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JULY/AUG 2016 | DISPLAY UNTIL 09/05/16



# History Repeating

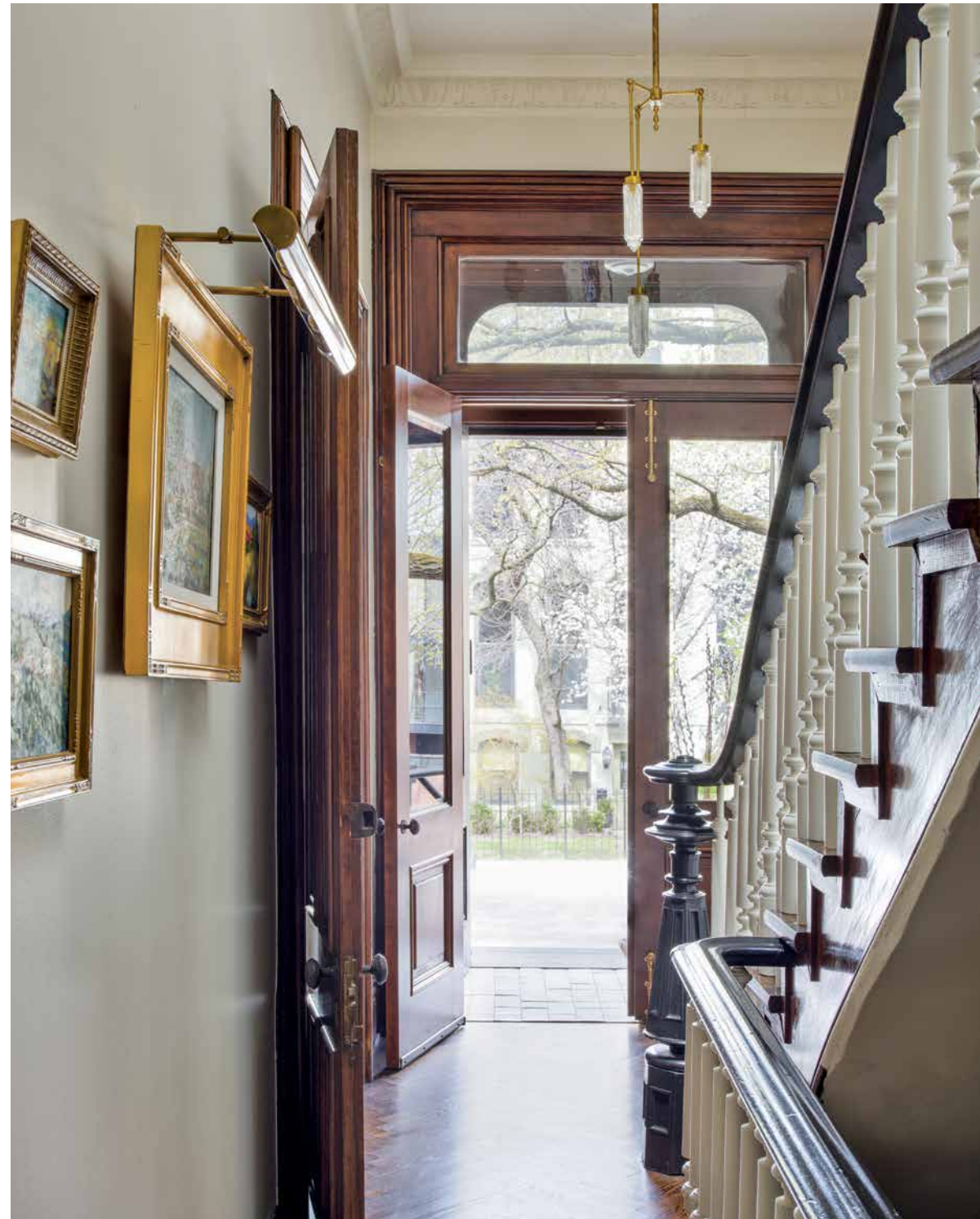
AN UPDATED LAYOUT AND A LIVELY BLEND OF FURNISHINGS ALLOW A 19<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY CHICAGO ROW HOME TO EMBRACE MODERNITY WITHOUT LOSING SIGHT OF ITS HISTORIC PAST.

