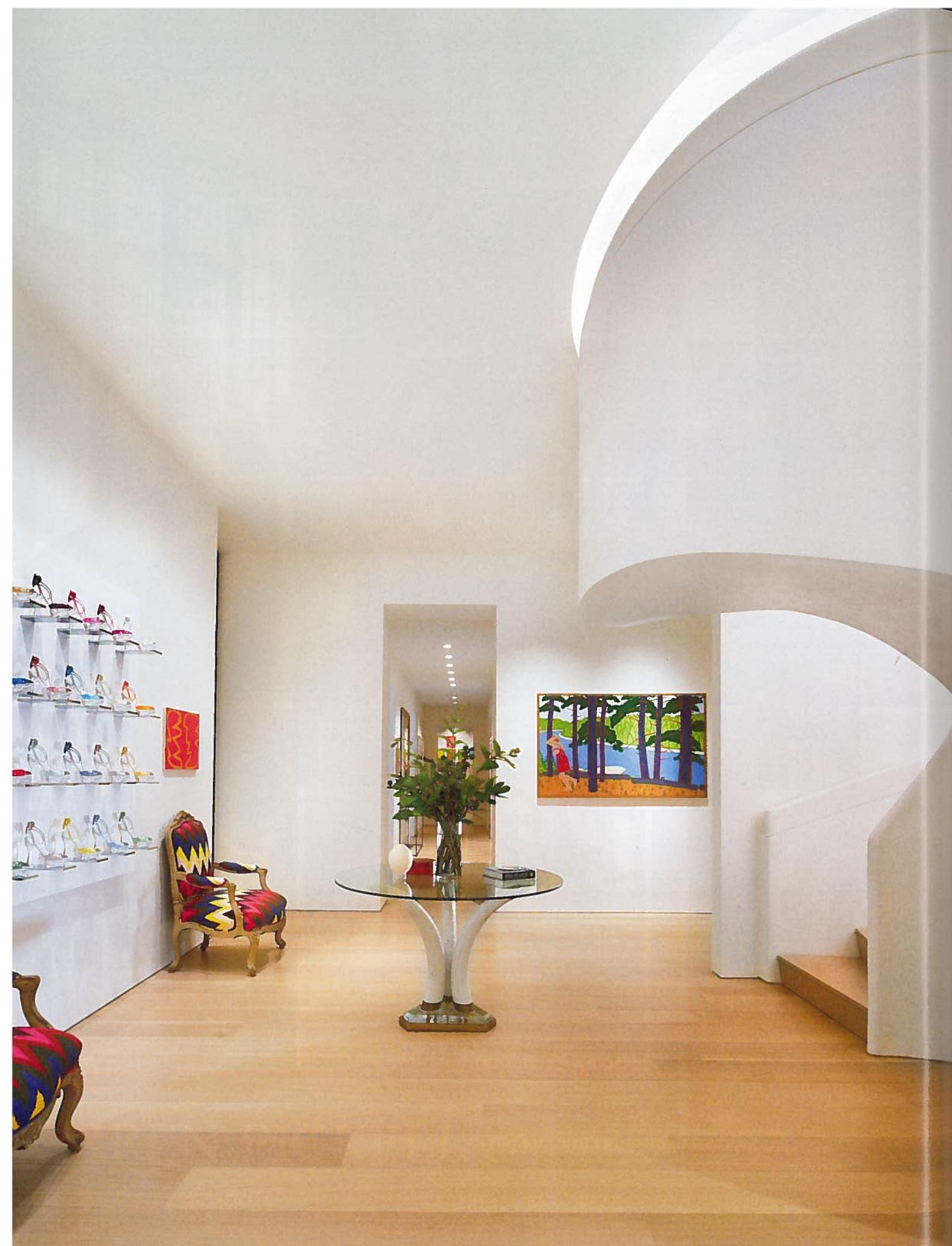


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balanced equation

POP ART, VINTAGE ANTIQUES AND MODERN DETAILS COMBINE SEAMLESSLY IN A CONVERTED TWO-STORY PENTHOUSE SITUATED IN CHICAGO'S TONY GOLD COAST NEIGHBORHOOD.

WRITTEN BY HEATHER L. SCHRECKENGAST | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY SOLURI

INTERIOR DESIGN Britt Taner, Britt Taner Design

ARCHITECTURE Tom Bader, Larry Kearns and Chris-Annmarie Spencer, Wheeler Kearns Architects

HOME BUILDER Mark Fraser, Fraser Construction, Inc. | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE Bill Heffernan, William Heffernan Landscapes

BEDROOMS 5 | BATHROOMS 6 | SQUARE FEET 5,400



For the living room, designer and homeowner Britt Taner placed a sofa from Holly Hunt and white armchairs from Baker to mingle among vintage pieces including a 1920s tripod side table and a red Asian console. *Opposite:* A vintage 1960s chair pulls up to the living room's Napoleon III-style secretaire, both from The Golden Triangle.



