

Materials Girl

Designer Merien Daka deftly mixes a variety of elements with a transitional style for a fashion-forward Shelby Township couple

TEXT BY
MEGAN SWOYER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MARTIN VECCHIO

When a couple with three grown children decided to build a dream home from scratch, they called on Merien Daka. “They had come from a more traditional home and wanted their style to be more fun and contemporary,” recalls Daka, who runs Merien Daka Design Group in Birmingham and attended the Illinois Institute of Art, where she received a bachelor’s degree in interior design. Before moving to Michigan, Daka worked for The Design Bar in the Chicago area, where she grew up.

Completed in June 2020, this splendid Shelby Township project features 4,600 square feet of award-winning beauty. The home, in fact, captured several honors in the 2021 *Detroit Design Awards*

competition, including first place in the Overall Home category. With four bedrooms, four full baths, two half-baths, and a finished basement, the elegant-chic layout is quite impressive, thanks to the skills of Daka, who shared recently that she’s currently juggling eight home-design projects.

Upon entering the home, a striking foyer greets visitors, thanks to textured wallpaper and metal sculptures in the shapes of flowers that adorn a large wall. “At first we were going to do a lot of wall paneling and wainscoting, but the homeowners were second-guessing themselves, so I suggested a fun, dramatic wall covering,” Daka says. “They asked me to show them some options, and then fell in love with a brown textural wallcovering. It has a shimmer to it and it’s stunning, especially as the foyer has a 20-foot-high ceiling.” The floral wall sculptures work well with the other white items in the space, including the door and window casings. Here, it’s all about high contrast.

The family spends a lot of time in the great room, and any visitor can likely tell you why. With a prominent modern chandelier, a 5-by-5-foot coffee table, and a commanding fireplace, the comfortable, inviting space turns heads. “The family loves to entertain,” Daka says, “and that means fill-

GLAM GLOW

The master bedroom, below, and great room, opposite page, are two of many gorgeous spaces.





ing that huge coffee table with appetizers.” A 20-foot ceiling height adds to the drama. “It’s actually my favorite room in the home,” Daka says. “They really wanted something outside the box and were open to new ideas. That floor-to-ceiling fireplace made of stone is very special, and the entrance into the great room features custom-made divider panels painted in black gloss. It was such a wide opening, I felt it needed something. That room came together beautifully.” Daka’s team accented the side walls of the fireplace in antique mirror with brass rosettes in each corner, which added a level of sophistication to the room.

Nearby, the kitchen, replete with a snazzy coffee niche, features crisp blacks and whites. “The homeowners knew they wanted a specific white tile in the kitchen, and then I suggested we complement the white cabinetry with white countertops and the black cabinetry with

black countertops. All the white cabinetry features brass hardware and all the black cabinetry features polished nickel hardware. The hardware dresses up the kitchen perfectly, and brass strapping to the hood was the ‘wow’ factor we needed in there,”

Daka explains. On the range hood wall (the back wall), the team wrapped the back of both glass cabinets in the same stone as the countertop and full splash. “The homeowners are edgy, fashion-forward people, and I knew this would be nice for them.” The couple did, indeed, fall in love with the notion of adding blacks, and also embraced Daka’s suggestion for selecting brass material.

The dining room showcases Daka’s penchant for injecting color in small doses. “The couple wanted a lot of neutrals through the home, but in the dining room I was pushing to add some color, so we went with a mauve grasscloth wallcovering

OUTSTANDING FEATURES
Above: A unique foyer perspective.
Below: A large dining room painting pulls the room together.

“THE COUPLE WANTED A LOT OF NEUTRALS THROUGH THE HOME, BUT IN THE DINING ROOM I WAS PUSHING TO ADD SOME COLOR, SO WE WENT WITH A MAUVE GRASSCLOTH WALLCOVERING BY SCHUMACHER. THE LARGE PAINTING, FROM LEFTBANK ART, WAS PERFECT FOR THAT SPACE.”