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INTERIOR DESIGN / REBEKAH ZAVELOFF, KITCHENLAB DESIGN  
ARCHITECTURE / BILL BICKFORD AND JASON OSBORNE,  
NORTHWORKS ARCHITECTS + PLANNERS  
HOME BUILDER / PETER GEMMEL AND JOHN MEDINGER, MG CUSTOM  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / TONY QUINN AND BRIAN CULLITON,  
CULLITON QUINN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

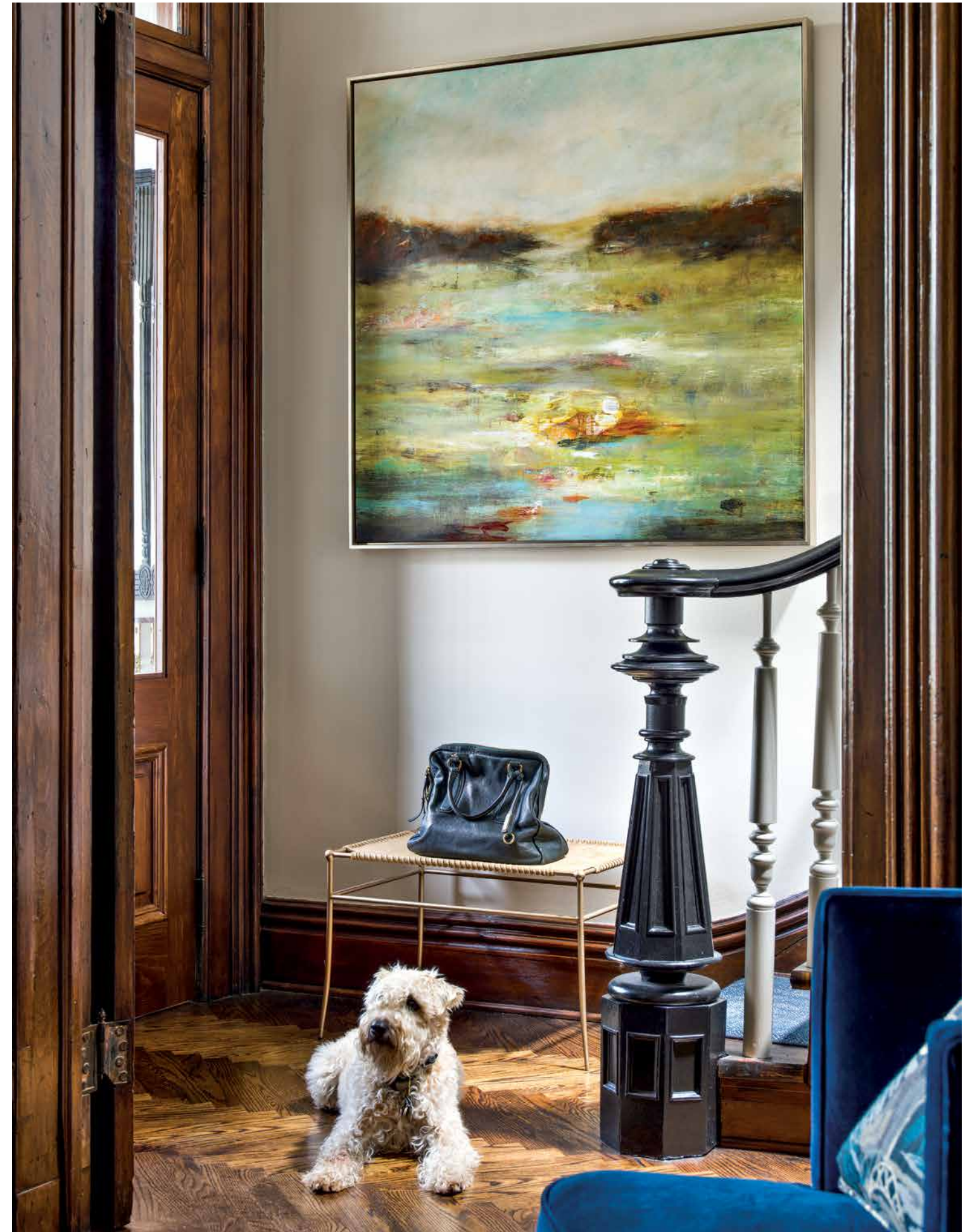
**Right:** Designer Rebekah Zaveloff gave this late-19<sup>th</sup>-century row home in Chicago an elegant timeless feel through a rhythm of vintage and modern elements. In the front hall, a Michelle James brass fixture hangs near the staircase, where builders Peter Gemmel and John Medinger methodically recreated the spindles to be longer.