They say the hallmark of a great designer is the ability to mix styles in seamlessly unexpected ways: modern art among antiques, clean-lined furniture with whimsical touches. If this is the case, then designer and homeowner Britt Taner delivers juxtaposition at its finest in her two-story penthouse in Chicago's Ambassador West building. Situated in the Gold Coast neighborhood, akin to New York's Upper East Side, the landmark building features a 1920s brick and limestone façade that belies Taner's contemporary interior. Filled with eye-catching art, vintage antiques and ultramodern details, the home reflects Taner and her family's "fun, full-of-energy and happy personalities," she says.

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rior to purchasing the condominium, Taner, husband Kerim and their combined family of three girls were living in the suburb of Winnetka when the cultural verve of the city came calling. "Kerim desired more of a metropolitan life," the designer says. Born and raised in Chicago, Taner was open to moving back to the city, "but needed to find a place worth moving to," she says. "So we spent a year looking at real estate." But after only a second look at this unit, with its 700-square-foot outdoor terrace and 12-to-13-foot-high ceilings, the couple was sold.

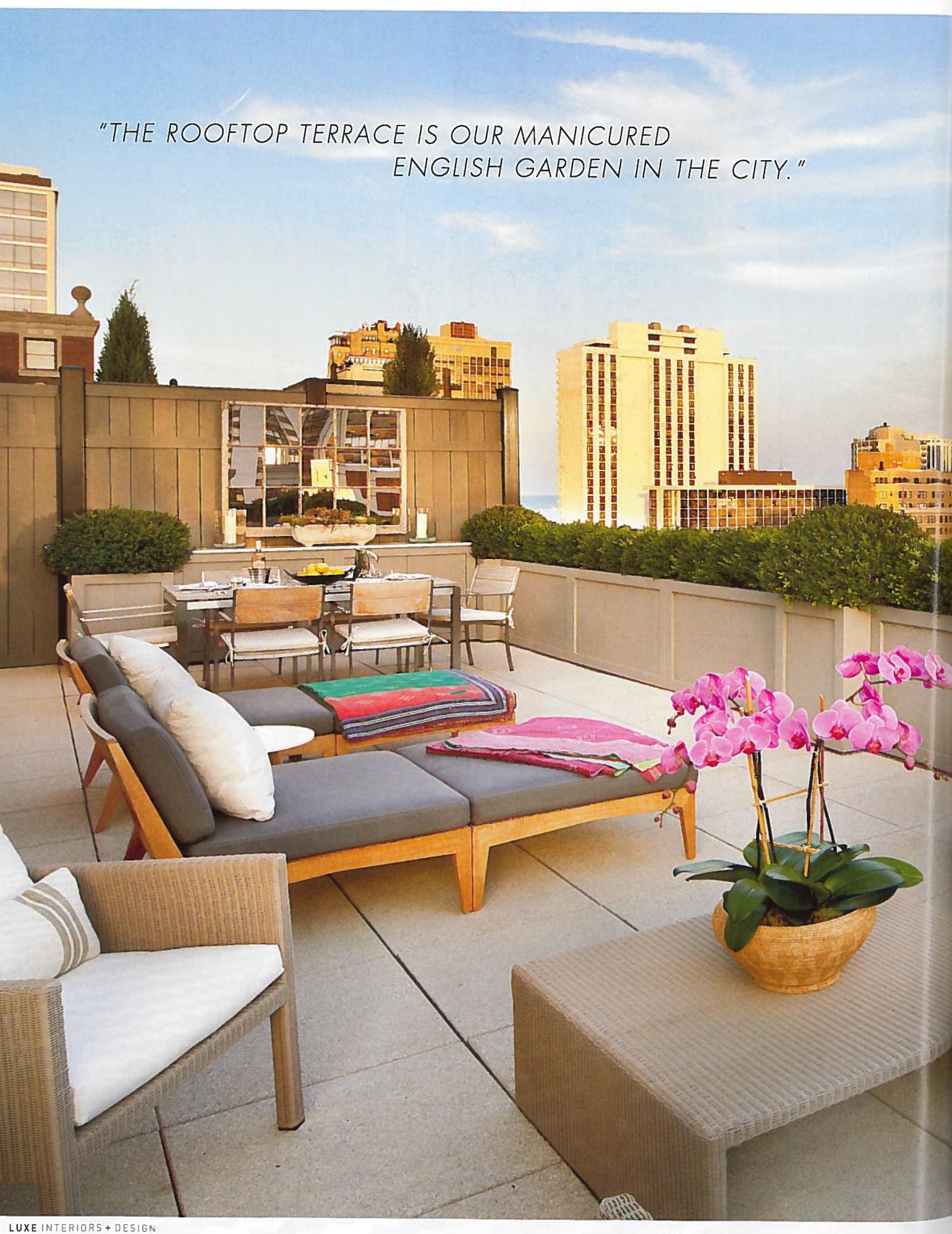
To begin the project, Taner called on the team at Wheeler Kearns Architects, which included architect Larry Kearns, principal Tom Bader and project architect Chris-Annmarie Spencer, to reconfigure specific areas like the master suite, powder room and, most significantly, the stairway. Cumbersome and unattractive, the original stairway obstructed the apartment's entry and exposures. "We wanted to create one that was compact and tucked away," Spencer says. "Yet it had to read as part of the container of the apartment to keep the focus on the art and furnishings." General contractor Mark Fraser, who Spencer had brought onboard, says the stairway was the biggest challenge and very tricky to construct."

