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# A Designer Turned Her Childhood Friend's Home into a Masterful Mash-Up of '70s and '80s Decor Hits

Shared style crushes help a designer pull from childhood memories to shape a new Chicago area home for a long-time friend.

By [Sally Finder Weepie](#) | May 16, 2023



Burnt orange, lava lamps and disco. The 1970s get a bad rap. But it's also an era that hustled in well-traveled boho, textural rattan and cane, sultry brass, global pattern and bold abstract art. These style stalwarts decorate today's most au courant homes—and the childhood memories of two friends who pulled from the past to shape a new home.

"We go way back," says interior designer Rebekah Zaveloff of her friend Lorie FitzGibbon. "We grew up together in Ohio. My mom owned a store that sold the latest fashions; Lorie's mom was an art dealer. We were both heavily influenced by the style of the late '70s and early '80s—boho hippy meets disco and glam."



Funky scenes frame a portrait by figurative artist Alex Katz that hangs over a finished burl wood dining table. "Everyone insists it looks like me," Lorie says. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

So when Lorie and her husband, John, built a new home in the Chicago suburbs, Lorie knew where to find her style muse.

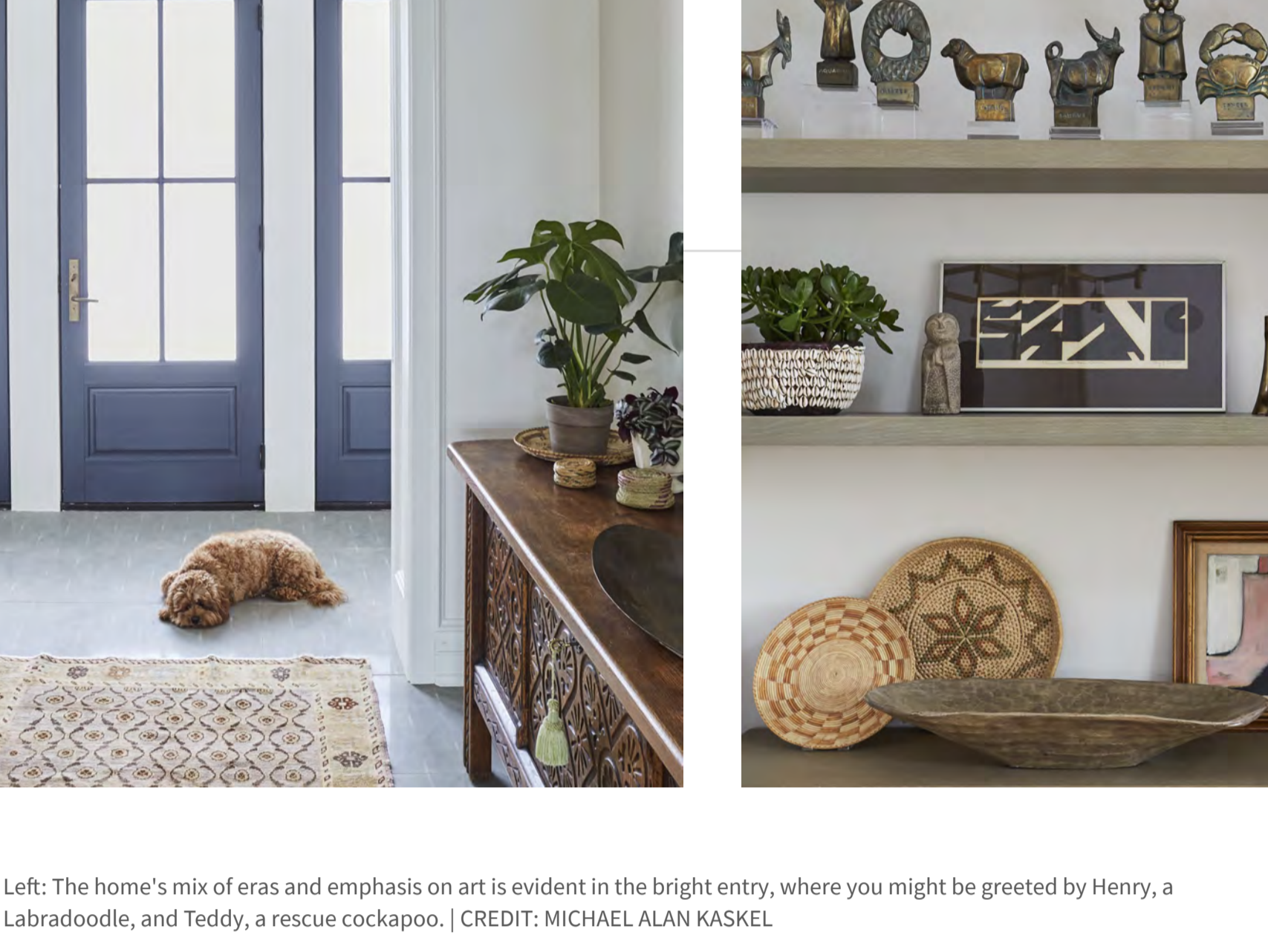
"First, I told her what I didn't want," Lorie says with a laugh. "I didn't want a kitschy lake house—even though the property is on a lake—or a house that looked brand-new and didn't fit with the 50-year-old houses in this little neighborhood."



