some really innovative ideas”







*Clockwise from top left: An acrylic desk occupies a window niche in the second-floor guest bedroom, with selenite-motif vinyl wall covering; photography: Gianni Franchellucci. The master bathroom's marble-top vanity meets walls in Venetian plaster; photography: Aimée Mazzenga. In the same room, brass wall panels and porcelain flooring boast the same trapezoidal form; photography: Tony Soluri. Four built-in bunks curtained in burlap allow the second-floor kids' hangout to double as a guest suite; photography: Aimée Mazzenga. Opposite: A custom louvered fence offers curated views of the front yard, where white birch trees stand out against zinc panels; custom Cor-ten planters will rust to match the home's Ipe accents. Photography: Tony Soluri.*



[interiordesign.net/projectinteriors19](https://interiordesign.net/projectinteriors19) for a tour of Project Interiors' office

irreverent, and we're thrilled we took some chances," Stefanie enthuses. And unlike their rather nondescript former abode, the family's new home makes a striking—and far more accurate—first impression. 🍷

**PROJECT TEAM** JASMINE GLOVER: PROJECT INTERIORS. NICOLE WAGNER ART & DESIGN: ART CONSULTANT. KEMORA LANDSCAPES: LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR. HOMERUN TECHNOLOGY: AUDIOVISUAL CONSULTANT. MLT CONSULTING ENGINEERS: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. AA SERVICES: MECHANICAL ENGINEER. GEOSOLAR ENERGY FARM: ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING ENGINEER. DEMETER MILLWORK: WOODWORK. TAYLOR STREET FABRICATION: DECORATIVE STEELWORK, STEEL STAIR FABRICATOR. SALVO ARCHITECTURAL ROOFING CONTRACTORS: METAL CLADDING AND ROOFING. LG DEVELOPMENT GROUP: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

**PRODUCT SOURCES**  
**KITCHEN** ERNESTOMEDA THROUGH LUCA LANZETTA GROUP: CABINETRY. ANTOLINI: MARBLE. RUBN AT TWENTYTWENTYONE: LINEAR PENDANT. DIRESKO: ISLAND COUNTERTOP. DORNBRACHT: SINK FITTINGS. NOIR: BAR STOOLS. **LIVING AREA** WIZARD INDUSTRIES AT RETRACTABLE SCREENS: SCREEN SYSTEM. LUTRON: MOTORIZED SHADES. C. SANCHEZ: CUSTOM SOFA. MOKUM AT HOLLY HUNT: SOFA UPHOLSTERY. ERDEN AT JEAN DE MERRY: CUSTOM RUG. CRÉATIONS MÉTAPHORES: PILLOW FABRIC. **DINING ROOM** ROCHE BOBOIS: CHAIRS. CARNEGIE FABRICS: DRAPERY FABRIC. REJUVENATION: CHANDELIER. C.SANCHEZ: CUSTOM BANQUETTE; HOLLY HUNT: FABRIC. GINA DOROUGH SURFACE STUDIO: WALL ART. **STAIR** C.R. LAURENCE CO.: GUARDRAIL HARDWARE. DELTA AT INTELLIS: RECESSED STEP LIGHTS. AMBIANCE AT INTELLIS: CONCEALED LINEAR LEDS. **MASTER BEDROOM** C. SANCHEZ: CUSTOM BED, HEADBOARD. LEUCOS AT LUMENS: PENDANT LIGHT. PINDLER: HEADBOARD FABRIC. POLLACK: PILLOW FABRIC. JAIPUR: RUG. **LIBRARY** GOLD LEAF DESIGN GROUP: SCULPTURE. CB2: LAMP, CHAIR. **OFFICE** VISUAL COMFORT: CHANDELIER. C. SANCHEZ: CUSTOM BANQUETTE; HOLLY HUNT: FABRIC. KNOLL: TABLE. PIERRE FREY: PILLOW FABRIC. **GUEST BEDROOM** D.L. COUCH: WALL COVERING. CARNEGIE FABRICS: DRAPERY FABRIC. ACRYLIC + FRAMING SERVICES: CUSTOM DESK. ARTERIORS: BENCH. CB2: BED FRAME. **BATHROOM** STUDIO BK: WALL TREATMENT. PURE EDGE LIGHTING AT LIGHTOLOGY: SCONCES. CB2: MIRROR. WATERMARK: SINK AND TUB FITTINGS. TRANSCERAMICA: FLOOR TILE. APPARATUS: CHANDELIER. RANDOLPH STREET MARKET: VINTAGE STOOL. SIGNATURE HARDWARE: TUB. **KIDS' HANGOUT** BASIA FROSSARD DESIGN: DRAPERY FABRICATION. **EXTERIOR** P & G ENGINEERING: GATE. PLANTERWORX: PLANTERS. SPJ: LIGHTING. VMZINC: ZINC PANELS. LEE LUMBER: IPE. TRESPA: RESIN PANELS. LIVEROOF: GREEN ROOF MODULES. **THROUGHOUT** BENJAMIN MOORE & CO.: PAINT. TERRAZZO + MARBLE SUPPLY: STONE SUPPLIER. UNILUX AT NOVUS INTELLIGENT FENESTRATION: DOOR, WINDOWS, CURTAIN WALL SYSTEM. EMERALD CONCRETE: CONCRETE FLOORING, PAVERS. RODE BROS: WOOD FLOORING. STUDIO41: KITCHEN/BATH SUPPLIER. RH: BEDDING.