**Opposite:** The owners' wheaten terrier rests on oak flooring installed in a herringbone pattern by Gemmel and Medinger in the front hall. Benjamin Moore's Fog Mist paint provides a neutral backdrop for an acrylic-on-canvas by Lisa Ridgers from Chicago Art Source, which hangs above a Caracole bench purchased from Candelabra. The Rosecore staircase runner is from Rexx Rug.



**F**or designer Rebekah Zaveloff, the late-19<sup>th</sup>-century brick row home in Chicago that she designed for a couple with two children was a dream project. "The opportunity to work on a house with this kind of intact architecture is just about as fun as it gets," says Zaveloff, noting that the goal was to create a stylish, timeless and family-friendly space within that significant architectural backdrop. "We wanted an older home with lots of character, but all the charm had been removed or altered from most houses we looked at," says the wife. "This one had the old moldings, doorknobs and other original details that we were searching for."

To create a more spacious abode, the owners hired architect Bill Bickford, who—along with project manager Jason Osborne—collaborated with Zaveloff on an addition to the back of the house, which contains a ground-level mudroom and family room, an eat-in kitchen on the second floor, and additional bedrooms on the third level. "The bones were in good shape, but the home needed to be reborn as a modern interpretation of a row house with more open space and natural light," says Bickford. "The house now tells a story from front to back as the interiors go from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century."



**Opposite:** A new granite hearth was added to the dining room's original Carrara-marble-and-cast-iron fireplace, which is topped with an English aged-brass RH mirror. The brass bar cart from Rara Avis Boutique shares space with a limited-edition pigment print by artist Rose Lindo, titled *The Rapids*, from Minted.

**Below:** Zaveloff used the clean lines of midcentury modern furniture to balance the dining room's woodwork. Josef Hoffmann side chairs from Design Within Reach surround a vintage table by Robsjohn-Gibbings for Widdicomb purchased through Style House D.C. An over-dyed vintage rug from Oscar Isberian Rugs grounds the space.





Architect Bill Bickford and project manager Jason Osborne collaborated with Zaveloff to give the new kitchen a pre-war feel. Custom cabinetry, designed by Zaveloff and fabricated by Superior Wood Products, pairs with honed Calacatta marble countertops from Marble & Granite Supply of Illinois. Circa Lighting pendants illuminate barstools from Ballard Designs as well as a Rohl faucet and Kraus sink.

