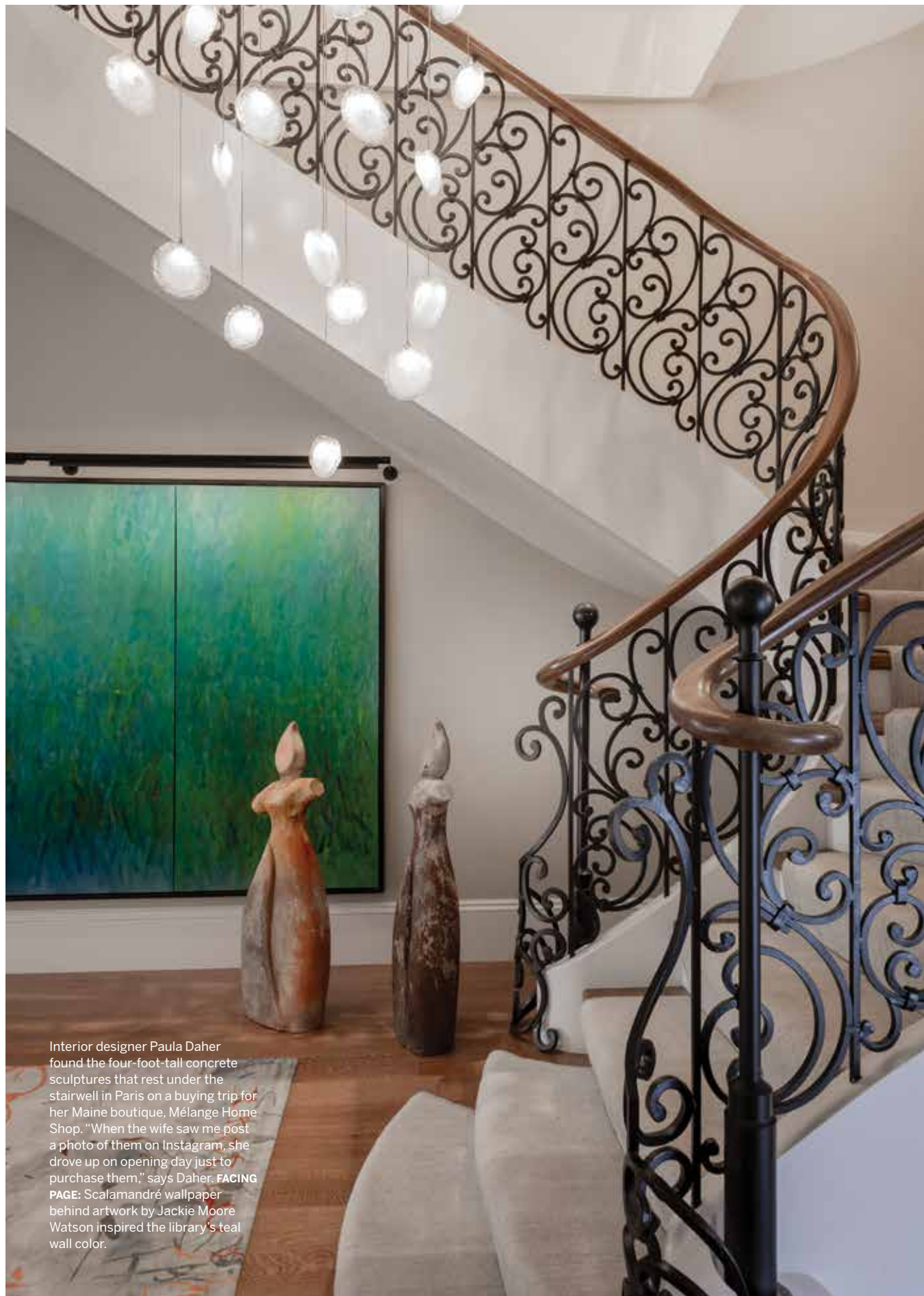


New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

20th
Anniversary
Issue

Celebrate!



