

HAUTE HUES

TWO SISTERS BALANCE
THE GRANDEUR
OF A DALLAS HOUSE
WITH AN UNABASHED
PASSION FOR COLOR.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY KELLI FORD AND KIRSTEN FITZGIBBONS ARCHITECTURE BY LARRY E. BOERDER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
BY PAUL FIELDS PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX KIM-BEE PRODUCED BY CAROLYN ENGLEFIELD TEXT BY JEFF TURRENTINE



A multitude of bold patterns balance each other.
THIS PAGE: Custom sofa in Clarence House fabric.
Table, J.F. Chen. Chairs, Anthropologie. Bench,
John Robshaw. Walls and curtains in Kirk
Brummel fabric. Rug, Elizabeth Eakins. Pillows in
Penn & Fletcher fabrics. Throw, Hermès. Antique
chandelier. OPPOSITE: Chairs, Hickory Chair,
in vintage ikat. Vases, Madison. Vintage table.
Custom lantern and sconces. Art, Henri Matisse.



The work of the late David Hicks inspired the geometry of the gallery floor. **THIS PAGE:** Custom chandeliers and stone floor. Sconces, Paul Ferrante. Vintage sociable. **OPPOSITE:** Custom wall panels with gold leaf. Custom sofa and slipper chairs in Schumacher velvet. Pillows in Turkish ikat. Custom chaise and curtains in China Seas fabric. Custom coffee table. All trim, Houlès. Vintage desk. Antique desk chairs in China Seas fabric. Rug, Interior Resources. Flowers by Darrell Ward Designs.



IT'S LARGE, TO BE SURE. BUT A LOT IS ASKED OF THE HOUSE THAT DESIGNER KELLI FORD SHARES WITH HER HUSBAND, GERALD, AND THEIR CHILDREN IN DALLAS.

It must be grand enough to accommodate a hundred dressed-up guests for cocktails on a Friday night, kid-friendly enough to host a gaggle of second-graders at a Saturday afternoon pool party, and cozy enough to serve as the spot where the Fords can kick back on a Sunday to watch a Cowboys game.

With that in mind, Kelli Ford—who worked on the house with her sister, designer Kirsten Fitzgibbons—used classical touches and bold colors to strike a balance between formal elegance and whimsy. One can stroll past austere white pilasters on the way to a family room dramatically done up in blue and white from floor to ceiling; a dazzling piece of walk-in Delft ware. It's the kind of house where museum-quality art—including pieces by Matisse, Picasso, and

Magritte—coexists with two cats and four dogs.

The designers, who own the New York–Dallas firm of Kirsten Kelli and a Dallas shop, Madison, were uniquely suited to team up on a project as personal as the decor of one sister's house. “We agree on everything that goes into a room,” Ford says. “We both have to love it before we say it's finished.”

Architect Larry Boerder—who based his plan on Rosecliff, the Gilded Age mansion in Newport that Stanford White modeled on the Grand Trianon at Versailles—gave the Fords a residence that features both a public area and a private one. “They wanted a house for entertaining large groups but also a smaller house-within-a-house to live in day to day,” he says.

The designers made some rooms more formal than others but let no space go too far in either direction. The great room's mahogany-paneled walls, for example, “gave it a very men's club feel,” Fitzgibbons says. They liked the dark wood but chose a brightly colored curtain fabric to lighten the atmosphere.

Ford and Fitzgibbons travel the world to find inspi-



Exuberant pattern enlivens a mahogany-paneled room. Sofa in Brunschwig & Fils velvet, tables, and silk ikat rug, all custom. Curtains, antique fauteuils, and custom club chairs in Lelièvre fabrics. Pillows in vintage Turkish fabrics. Vase and hurricanes, Madison. Antique lamp. Framed art, René Magritte and Pablo Picasso.



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The walls of the dining room were meticulously hand-painted to look like ikat fabric. Chairs in Schumacher fabric with linen backs, dining table, sunburst mirror, and chandelier, all custom. Curtains in Donghia fabric. Mantel, Larry E. Boerder. Rug, Cornell Carpets. Antique cabinet. Vase, Pablo Picasso. Ginger jars, Madison. Clear stemware, Moser. Amethyst decanter and glasses, William Yeoward.

Yellow pops in a neutral room. **THIS PAGE:** Custom bed in China Seas and Libas Ltd. fabrics. Trim, Samuel & Sons. Linens and wall lamps, Madison. Tufted chair in Holland & Sherry fabric, chaise in Robert Kime floral, chairs in Lee Jofa mohair, TV cabinet, and coffee table, custom. Grosgrain trim on chairs, Houllès. Vintage settee. Pillows in Penn & Fletcher fabrics. Mirror, Thomas Grant. Floor lamp, Paul Ferrante. Sconce, John Salibello. Mantel, Chesney's. Carpet, Blackstone Carpets. Art, Jasper Johns. **OPPOSITE:** Custom mirror. Chest, J.F. Chen. Chairs in Clarence House fabric.





ration for their custom creations. The entry's sconces were mirrored after ones the sisters saw at Versailles. "We fell in love with them," says Ford, who discovered that reproducing them exactly might constitute a violation of French law. "So we changed the silver-and-red scheme to gold and cobalt."

The designers are drawn to evocative color. Because her husband's favorite is yellow, Ford gave him a brilliant version that approaches pure primary pigment for the art-lined gallery. Blue, though, occupies a special place in the sisters' hearts. "There are just so many different shades that can evoke so many different feelings," says Ford. They range from the summer-afternoon azure in the office's vaulted ceiling to the diffuse, almost foggy hue in her master bath. Lacquered finishes give walls a soft shimmer.

A personal touch takes precedence everywhere, and lighthearted surprise trumps seriousness. In the backyard, the dogs jump into the fountain right next to a Fernand Léger artwork—don't worry, it's made of glazed tiles. In the dining room, the shape of the chandeliers reminded the sisters of a birdcage, so they are now home to a pair of crystal parrots—perfect symbols of a design philosophy in which elegance and fun aren't mutually exclusive. □



A painted wooden floor mimics Missoni chevrons. Custom vanity and marble tub. Fittings, Waterworks. Clover-back and vanity chairs, Hickory Chair, in Muriel Brandolini fabric. Black armchair, custom. Sconces, Thomas Grant. Antique Venetian mirror. Curtains in Muriel Brandolini fabric. Ceiling fixture, Paul Ferrante.



A spirited mix of pattern continues outdoors.
THIS PAGE: Sofas and chairs in Durable stripe,
side tables, and coffee table, all Michael
Taylor Designs. Pillow fabrics, John Robshaw
Textiles. Throw and planters, Madison.
OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Versailles-style planter,
Authentic Provence. Art, Fernand Léger.





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