Lorie and John FitzGibbon's suburban Chicago home looks out on a lake. Colorful patterned throw pillows and a goatskin coffee table punch up the serene living area. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

Zaveloff was already on the same page. "My firm has primarily done remodels—in fact, this was our first new home from the ground up," she says. "I love the character that comes with old houses, and I wanted to give that aesthetic to Lorie in a home with casual elegance." The key, the friends agreed, was bringing elements from past eras into the new interiors.

"When others zig, Lorie and I zag," Zaveloff says. "We have an almost visceral reaction to anything that feels too trendy." Instead, the friends turned to vintage furnishings and rugs, along with other elements that nod to their younger days. The result infuses rooms with an old soul while juxtaposing contemporary ingredients in a sophisticated mix.



Left: The home's mix of eras and emphasis on art is evident in the bright entry, where you might be greeted by Henry, a Labrador, and Teddy, a rescue cocker spaniel. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

Right: Lorie collects midcentury modern zodiac sculptures by Fred Press and displays them on floating shelves that span a wall niche in the living area. "I started with my own sign, Pisces," she says. "Now I'm missing just one: Scorpio. It's very fun. Everyone looks for their sign. What's your sign? How very '70s." | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

It all starts in the entry, where Zaveloff paired two pieces that Lorie already owned—an 18th-century carved cabinet and a painting by Colombian American artist Oscar Murillo—with textural porcelain tile and a vintage rug.

In the great room, a newly purchased linen sofa—and a well-loved leather counterpart that Zaveloff had restuffed—join in a multi-era repertoire with brass Design Institute America chairs and a lacquered goatskin coffee table from the 1970s.

Lorie says she spotted the sprawling 60x60-inch table on Chairish. "I fell in love with it, and Rebekah said, 'Buy it—it's fabulous!'" But her husband wasn't so sure about purchasing used furniture. "I said, 'It's made, it's pre-owned. It just has a few scratches, and we have teenagers. If this table made it through 40 years, it's going to make it through our children.'"

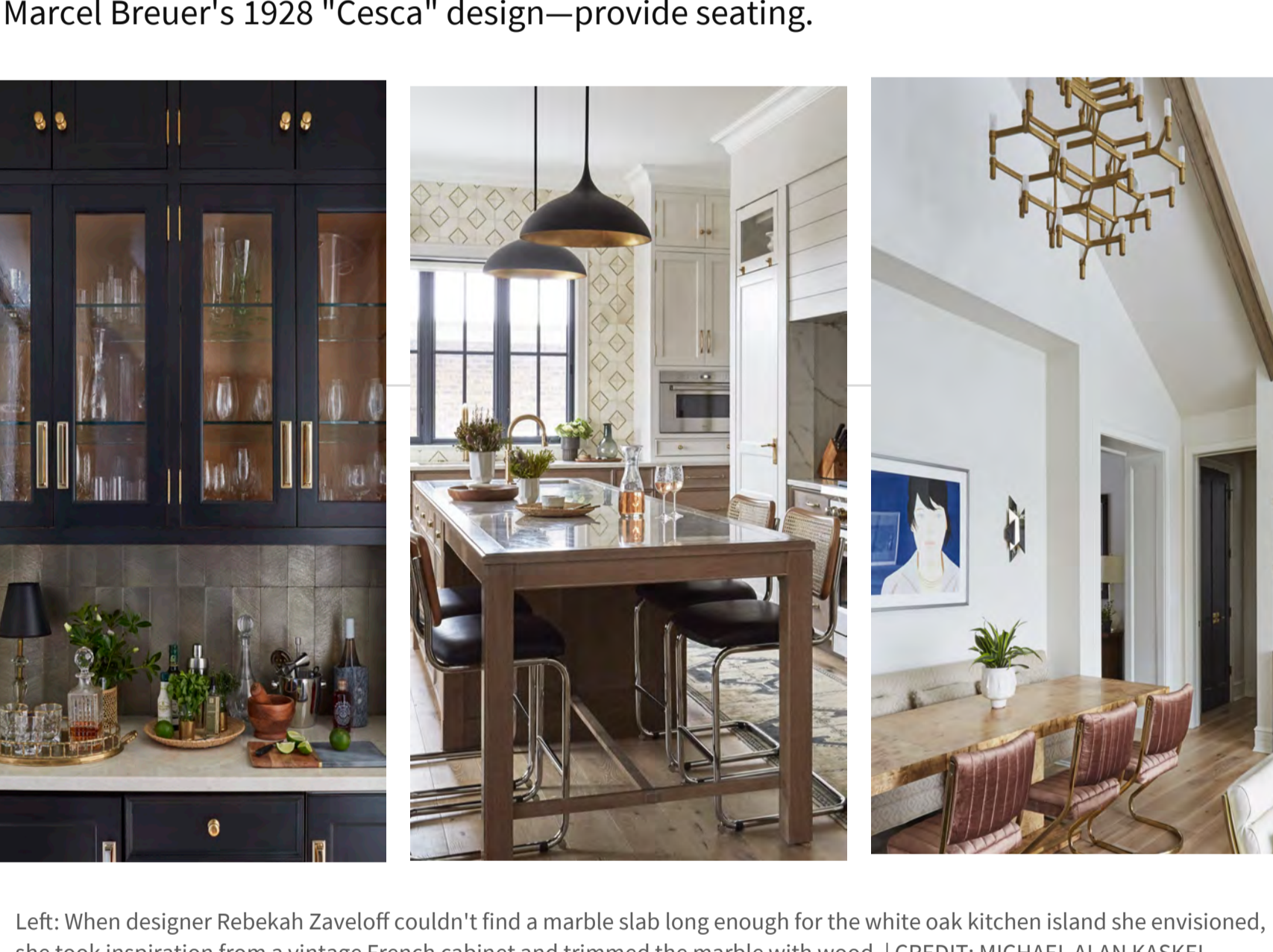
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An envelope of white walls and neutral upholstery provides an ideal canvas for Lorie's collected art pieces and a trove of throw pillows covered in patterns that evoke exotic travels. "At first glance, it might look like a lot of beige, but it's not," Zaveloff says. "The palette, with its faded pinks and purples, was inspired by a dream trip I took to Marrakech."