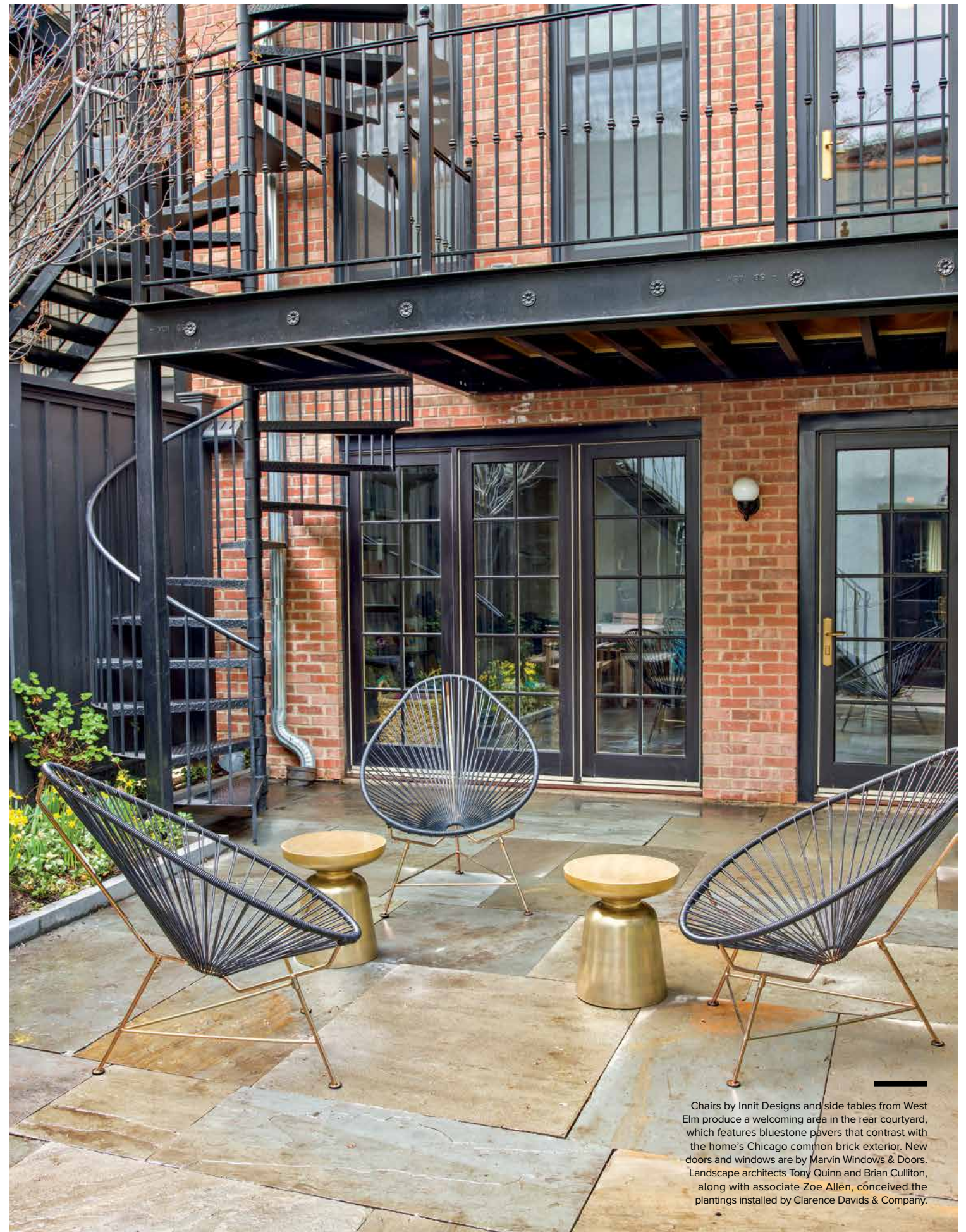
Bickford and Osborne relied on a new bank of south-facing windows in the kitchen and skylights on the upper level to allow for natural illumination and to bring the outside in. "Although the house is traditional in aesthetic, the homeowners wanted a more modern and clean landscape design to maximize the small spaces in the front and back," says landscape architect Tony Quinn, who worked on the surrounding greenery with fellow landscape architect Brian Culliton and associate Zoe Allen. "So, texture and seasonal display were key."

Another key element inside was the staircase railing, which was too low to meet current standards. Therefore, builders Peter Gemmel and John Medinger—who handled all the on-site work—meticulously recreated the spindles in a longer length to address this problem without altering the old-time appearance. Now, a black railing, white spindles and simple runner all add a sense of modernity without disrupting the dwelling's vintage character. "It's rare for people to go to the extent that the owners did with their house," Gemmel says. "They were willing to invest in the details that make this project incredibly distinct."

Those details are evident around the home, particularly on the main level. Here, Gemmel and Medinger carefully laid oak floorboards in a herringbone pattern and went to great lengths to reproduce the moldings, pocket doors and ornate plaster cornice work that first sold the owners on the house. "The large moldings are what make this house so special," Zaveloff says. "It was important to match them." Additionally, dark trim stands out against the kitchen's white custom cabinetry, which is outfitted with a mix of hardware and diamond-wire glass. A black-painted island and cast-iron pedestal table, with a bluestone top, stand out against the white subway-tile walls and honed Calacatta marble countertops. "We really wanted to create a kitchen that felt one with the space yet still appropriate to style of the house," Zaveloff says. "There's a lot of black and white contrasting throughout because the palette is timeless."

