

After becoming new parents, a couple reimagines their home.

By Abby Bielagus // Photographed by Michael J. Lee

A FAMILY AFFAIR

The living room shelves disappear, allowing the objects to shine.



This is less a story about a home and more so one about good parents. Paula Daher's (daherinteriordesign.com) chic design for this Boston brownstone is ultimately a result of choices both she and her clients made for their children. The clients first approached Daher 11 years ago when they were moving from London to Boston, but she declined the project because she was devoted to caring for her son who was sick with severe meningitis. (He made a full recovery and now works with her at the design firm.) Fast forward a decade later and the clients reached out again. They had a daughter now and wanted to revamp their home to better suit her lifestyle and theirs as new parents.

Finally the timing was right for Daher and she and the clients embarked on a modified gut. When the homeowners had first moved in, they had simply

purchased all of their furnishings from one retail store. Their goal with Daher was to take the home from generic and basic to chic and curated. Every inch of the five-story brownstone was touched, but not completely ripped apart. The dining room became the living room so that the kitchen and dining room could be on the same level. The powder room was relocated in order to create a casual tv room and the lower level was renovated into a colorful playroom. The design concept and color choices were based on existing elements like the stone in the kitchen and the hardwood floors.

Daher also wanted to bring the client's European sensibility and warm personality into the brownstone. The wife grew up in Belgium and the husband had lived abroad for twenty-five years, spending time in Singapore and London. Between them, they owned a worldly collection of objects from around the globe. To showcase their collection of pottery and

The sunlit, sophisticated kitchen is also quite functional. Opposite page: Wallpaper helps bring the outside into the dining room.

Below: Artful wallpaper brings personality to the study. Right: The lush and elegant primary bedroom.



keepsakes from their travels, Daher designed shelves in the living room that disappear into the plaster with a deep gray backdrop that allows the objects to take center stage. "When I first broached this idea to the client, they were skeptical to go with such a dramatic hue, but once they saw the rendering and were able to visualize the look, they were one hundred percent on board," Daher says. Other special touches were integrated into the design like the fireplace mantel from Chesneys (chesneys.com). Coupled with the shelves, it makes the living room warm, inviting, layered and timeless.

Throughout the design process, Daher always kept functionality top of mind. "Each floor is 1,100 square feet and I had to think about how the family

lives and ensure the design supported and elevated that lifestyle. Space planning is always important and that is especially true in vertical city living," says Daher.

The timeline from start to finish was roughly one year. "We did a lot in that time, especially since this project was during the pandemic when there were many challenges around scheduling artisans and supply chain issues," says Daher. Millwork was a large hurdle and the owner of the company ended up doing much of the project himself due to worker shortages. The banquette in the dining area, for example, required an artisan to build the structure, a finisher and an upholster. To help keep the project on time, Daher chose walnut instead of the



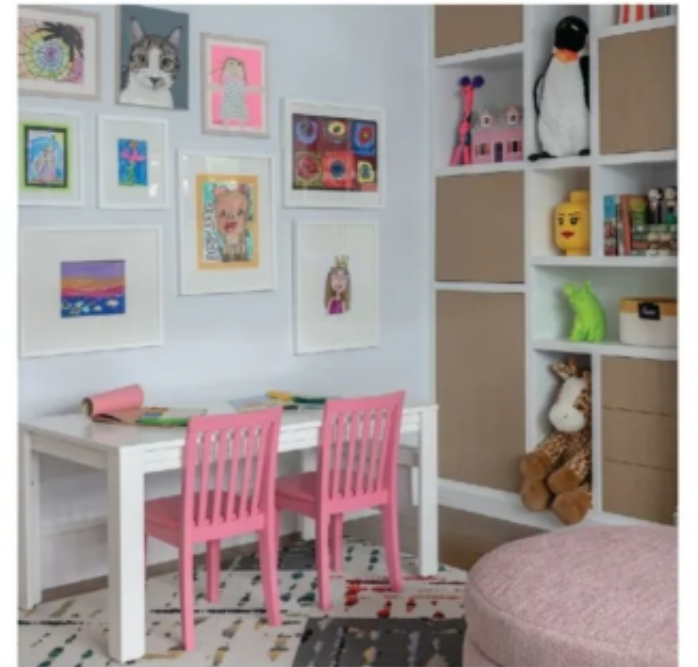
original white oak. Throughout the process, she was diligent about ordering all the furnishings so they would be ready to install on schedule. She planned the renovation and installation for the summer months while the family was at their summer house. "With decades of experience in design, I know that it's important to face challenges head on. Client communication is hugely important," says Daher.

In addition to the roadblocks, the design team was also forced to wrestle with the weather. The install happened on the hottest day

Toys are fashionably stashed in the daughter's playroom which will easily grow with her maturing tastes. Opposite page: Daher framed and hung the daughter's artwork in a clever montage.

of the summer and the workers were drenched in sweat. "I was running around with a towel for them! And the photoshoot happened during a snowstorm," Daher laughs.

Yet despite all of the challenges, the end result is not only functional, but serene, chic and elegant. "I am proud that throughout it all, everyone came together to create a beautiful project that the client loves," says Daher. When the couple returned to their city home in time for back to school, they were thrilled. One of their favorite areas is the daughter's playroom. "They were touched by how we professionally framed her art and hung it in a montage. It's those details that make the difference," says Daher. ■



DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE

Single-family home

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Daher Interior Design
Daherinteriordesign.com

LOCATION

South End

CONTRACTOR

Prominent Builders
Buildprominent.com

MILLWORKER

Salmon Falls Millworkers
Salmonfallswoodworksinc.com

BANQUETTE UPHOLSTERY

Dauids Custom Upholstery
Davidcustomupholstery.blogspot.com

PAINT

BMC Painting Inc.
Bmcpaintinginc.com