— MERIEN DAKA

SIP & SAVOR
The kitchen, above, is all about contrasts. It features a nifty beverage niche, right, with a drop-dead backsplash.





GOOD NIGHT
 A trio of bedroom vignettes that showcase masculine appointments as well as a daughter's love of art.



**SPLASHY STYLE**

This page, clockwise from left: The master bath, daughter's bath, and son's bath are breathtaking, thanks to a chic mix of materials. Opposite page: A glamorous stand-alone tub in the master bath is welcoming.

by Schumacher. The large painting, from Leftbank Art, was perfect for that space." Meanwhile, the table's side chairs, covered in a soft green velvet, pick up on the green in the painting. "I like the fun geometric pattern in the host and hostess chairs, too," Daka says. Light, airy drapery in a Holly Hunt fabric lets the room breathe.

The dining room's light mauve shows up again in the master bedroom sitting area, which features a balcony that overlooks the backyard. Leftbank Art and swivel chairs that are "very comfy," Daka says, due in part to their velvety fabric, add to that area's appeal. A velvet Phillip Jeffries wallcovering in Peacock complements the room's cocoa tones. The adjoining bath's chic tub was a must, Daka says, and glass tile in the shower creates a "super simple, sleek, and clean look. They wanted the master suite to feel like a boutique hotel."

Like the master bedroom, a son's bedroom, with dimensional wall art made of wood (from the Z Gallerie) has a balcony overlooking the backyard. As for the son's bathroom, it features cement flooring with a unique geometric pattern. "He's in his early 20s and my goal was to create something a little more masculine," Daka says. Marble, waterfall-style countertops from Ciot, and cabinetry painted in Benjamin Moore's Forest Green give a sense of unity to the look. Leather pulls with brass screws on the cabinetry add more masculinity.

A daughter's room showcases the inhabitant's



love of art. “She’s very artistic and requested a gallery-style wall,” says Daka, who chose art from the Z Gallerie, Wendover Art, and Left-bank Art.

The second-floor study inspires work, reading, and contemplating the day’s to-do list. “The wife spends a lot of time here,” Daka says of the inviting room. Navy blue shelving, a leather desk, calming art, and a double door that leads to a little balcony create the perfect spot in which to get work done. “We made sure to create the right depth for the built-in cabinetry so it could accommodate the computer’s printer,” Daka explains.

STUNNERS
This page: Of note in the study are rich hues and a handsome leather desk.
Opposite page: The luxe master bedroom.

“By being involved from the architectural phase, it enabled us to make proper adjustments,” she adds. Examples include slightly reducing room sizes to create wider, grander corridors; and reconfiguring bathrooms to ensure specialty electrical locations. “All these minute adjustments might seem insignificant, but they really make a huge difference to the final product.”

From open gathering spaces to those offering peace and quiet, the entire home suits this family well. “They were a pleasure to work with,” Daka says. “They really trusted and believed in the process and in me.” ♦



BUYER'S GUIDE

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Merien Daka, Merien Daka Design Group, Birmingham, meriendakadesigngroup.com

BATHROOM, DAUGHTER

Cabinet – River Valley Cabinets and Millwork, Vassar; Paint, Sherwin-Williams, Cityscape

Countertop – Mystery White Marble, Ciot, Troy

Faucet – Luxe Gold, Vero, Brizo, Advance Plumbing & Heating Supply Company, Detroit, Walled Lake

Mirror – Brass, Oversize Wall Mirror, Regina Andrew

Sconces – Vendome Single Sconce, Thomas O' Brien, Visual Comfort

Sink – Vertical Rectangle, Kohler, Advance Plumbing & Heating Supply Company, Detroit, Walled Lake

Wall Paint – Benjamin Moore, Classic Gray

Window Shade – Diamond Monochrome, Kirkby Design, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

BATHROOM, MASTER

Bathtub – Oval Evanesence Freestanding Tub, BainUltra, Advance Plumbing & Heating Supply Co., Detroit, Walled Lake

