

DEEP LAYERS

This Bucktown home was designed to be bold and unexpected—a complete departure from the homeowner's previous style. Designer Brienne Bishop played with texture and scale through wallcoverings, accessories and art such as the wire sculpture by Chicago artist Eric Gushee.



SURPRISE TWIST

A new-construction family home in Bucktown defies convention with bold scale and a dark and sultry interior.

By Zlata Kozul Naumovski
Photography by Anthony Tahlier

The first thing Brienne Bishop's client told her was that she did not want a stuffy, formal or boring home. The family's previous home was clean and modern and, Bishop admits, had awesome furniture. But none of it came with them.

"This client really wanted to take risks," says Bishop of Brienne Bishop Design. "She kept pushing the envelope more and more. She wanted different and unusual stuff."

In the case of this new-construction home in Bucktown built by Jim Lucas of Lucas Properties, the reward for all the risks taken is a dark and dramatic interior imbued with texture, draped with sophisticated yet durable fabrics and outfitted with custom furniture and statement light fixtures.

Starting in the entry of the 5,000-square-foot home she shares with her real estate banker husband and two children, in lieu of a traditional light fixture, ropes of knitted merino wool drip with knots and are capped in a warm LED glow. "The foyer light fixture is the first thing you see when you enter the house," says Bishop. "It says, 'This house is going to have some surprises.'" Neil Kraus, co-owner of neighboring Pavilion Antiques, where the Matt light



MONOCHROME TONES
 Tasked with providing a neutral kitchen that wasn't white, Bishop opted for a soft gray palette. The custom stools at the island were fabricated by Randall Kramer at Kramer Design Studio and are accented with lighting from Restoration Hardware.



SPACE BETWEEN
 The family room features a gray sectional and tufted ottoman that are both upholstered in durable fabrics, to withstand the family's dogs and traffic through the open-concept space that flows off the kitchen.

by Ilt Ilov of Berlin was purchased, helped her install the fixture that could be easily mistaken for a hanging sculpture.

Another unexpected choice awaits in the dining room—a simple room with a custom walnut dining table and black leather chairs that is wrapped in a smoky suede wallcovering for an atmosphere of a chic late-night lounge. “I always seem to gravitate to the darker, more dramatic spaces,” says Bishop’s client. “I saw the gray and just had to have it. We’re big foodies and go out to eat a lot, and every restaurant outdoes the other in design. I wanted that sexy restaurant feel,” she explains. Imprints on the tactile backdrop can be brushed away. “It’s like Etch A Sketch on wallpaper,” she says. “My kids draw hearts and flowers, and it just brushes out.”

A bold light fixture in the dining room impresses with its dominant size. Made of matte black spun steel and custom designed by Bishop, it was a challenge to find someone willing to make it. “I knew I wanted something big and dramatic, but not the typical chandelier,” says Bishop. “I just knew it had to be an oversized massive steel drum, and my client was brave enough to go for it.”

In the powder room, walls are glossy for a patent-leather effect courtesy of Phillip Jeffries’ aptly named Lacquered Graphite wallcovering. “I’m a huge texture person; I want people to walk up and touch everything,” says Bishop.

And though her client loves neutrals, a stark white kitchen wouldn’t suffice. Working with the builder, whose work she had long admired for its craftsmanship, Bishop chose a putty color that veers toward medium gray. It pairs with a countertop of superwhite quartzite from South America, which offers the look of Carrara marble



TOP KNOT
 An artful light fixture by Berlin's Ilt Ilov from Pavilion Antiques on Damen makes a dramatic statement in the front entry.



but is more durable. The island, stained a darker color, brings in some warmth and plays nicely against the lighter painted finish of the cabinets.

"I wanted a more sophisticated kind of home," the homeowner says of her two-tone kitchen. "When you're sitting on the sofa, you forget that you're in the kitchen." A nearby wet bar with an antique mirror augments the sophistication factor and looks more like a furniture piece.

In the family room, a custom dark gray sectional and custom tufted ottoman—both done in a commercial-grade velvet—provide the durability the client was after. "The fabric is good with dogs and kids," notes Bishop. "Everything in the house is basically indestructible but doesn't look that way," she adds. And in a house that often hosts an entire grade full of teens, it gets put to the test.

A large powder-coated wire sculpture in an organic shape above the fireplace was commissioned from local artist Eric Gushee "to take up every inch of that wall and to balance the dining room drum light," Bishop explains. "We wanted everything to be really big. City lots are so narrow, and we wanted to make dramatic statements where we could," her client adds.

In the living room, the family's Shih Tzu bichon found

his favorite spot on a sofa covered in smooth Great Plains vinyl from Holly Hunt that contrasts with the fluffy texture of Mongolian sheep-covered vintage chairs. "It's rare for a couple with young kids to take risks like that," notes Bishop.

The bedrooms upstairs have their fair share of drama and texture too. In the 14-year-old daughter's room, there's a grass-cloth wallcovering with metallic thread on the ceiling, a fringed Moroccan wedding blanket on the bed and a vintage metal vanity with furry pouf.

The master bedroom, meanwhile, revisits Bishop's penchant for moody spaces, since the homeowner wanted a dark sleeping cave. Not satisfied with a simple painted wall and shunning wallpaper, Bishop opted for a faux finish. "We had one sample made, and it was a done deal," she says. "It has incredible texture. You're not sure what it is when you touch it—it could be plaster or wallpaper." A custom bed and nightstands by Bishop, silk velvet barrel chairs and a special Curtis Jere sculpture that was a gift from the homeowner's husband complete the look. It happens to be Bishop's favorite room.

The client loves it more and more every day: "As you move from room to room, it's all connected like a thread. It makes me feel very adult." ■

GRAY MATTER

From left: An oversized sofa in the loft area was chosen to anchor the space and host an entire class. "My daughter can invite everyone over and have a massive sleepover," says the homeowner; the daughter's bedroom features shimmering bedding and a wallpapered ceiling that gives a twinkly glow. Opposite page: The cherished Curtis Jere sculpture on the wall over the master bed was one of the only things that survived the move.

DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE
Single-family home

LOCATION
Bucktown

INTERIOR DESIGN
Brienne Bishop,
Brienne Bishop Design
briennebishopdesign.com

BUILDER & PAINTER
Lucas Properties & Construction
lucas-properties.com

PLASTERWORK
Näss Fresco Finishes
frescoplaster.com

MILLWORK
Arbor Mills
arbormills.com

RESOURCES
Arteriors
Bench in master bedroom
arteriorshome.com

Atelier Gary Lee
Gabriel Scott coffee table
ateliergarylee.com

Brienne Bishop Design
Custom design of entry chandelier,
master bed and nightstands,
kitchen banquette, family room
sectional and ottoman, dining table
and living room sofa
briennebishopdesign.com

Holly Hunt
Great Plains sharkskin and vinyl
fabrics, living room and daughter's
bedroom's drapery, and Phillip
Jeffries wallpaper
hollyhunt.com

Kramer Design Studio
Fabrication of custom furniture design
kramerdesignstudio.com

Lightology
Living room and powder room fixtures
lightology.com

Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams
Barrel chairs,
mgbwhome.com

Restoration Hardware
Rugs throughout, entry and kitchen
pendant lighting
restorationhardware.com

Schaaf Window Company
Windows and doors
schaafwindow.com