Interior designer Paula Daher found the four-foot-tall concrete sculptures that rest under the stairwell in Paris on a buying trip for her Maine boutique, Mélange Home Shop. "When the wife saw me post a photo of them on Instagram, she drove up on opening day just to purchase them," says Daher. **FACING PAGE:** Scalamandré wallpaper behind artwork by Jackie Moore Watson inspired the library's teal wall color.

A Celebration of Design

From the designers to the makers to the homeowners, everyone brought something to the table in this Boston renovation.

Text by ERIKA AYN FINCH | *Photography by* MICHAEL J. LEE





LEFT: Near the living room's conversation alcove, Daher topped an Italian commode with an antique lamp that belonged to the homeowner's grandmother. The artwork is by Vickie Marsango. **BELOW:** An antique potting table from France serves as the vanity in a powder room tucked under the building's stairwell. **FACING PAGE:** The living room's detailed ceiling launched the home's European-flavored design.

It all ended with a massive party, but the guests weren't just friends and family. They were also designers and builders—the collaborators who turned a quirky, dated Back Bay brownstone into an elegant contemporary home. The soiree acted like an exclamation point, a snapshot of how these particular homeowners move through life, says interior designer Paula Daher: "They are charismatic, happy, positive patrons of the arts."





The family's dog loves to lounge on the the kitchen's banquette, upholstered in a nubby olive green fabric. Overgaard & Dyrman chairs offer additional seating. **FACING PAGE:** In the kitchen, with its dramatic barrel-vaulted ceiling, Blue Caravaggio marble tops a cerused-walnut island and the nearby counter and backsplash.

And it truly did take a village to gut the apartment and turn it into a colorful home that welcomes friends for Sunday afternoon football and kids for holiday gift exchanges. But even before the village was assembled—and well before the champagne was poured—it started with one very special living room ceiling.

David O'Malley and David Schwartz of BSA Construction, along with the architects at Payne | Collins Design, were

already in the process of renovating the extra-wide (fifty feet!) brownstone when a couple and their realtor approached them about purchasing it. Before signing on the dotted line, the couple began auditioning interior designers, and when Daher arrived for her interview, the wedding cake ceiling in the living room took her breath away.

"I told them, 'Whether you hire me or not, don't let anyone remove this

“There were one hundred decisions we had to make for each room, but ultimately it made the project that much more rewarding.”—*Builder David O’Malley*