Cabinet – River Valley Cabinets and Millwork, Vassar; Paint, Benjamin Moore, Balboa Mist

Countertop – Mystery White Marble, Ciot, Troy

Drapery – Crystal, Prodigy, Pollack, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy; Trim, Dove, Etienne Silk Greek, Schumacher, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Flooring – White Thassos, Ann Sacks, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Mirror – RH

Sconces – Ojai Sconce, Barbara Barry, Visual Comfort

Shower – Vetrise Tile Fuliggine, Virginia Tile Co., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Table, Bathtub – Forest Park Table, Arteriors

Wall Paint – RH, Gravel

Window Shades – Trend, 03349-T - Alabaster, Designer Furniture Services, Michigan Design Center, Troy

BATHROOM, SON

Artwork – Boyle Brown, Herringbone, Phillip Jeffries, Tennant & Associates,

Michigan Design Center, Troy

Countertop – Imperial Danby Marble, Ciot, Troy; Fabrication, Top Surface, Clinton Township

Faucet – Matte Black, Concord Faucet, Kingston Brass

Flooring – Cement Tile, Wow Décor Tile, Gray, Virginia Tile Co., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Mirror – Walnut Frame, Bentwood Rounded Rectangular Mirror, Rejuvenation

Picture Frames – Black Wood Frame, West Elm

Sconce – Ziyi Sconce, Bronze, Thomas O'Brien, Visual Comfort

Sink – White, Pop Vessel Sink, DXV, Advance Plumbing & Heating Supply Company, Detroit, Walled Lake

Wall Paint – Benjamin Moore, Classic Gray

Wall Tile – Del Ray, White Caps Gloss Beveled Subway Tile, Virginia Tile Co., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Window Shade – Barbier Pewter, Mark Alexander, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy; Fabricator, Foam N' More, Clawson

BEDROOM, DAUGHTER

Armchair – Corbin Chair, Four Hands

Artwork (large) – Season Shift, Z Gallerie

Artwork (medium) – Ingenuie IV, Leftbank Art

Artwork (small) – Midnight on the Bay, Wendover Art Group

Flooring – Carter Lumber, Macomb

Lamp, Floor – Dauphine Floor Lamp, Studio VC, Visual Comfort

Pillow, Accent Fabric – Linen/Onyx, Graffito, Kelly Wearstler, Kravet, Kravet/Lee

Sculpture, Gold – Scoppio Sphere, Z Gallerie

Table, Occasional – Capri Accent Table, Z Gallerie

Wall Paint – Benjamin Moore, Classic Gray

Desk – Mayfair Steamer Desk, RH

BEDROOM, MASTER

Basket – Rattan Basket, CB2

Bed Frame – Modena Platform Bed, RH

Bedding – Matouk

Bench – Mansfield Hide Bench, Bernhardt, RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Chandelier – Hardy Chandelier, Arteriors

Chests, Bedside – Back to Square One,

Caracole, RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Drapery – Fabricator, Foam N' More, Clawson; Fabric, Trend, 03349-T, Alabaster, Designer Furniture Services, Michigan Design Center, Troy; Trim, Cream, Chrysler Embroidered Border, Samuel & Sons, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Fireplace – 40-inch Landscape FullView, Modern Flames, Bourlier's Barbecue and Fireplace, Royal Oak

Fireplace Wall Treatment – Peacock, Velvet Walls, Phillip Jeffries, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Flooring – Carter Lumber, Macomb

Lamp, Table – Mod Low Table, Suzanne Kasler, Visual Comfort, City Lights Detroit, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Mirror – Salon Gilt Mirror, RH

Rug – Opal, Prosperity, Stark Carpet, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Sculpture, Wall – Reeve Rattan Wall Décor, Palecek

