



BIG EASY DOES IT

INTERIOR DESIGNER WARE PORTER SERVES UP A COLORFUL COCKTAIL IN HIS CLIENT'S HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COTTAGE WITH AN INSPIRED PASTICHE OF OLD-WORLD ELEGANCE AND MODERN-DAY CHIC. PRODUCED BY TORI MELLOTT. WRITTEN BY ALICE WELSH DOYLE. PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAUL COSTELLO.

For the screened porch in historic New Orleans, Ware employed a traditional floor (Blue Haze) with ginger jars from Chair the library walls and ceiling. A classic octagon large-scale botanical vintage-style milk glass hangs above. Sconce,



arrangements of contemporary pieces with landscapes and formal antique portraits. To keep the room from feeling too staid, Porter introduced a zoo's worth of animal motifs—leopard on an antique chair, a zebra pillow on the sofa, a club chair covered in peacocks—and trimmed the crown molding with blue grosgrain ribbon.

That same balance of tradition with winsome *joie de vivre* is on full display in the den, which Porter describes as the “flop room”—albeit a decidedly luxurious and slightly decadent one. “After a dinner party, when the guests are feeling a little *louche* and naughty, this is where they end up,” says Porter. “The wool-felt covered walls are so indulgent, as is the very long L-shaped mohair sofa with classic bouillon fringe, and there’s the plushest carpet underfoot.” While there are some modern aspects to the room, such as the clean-lined cocktail table and paintings by contemporary artists like Hunt Slonem and Lindsay Porter (who also happens to be the designer’s sister), it truly is rooted in classical design and historic New Orleans allure, with dramatic silk pelmets on the windows, 19th-century Louis XVI French armchairs, and an antique chandelier from Paris. The palette similarly balances quiet refinement with exuberance: A delectably chic backdrop of café au lait and cream is enlivened with jolts of apricot, used sparingly—but to maximum effect—on two armchairs, sofa pillows, sconce shades, and the original crown molding.

Perhaps the most transporting spot of all, the first-floor guest

bedroom exemplifies Porter’s devotion to giving each room its own distinct story to tell. A hand-painted panoramic mural by Paul Montgomery shows scenes of India, with caravans, palaces, and animals, whisking visitors away to another time and place. Abundant yards of blue silk make up a classic balloon shade dripping with a long fringe trim reminiscent of a glamorous ball gown. While new, the cornice could easily be a French antique with its rich finish and gilded accents. The vintage Mario Villa iron bed frame and chair serve as a foil to billowing window treatments, fanciful carved mirror, and glamorous crystal chandelier. Best of all, because the room is located just off the library, every visitor to the home can enjoy its beguiling draw.

One quality of successful decorating speaks to how well a home functions when entertaining, especially for a large number of guests. By this measure, the cottage is a hands-down winner. “The crowd at a party or dinner here is very migratory, and there’s a different feeling in each room: You start with cocktails in the library, or in good weather perhaps on the screened-in porch—or both—then mingling in the living room, then dinner, and finally, some possible hijinks in the den,” explains Porter, who has had the occasion to attend numerous events at the home after it was completed. “It’s satisfying to see how clients use the home after you’ve been so in the weeds during the project,” he adds. “It’s like watching a film that you directed and realizing the end result was just what you were endeavoring to achieve.”

The decidedly luxurious den has a cocooning feel, with a paper-backed Chester Wool from Schumacher on the walls and a custom mohair banquette trimmed with Samuel & Sons bullion fringe. The gallery wall of art from the homeowners' collection includes a mix of different mediums. Coffee table, Mrs. & M. is distinctly formal. Pale yellow walls (accented with blue Samuel & Sons grosgrain trim) provide an ideal canvas to showcase more of the clients' extensive art collection. Sink-in upholstery includes an Ebanis velvet sofa and a generous armchair in Schumacher's Peacock fabric by Miles Redd. Pillows in Cub by Miles Redd for Schumacher. Side table and lamps, Bunny Williams Home. Lantern, Visual Comfort.



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