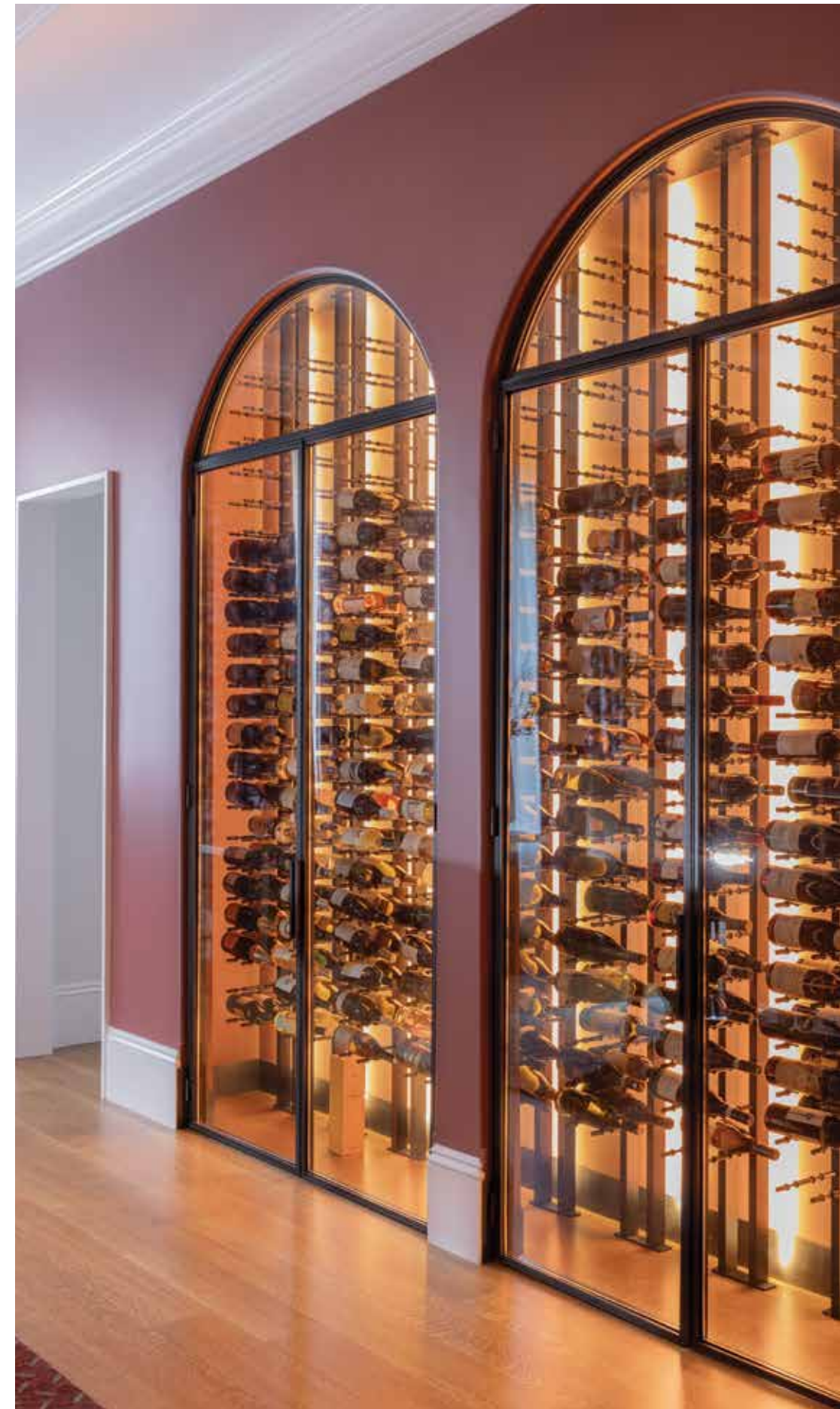
ceiling.’” remembers Daher, who has offices in Boston and Maine. “It had these Haussmann-like details that just made me think of Paris.”