Wall Paint – RH, Gravel

BEDROOM, SON

Armchair – Jules Chair, Sapphire, Four Hands

Artwork – Cubic Array, Z Gallerie

Artwork (bottom) – Follow Me 4 (Limited Edition), Z Gallerie

Artwork (top) – Z Gallerie

Bedding – Lacoste

Bed Frame – Newhall King Bed, Vintage Tobacco, Four Hands

Drapery – Tavish Flannel, Pindler, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Flooring – Carter Lumber, Macomb

Lamp, Bedside – Ralph Lauren

Lamp, Reading – Robert Task Floor Lamp, Lauren Ralph Lauren, City Lights Detroit, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Pillow, Accent – White Woven Leather Pillow, CB2

Rug – Offset Black Stripe Cotton Rug, Four Hands

Tables, Bedside – Shagreen Bedside Table, Four Hands,

Tables, Nested – Vincent Accent Tables, Z Gallerie

Wall Paint – Benjamin Moore, Classic Gray

COFFEE BAR

Cabinet Paint – Sherwin-Williams, Black Magic

Lighting – Puck Light, Ray Lighting Center, Sterling Heights

Shelving – Clear Glass, Birmingham Glass & Mirror, Birmingham

Tile – Antique Mirror Heirloom, Devotion, Virginia Tile Company, Michigan Design Center, Troy

DINING ROOM

Artwork – Nymph's Serenade, Leftbank Art

Candle Holders – CB2

Chandeliers – Regency Large Chandelier, Joe Nye, Visual Comfort

Chairs, Dining – Keno Bros. Dining Chairs, Theodore Alexander, Michigan Design Center, Troy; Fabric, Aqua, Antique Linen Velvet, Schumacher, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Chairs, Patterned Dining – Purr-fect Chair, Caracole, RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy; Fabric, Dove, Vanderbilt Velvet, Schumacher, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Display Chest – Rio 4 Door Buffet, John-Richard, CAI Designs

Drapery – Raise the Bar: Sandbar II, Holly Hunt, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Flooring – Carter Lumber, Macomb

Rug – Halsten, Dune, Stark Carpet, Troy

Sculptures, Circle – CB2

Sculptures, Wall – Hand-Blown Glass, Bueno Glass

Table, Dining – Noir Dining Table, Lillian August for Hickory White, RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Vase, Face – Dora Maar Large Vase, Jonathan Adler

Wall Treatment – Mauve, Haruki Sisal, Schumacher, Michigan Design Center, Troy

FOYER

Candles – Petrified Wood Candle Holder, CB2

Chandelier – Folgate Grande Chandelier, Currey and Company

Flooring – Varenna Carrara Polished Porcelain Tile, Cercan Tile, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Flowers, Large – Fleurdetroit, Bloomfield Township

Mirror, Gold – Custom, Bruce White Galleries, Troy

Sculpture, Wall – Dimensional White Dandelions, Phillips Collection

Table – Twister Table, Caracole, RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Vase – Urn Vase, Global Views, RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Wall Treatment – Umber, Brushed Silk Vinyl, Maya Romanoff

GREAT ROOM

Armchairs – Bigelow Chairs, Caracole,



RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy; Fabric, Cracked Ice, Crosscut Plush, Pollack, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Bench, Leather – Cocktail Tufted Ottoman, Lee Industries, RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Chandelier – Elegant Lighting, Corsica Burnished Brass, Ray Lighting Center, Sterling Heights

Fabric, Bench – Mushroom, Caballero, Pindler, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Fireplace – 60-inch Landscape FullView, Modern Flames, Bourlier's Barbecue and Fireplace, Royal Oak

Flooring – Carter Lumber, Macomb

Pillows, Accent – Dove, Fiji, Clarke & Clarke, Kravet, Kravet / Lee Jofa / Brunswick & Fils, Michigan Design Center, Troy; Logan, Westminster Houndstooth, Holland and Sherry

Pillows, Armchair – Mocha, Lanark Plaid, Cowtan & Tout, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Mirrors, Wall – Antique Mirror with Brass Rosettes, Atelier 26

Rug – Quartz, Thimbu, Stark Carpet, Troy

Sofa – Off the Cuff Sofa, Caracole, RJ Thomas Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy; Fabrication, Gray Flannel, Opuzen, Anthony Inc.