Coated in Venetian plaster with rift-oak treads and risers, the stunning stairway spirals from the 12th-floor common areas and bedrooms to the 13th-floor family and guest room and connecting terrace outside. In addition to this new sculptural piece, the home also displays several artistic masterpieces by such renowned names as Joan Miró and Andy Warhol, to name a few. "Kerim and I both love contemporary art," Taner says, as proven through the immense gallery collected nationally and abroad—which includes the entry's fanciful display of shoes by Fausto Perucchetti made of crystal clear urethane, Swarovski crystals and stainless steel on acrylic. "It wasn't just art to fill the space. We saw so much that we loved, and it was nice to pick it out together."



Twelve-foot-high, glass-paned doors open to the dining room, where a Therrien Studio Workshops chandelier lights a custom table from Manifesto surrounded by chairs from Holly Hunt. A zigzag rug by Madeline Weinrib adds visual interest. China Seas wallpaper provides a subtle backdrop for John "Crash" Matos' *Playground Battleground* above the white-lacquered Bulthaup buffet.

"THE ROOFTOP TERRACE IS OUR MANICURED ENGLISH GARDEN IN THE CITY."



Awash in gray, cream and green, the rooftop terrace becomes an extension of the family room-cum-guest room. Janus et Cie furnishings form the lounge area, teak chaises by Richard Frinier for Brown Jordan afford lounging in the sun, and a Gloster table and chairs provide dining alfresco. A vintage farmhouse window-turned-mirror creates an unexpected touch.



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From the artwork to the fabrics, color plays a part in every room. In fact, an ikat fabric purchased on a family trip to Istanbul fueled the design of the home. Seen on the French armchairs and pillows in the living room, the graphic silk comes alive with jewel tones. Taner also drew inspiration from other sites worldwide, like the sophisticated spunk of Miami Beach's Delano hotel (where Taner met Kerim), the wood floors at the Art Institute of Chicago and the creamy lacquered walls at the Hotel Adlon Kempinski in Berlin. Thus, rift oak, white Thassos marble and lacquered millwork make an appearance time and again. Throughout, antique furnishings blend with new and custom pieces, such as the 1800s black secretaire from France that pairs with low-profile seating in the living room. "I love creating a space with an unexpected mix of elements," Taner says.

The office, which also acts as a den, features a custom sofa by George Smith covered in C&C Milano linen from Holland & Sherry. Pieces from Taner's family, such as a vintage cocktail table from her father and her great-grandmother's bergère enveloped in Old World Weavers silk from Stark, add personality.



Project architect Chris-Anmarie Spencer conceived the stunning sculptural stairway, created from plywood then wrapped in Venetian plaster. Wood railings painted to match the Venetian plaster mold perfectly to the hand. LEDs illuminate every third tread to help light the way to the rooftop terrace.



Bold art and fabrics in chartreuse, orange and fuchsia define the daring palette of the master bedroom, which Taner fashioned around a nude painting commissioned by Bruce French. Vintage lamps purchased at Douglas Rosin Decorative Arts & Antiques frame the bed, which features a custom headboard by Prairie Interiors and is dressed in coverings from Leontine Linens.



Outfitted with Ann Sacks Thassos marble and Antonio Lupi cabinetry and fixtures, the head-to-toe white master bathroom provides a stark backdrop for artwork by a student at the Art Institute of Chicago. Taner says she's mad for the student's bold use of color.

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Between the art, furniture and architectural feats, it's difficult to determine what makes the greatest impact. And stepping outside doesn't make it any easier. Outfitted for comfort, the panoramic terrace affords entertaining at its best. "The rooftop terrace is our manicured English garden in the city," Taner says. Variegated boxwood, chosen by landscape designer Bill Heffernan for its durability, defines the space. "It's clean and handsome," he says. Topping off the terrace, literally, a 20-foot-wide awning gives the outdoor oasis protection from the elements and greater usability.

With an apartment in Istanbul, a vacation home in Vero Beach, Florida, and their primary residence here in Chicago now complete, what's next on the radar for Taner? "It's always been a dream of ours to rehab a barn," she says. Talk about juxtapositions. 