On the main floor, a glass-door hutch adds to the kitchen's character and openness. Meals at the eating nook come with lake views. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

The melding of influences continues in the kitchen, where Zaveloff contrasted white-painted cabinetry with rift-cut white oak. Traditional moldings and paneled doors play off the farmhouse simplicity of a shiplap-covered range hood. White quartzite countertops politely turn the spotlight on backsplash materials: marble-look porcelain behind the range, terra-cotta tile with a geometric bronze inlay behind the sink. Contemporary black accents marry with timeless unlacquered brass. Cane-back, tubular-steel counter stools—a 1970s favorite descended from Marcel Breuer's 1928 "Cesca" design—provide seating.



Left: When designer Rebekah Zaveloff couldn't find a marble slab long enough for the white oak kitchen island she envisioned, she took inspiration from a vintage French cabinet and trimmed the marble with wood. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

Center: In the lower-level bar, black cabinetry and handmade tile dial up the drama. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

Right: A retro chandelier defines the great room's banquette dining zone. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

"There is no one style, no one era," Zaveloff says. "It's about how materials interact. I learned that during my time as a collage artist, and it's just as important in interior design."

**Related:** [See How One Family Modernized a 1977 Cabin in South Dakota](#)



In the couple's bath, Zaveloff called on timeless warm and cool tones to create a soothing sanctuary. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

A main-level suite features rich texture in the bedroom, where Zaveloff reupholstered Lorie and John's existing headboard and flanked their bed with vintage burl maple side tables. A light-filled bath offers generous spans of white oak cabinetry, replated vintage mirrors and a floor clad in trellis-inspired tile.



Left: Yes, rattan furniture is still hanging around. This version of the '70s staple swings from a bedroom ceiling. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

Right: The walkout basement is a great place for entertaining—and having a second kitchen. Deep blue cabinets, quartzite countertops and custom backsplash tile make the space a real stunner. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

The kids' rooms—plus a family room and second kitchen—reside in the back home's walkout basement, where French doors open to the backyard and lake beyond.

"Being on the lake provides immediate serenity," Zaveloff says. "You don't need to travel. Here, you feel like you're on vacation all the time. It's a place you never want to leave."



By building a suburban home on the water, Lorie and John got both a full-time residence and a lake retreat. A patio and dock bring them even closer to the neighborhood's big draw. | CREDIT: MICHAEL ALAN KASKEL

***My husband says there's a saga attached to everything in this house.***

LORIE FITZGIBBON, HOMEOWNER

Lorie agrees. "I love this house. There's so much of me—and Rebekah—in here," she says. "We filled this home with things from the '70s and '80s that I love. It makes it feel good—it feels like our childhood. And that's a really happy feeling."

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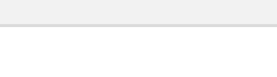
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