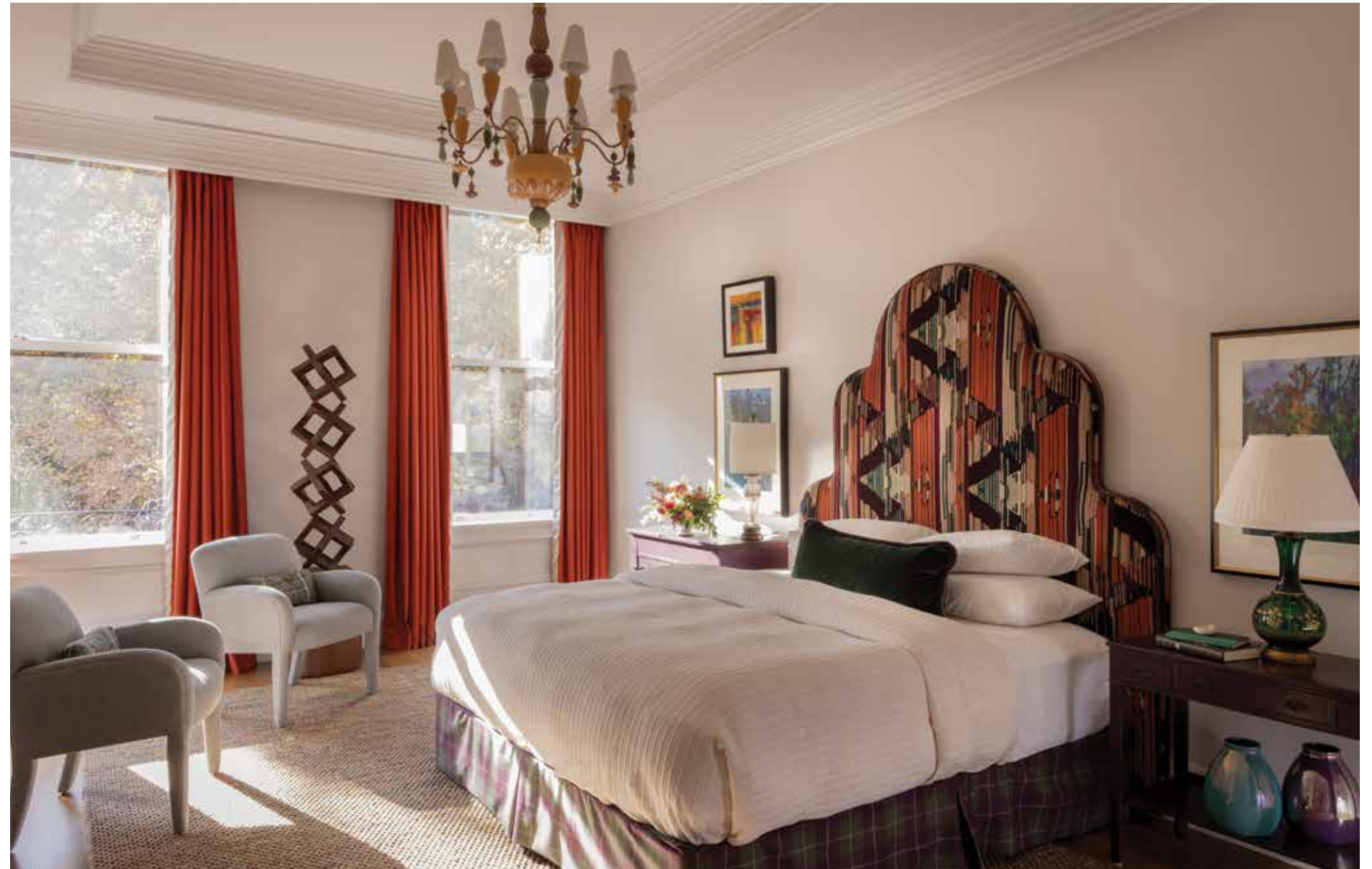
That keen observation sealed the deal, and Daher got the job. Aside from the ceiling, the owners elected to keep most of the original fireplaces in the 1887-built home and insisted on

repurposing its stained glass (more on that later), but a free-flowing staircase replaced the original suburban-esque design, and the home was given a luxe primary suite on the second floor.

The team devised a dramatic barrel-vaulted ceiling in the kitchen, and Daher added a crescent-shaped banquette niche in the same space. “The wife only

ABOVE: The chairs in the formal dining room are wrapped top to bottom in Romo fabric, while dual niches flanking the fireplace contain dry bars crafted from the same Calacatta Viola marble as the fireplace surround. **RIGHT:** The dining room’s wine cave holds 750 bottles.





CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: The headboard in a guest room is eight feet tall. A closet in the primary suite showcases antique doors from France. Absolute Glass disassembled stained glass original to the home and turned it into a statement piece on the second-floor landing; the artwork is by Vickie Marsango.

“The homeowners are charismatic, happy, positive patrons of the arts.”

—Interior designer Paula Daher

wanted curves in the house—no ninety-degree angles,” says Daher. “You’ll see that everywhere from the staircase to the wine cave in the dining room to the rounded corners on the range hood.”