**Below left:** The custom bench conceived by Zaveloff and a cast-iron pedestal table from RH create a casual dining area in the kitchen. Chairs from Design Within Reach offer additional seating, while the ladder from Putnam Rolling Ladder Co. in New York adds interest. The sconce is from Schoolhouse Electric & Supply Co. in Portland, Oregon.

**Below right:** A custom stainless-steel hood with brass accents from Avenue Metal Co. forms a striking focal point in the kitchen. Concorde Dawn subway tiles by Jeffrey Court featuring charcoal grout harmonize with walls painted in a Benjamin Moore Ballet White hue. Thermador appliances finish the space.



Chairs by Innit Designs and side tables from West Elm produce a welcoming area in the rear courtyard, which features bluestone pavers that contrast with the home's Chicago common brick exterior. New doors and windows are by Marvin Windows & Doors. Landscape architects Tony Quinn and Brian Culliton, along with associate Zoe Allen, conceived the plantings installed by Clarence Davids & Company.



In the study, a Souk wool rug from West Elm is juxtaposed with dark gray walls painted in Benjamin Moore's Midsummer Night and built-in cabinetry fabricated by Gemmel and Medinger. The multifunctional space also includes a sleeper sofa from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, covered in charcoal velvet, and a tufted RH ottoman.

***“FURNISHINGS SHOULD PROVIDE A COUNTERPOINT AND VISUAL CONTRAST RATHER THAN MATCH THE ERA OF THE HOME.”***

*-REBEKAH ZAVELOFF*

Crisp white linens from Bedside Manor, pillow shams dressed in a Kelly Wearstler textile for Lee Jofa's Groundworks, and an RH duvet all fashion a restful retreat in the master bedroom, which features an Ethan Allen bed. The nightstand, also by Ethan Allen, is topped with a vintage table lamp from Revision Home. The linen window shade is by Smith & Noble.



That contrast, for example, can be found in the entry, where black lacquered front doors and a mirror mingle with a white marble ledge as well as charcoal-and-off-white floor tiles.

Although the interiors feature some traditional roots, bits of color and whimsy abound. "The owners wanted some unexpected elements and shapes to keep the space from feeling too serious," Zaveloff says. In the living room, for example, a blue-and-white ikat rug strikes a contemporary chord against the original marble-and-cast-iron fireplace. Likewise, the linen-covered sofa and blue velvet chairs feature clean lines that complement the vintage cocktail table. "Historic houses can often hold their homeowners hostage because they feel like the furnishings should honor the architecture," Zaveloff says. "To me, furnishings should provide a counterpoint and visual contrast rather than match the era of the home."

Moreover, in the dining room, an over-dyed vintage rug pairs with a midcentury modern table and brass bar cart. The entry and front hall also display distinct material

combinations. The front hall, for instance, features a brass fixture that coexists peacefully with an acrylic-on-canvas landscape painting, hair-on-hide bench and original vintage doors. In the entry, hand-painted terra-cotta floor tiles—one of several similar designs that can be found in the home's numerous bathrooms—add to the consistent palette and material selections throughout (subway tiles and marble countertops in the bathrooms also repeat in the kitchen). "In music, repetition and contrast are what make a good song," Zaveloff says, "and it's the same idea with interiors."

For the designer, the nearly two-year project was equal parts challenging, educational and rewarding. "It's humbling to work on a house with this level of craftsmanship, and the result fills me with so much pride," Zaveloff says. Happily ensconced in their new abode, the owners are just as thrilled with the outcome. "Rebekah understood what we wanted and helped us take some risks," says the wife. "We're really proud of the house and love the way it turned out." ■

In the master bathroom, sconces from Pottery Barn shine light on polished-nickel medicine cabinets and a metal double-sink washstand, all from RH. The washstand is topped with marble and outfitted with Newport Brass faucets from Studio41. Walls are partially covered in subway tiles by Jeffrey Court.