

Dream Job

By Tanya Zager Chisholm

Photographs by Kat Stevenson

After an unexpected turn of events,
one designer lands a dream client
and the project of a lifetime.
Join us for the grand tour!

HOW IT STARTED...



Paige designed this guest bedroom at the 2022 Junior League of Detroit Designers' Show House.

SURPRISE SURPRISE

In 2022, principal designer Paige Loperfido of Grosse Pointe Farms-based Décor & More Design Studio, considered entering in the prestigious Junior League of Detroit Designers' Show House, but wasn't sure she could pull it off. "I was nervous," she says. However, her husband Chris had full faith in his wife's skills and applied on her behalf for a coveted position. "Imagine my surprise when I received an email from JLD inviting me to submit my design for the Show House!" she recalls.

Little did she know that while packing up on the last day, she would be approached by Veronica Alger, wife of financier and philanthropist Fred Alger III. Mr. Alger has deep family roots in Grosse Pointe Farms. In fact, his ancestral home, Alger House, was donated by his great-aunt Marion Alger in 1949 and now serves as The Grosse Pointe War Memorial.

"Veronica told me how much she loved the room that I designed for the Show House and wanted to know if I could recreate this space for a new guest home they purchased on Lake St. Clair," the designer recalls. When the two met again, the one-room assignment blossomed into a whole-home project.



BEFORE: The home formerly had a blank, beige palette.

NEUTRAL AND READY FOR A REVAMP

Built in the 1970s and located on a quiet cul-de-sac in Grosse Pointe Farms, the home stands on the same land where Mr. Alger's childhood home formerly stood. "The house was top-to-bottom beige," Loperfido says. "Every tile, every countertop, the walls, the trim, even the flooring was the same beige color. Even so, I saw so much potential in the place. My goal was to bring the home back to life and give it some character." To the designer's delight, the homeowners gave her full creative control over the project. "I was able to somewhat take my time and just run with it," she says. "It was a one-in-a-million-type situation."



BEFORE: Turn the page to see this wet bar's vibrant new look.



AVAILABLE AT MDC:
Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils
ceiling wallpaper; **Rozmallin** wallpaper;
CAI Designs table lamp.

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BYE-BYE BEIGE

Off the main hallway and adjacent to the living room is a wet bar that received a dramatic makeover. Formerly saturated in beige tones, Loperfido breathed new life into the space with bold cabinetry and rich wood tones. With both the designer and client's affinity for blue, she used high-gloss lacquer on the cabinets and mixed metal finishes. At the client's request, Loperfido blended vintage and new furnishings and accents throughout the home, choosing a stunning vintage pendant to light the space.



Adjacent to the living room, the wet bar received a bold makeover with lacquered blue cabinetry and feathered wallpaper on the ceiling.



PURE SYMMETRY

The foyer ceiling was originally studded with asymmetrically placed can lighting. To create a bold sight line through the house and the symmetrical harmony the designer was striving for, she replaced the chaotic lights with three classic, crystal flush-mount lights positioned centrally across the ceiling. A round pedestal table grounds the foyer.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: CAI Designs glass console table, flush mount lighting, and side chairs.



The designer used elements such as centrally placed ceiling light fixtures and a classic pedestal table in the foyer to draw a clear sightline through the house and beyond to Lake St. Clair.



THROUGH THE MILL

Starting with a blank slate, Loperfido had extensive millwork installed in the space including a coffered ceiling, new fireplace surround, and framing around wall artwork. The existing bookcases were upgraded to include millwork and leather-wrapped light fixtures. “The shelves are new, and we papered the back of the bookcases with a sophisticated grass cloth,” she adds.



The designer incorporated several accents that reflect Mr. Alger's Michigan heritage, and a spurfowl bronze sculpture and horn accents express Mrs. Alger's South African heritage.

WIDER VIEW

New French doors that run the length of the living room replaced screened sliding doors which obstructed the view. The new system includes remote-controlled screens that are hidden in wooden valences above the doors and can be deployed individually or all at once.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Baker | McGuire cream sofa, white sofa, and cream chairs with fringe; **CAI Designs** burlwood coffee table, chandeliers, kidney bean coffee table set, leather picture lights, seagrass nesting tables, and acrylic floor lamp; **Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils** area rugs; **Schumacher** grasscloth wallpaper in bookshelves; **Rozmallin** drapery fabric.