Not surprisingly, challenges appeared around every curved corner. The team had to get creative with the new ductwork, and it took a small army

to relocate 400-pound solid-mahogany pocket doors from the living room to the dining room, says O’Malley. “There were one hundred decisions we had to make for each room,” he explains, “but ultimately it made the project that much more rewarding.”

The high-gloss teal library is especially rife with details, and its built-ins

contain all kinds of secrets. To the left of the fireplace, a TV rises on demand from a concealed opening in what reads as base cabinetry. To the right, says Daher’s son and business partner, Clayton, the bookcases slide to reveal a computer desk.

As for the aforementioned stained glass, the Dahers searched high and low



ABOVE: In the new primary suite, Daher repurposed a sofa from the homeowner's former living room, reupholstering it and adding fringe to the bottom. The artwork above the fireplace is by Cate West Zahl. **RIGHT:** The primary bedroom's empire chandelier is original to the home. **FACING PAGE:** New Ravenna tile in the inset behind the primary bath adds an artistic element to the room.

for someone who could repurpose it in an unexpected way. They found a craftsman in Methuen, Massachusetts, who took the panels apart and integrated LED backlighting. The resulting art piece now takes center stage in a recess on the upstairs landing.

But back to that party. It was intended to thank the team for their creativity and gumption. "It really was a very special project in that everyone involved, from the builder to the artisans to the homeowners, was willing to go along with some crazy ideas," says Daher. "It was such a treat to return and see the final outcome. It was a night to remember."

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

ARCHITECTURE: Payne | Collins Design
INTERIOR DESIGN: Daher Interior Design
BUILDER: BSA Construction





This past spring, interior designer Paula Daher found herself wandering through Paris, searching for treasures for her Maine boutique, *Mélange Home Shop*. Instead, her eye kept landing on, of all things, pampas grass. “It was everywhere,” she says. “And it made every space feel like a party.”

It also planted a seed of inspiration that grew into a full-fledged design scheme when it came time to set the stage for a party in a Boston home Daher recently completed. The designer, who

has offices in Boston and Maine, wanted to inject the home’s formal dining room with a hefty dose of whimsy. She also sought to draw out the pinks and purples in the room’s upholstered chairs.

Armed with ceramic busts sourced from Italy, tableware from Morocco, and her own red Waterford glasses (a cherished wedding gift), Daher created a room that feels elegant but vivacious. The finishing touch? In lieu of a runner, she scattered the tabletop with rose petals.

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see *Resources*.

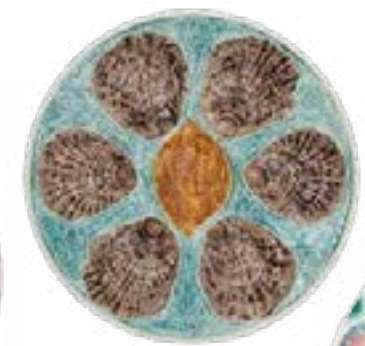
PAULA’S PARTY TIPS

1. Forgo a tablecloth for layers of placemats: “It de-escalates the formality.”
2. Opt for candlesticks that are different heights but still have a common theme. Here, it’s crystal.
3. To replicate the roses-instead-of-runner look, seek out day-old flowers.
4. Forget matching place settings. Instead, use the same placemats but mix up plate colors and napkin patterns.

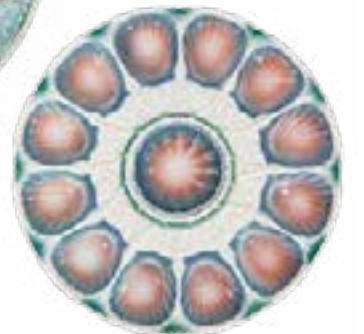
ARCHITECTURE: Payne | Collins Design
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BUILDER: BSA Construction

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Harcourt Champagne Cooler
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Vintage Oyster Plates,
 Weston Table, westontable.com



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