Table, Coffee – Dove, Saunderson

Shagreen Coffee Table, RH

Wall Paint – Benjamin Moore, Classic Gray

Wall Treatment – Pietra Grey Porcelain Slab, SapienStone, Ciot, Troy

KITCHEN

Appliances – Sub-Zero, Witbeck Home Appliance Mart, West Bloomfield

Backsplash – Calacatta Laza Quartz, MSI Detroit, Wixom; Fabrication, Top Surface, Clinton Township

Cabinetry – River Valley Cabinets and Millwork, Vassar; Paint, Sherwin-Williams, Pure White

Countertop – Calacatta Laza Quartz, MSI Detroit, Wixom; Fabrication, Top Surface, Clinton Township

Flooring – Varenna Carrara Polished Porcelain, Cercan Tile, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Hood – River Valley Cabinets and Millwork, Vassar; Brass Strapping, Unlacquered Brass, Patra & Patra Studios, Royal Oak; Paint, Sherwin-Williams, Pure White

Island – River Valley Cabinets and Millwork, Vassar; Paint, Benjamin Moore, Black Magic

Lighting, Island – Allen Large Chandelier, Ralph Lauren, Visual Comfort

Sconce – Gild, Go Lightly Sconce, Barbara Barry, Visual Comfort

Sink – Vault Undermount Sink, Kohler,

Advance Plumbing & Heating Supply Company, Detroit, Walled Lake

Stools, Island – Margarita Swivel Counter Stool, TCS Designs; Fabric, Mushroom, Caballero, Pindler, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Wall Paint – Benjamin Moore, London Fog

Window Shade – Beige, Derain, Manuel Canovas, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy; Fabricator, Foam N' More, Clawson

MASTER SUITE SITTING AREA

Armchairs – Naples Swivel Chair, TCS Designs; Fabric, Rose Buvard, Rivoli, Manuel Canovas, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Artwork (left) – Waves of Light, Leftbank Art

Artwork (right) – Leaf Blade, Leftbank Art

Flooring – Carter Lumber, Macomb

Lamp, Floor – Mia Floor Lamp, Thomas O'Brien, Visual Comfort, City Lights Detroit, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Ottoman – Custom, Designer Furniture Service, Pontiac; Fabric, Gray, Babe's Tweed, Schumacher, Michigan Design Center, Troy; Christian Pleating Piping, Lori Weitzner, Samuel & Sons, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Pillows, Accent – Quartz, Octavia, Schumacher, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Table, Occasional – End Quote, Caracole, RJ Thomas, Ltd., Michigan Design Center, Troy

Wall Paint – RH, Gravel

STUDY

Armchair – Kaishi Black Chair, CB2

Artwork – Modern Improvisation, Leftbank Art

Cabinets – River Valley Cabinets and Millwork, Vassar; Paint, Benjamin Moore, Old Navy

Chair, Desk – Patent Leather Chair, CB2

Chandelier – Farlane Chandelier, Thomas O'Brien, Visual Comfort

Drapery – Teal, Lowick Plaid, Colefax and Fowler, Cowtan & Tout, Tennant & Associates, Michigan Design Center, Troy

Flooring – Carter Lumber, Macomb

Lighting, Cabinet – Dean Picture Light, Alexa Hampton, Visual Comfort

Rug – Sway Black Tufted Rug, CB2

Wall Paint – Benjamin Moore, Classic Gray

ADDITIONAL PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Architect – Joe Vaglica, Ph.D., P.E., Gateway Engineering & Surveying, Shelby Township

Builder – A and G Building, Avery Gilaj, Bruce Township



RELAX & RESTORE

Above: A lovely sitting area in the master suite conveys a peaceful feeling. Left: Another unique view of the foyer.