A peek of the living room through the dining room doorway.



Nestled between the kitchen and dining room is a series of pocket doors original to the space and ideal for creating privacy during meal preparation.

HIGHLY FAVORED

The inspiration for the elegant formal dining room began with forested peacock-colored wallpaper. “I love to make a dramatic statement,” Loperfido says. The neighboring living room has a natural palette, so the designer decided to turn up the volume in this space. “The clients love to host dinner parties, so I envisioned guests enjoying a cocktail in the living room and then moving into the dining room.”



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Expressive botanical wallpaper, watery hues, and bold splashes of chartreuse offer a chic dining experience for guests.

BOLD & BEAUTIFUL

The designer brought in botanical elements including a twiggy fireplace screen and brass eucalyptus sconces that complement the forested wallpaper. “The beadwork in the chandelier has a lot of movement that feels wave-like,” she says. “And custom artwork above the fireplace ties all the colors in the room together.” New French doors open into the garden to allow a biophilic atmosphere.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Baker | McGuire dining table and chairs; **CAI Designs** chandelier, wall sconces, sideboard, and table lamps; **Schumacher** wallpaper; **Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils** drapery fabric.



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The homeowner tasked Loperfido with designing her own personal dream kitchen.



Kitchen BEFORE

DREAM KITCHEN

The original kitchen had an outdated bi-level island and where the sink is now located, there was a low, built-in desk. “I had a vision of moving the sink [in place of the desk] and I really wanted a focal-point window with two sconces,” she explains. Determined to make it happen, she and the contractor worked together on structural issues to create the perfect leaded glass look. Mrs. Alger says, “[I was surprised] how she reorganized the kitchen by removing most of the cabinets and moving the sink around. It came out beautifully!”

AVAILABLE AT MDC: CAI Designs window wall sconce.



The chic, commercial-style kitchen offers plenty of storage.

CHEF'S CHOICE

Loperfido consulted a professional chef while designing the kitchen, “I just wanted to run a few things past him,” she says, and worked with her contractor to create the custom bell-shaped range hood. She also removed all the cabinets on the back wall. “The cabinet representative thought I was crazy,” Loperfido recalls, “but I didn’t want any cabinets on that back range wall. I’m so glad that I did because I love how it turned out.”

A 60-inch range with two ovens was installed, and to compensate for the removal of the upper cabinets, Loperfido flanked the range with extra-large 36-inch drawers for storage that organize everything from pots and pans to dishware. The designer developed corner shelves that display decorative accents and dishes in what was once a dead corner.



Located off the kitchen, there is plenty of room for dry goods, serveware, and cookware.

STORAGE, STORAGE, AND EVEN MORE STORAGE

Next to the kitchen is a long hallway filled with storage options. “Here we have a full working pantry with closed cabinetry and electrical (pictured left) as well as a dry pantry,” the designer explains. “There’s so much storage, that it allowed me to design the kitchen exactly the way I wanted it.”



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A spacious laundry area with room to take a break between wash cycles.

WASH & UNWIND

Making our way down the butler's pantry hall is a comfortable utility area for laundry and space to unwind between chores. The designer selected dramatic 30-inch large-format black and white tiles, and the walls are clad in grasscloth wallpaper. Paige created a custom banquette that fits neatly by the window. Directly across from the table area is a station that houses a pull-out drying rack, full-size ironing board, and upper storage cabinets.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Rozmallin wallpaper and custom bench fabric;
Cercan Tile floor tile.



Directly off the laundry room is a full-size bathroom showcasing floral wallcovering inspired by a Georgian era French block print, reeded-detail cabinetry, and the same large-format black tile as the laundry room.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Rozmallin wallpaper; **Cercan Tile** tile.



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Equal parts feminine and masculine, the primary bedroom suits both homeowners.

WELL BALANCED

In the primary suite, the designer used a mix of vintage and new décor to add personality. Asian-inspired blue and white porcelain accents dot the space, and Greek-key patterned carpeting—a favorite motif of Loperfido’s—adds warmth to the room. “Mrs. Alger commented that she feels like this room is the perfect balance of masculine and feminine and equally reflects them both,” she says. “Which is obviously a great compliment. I love the room—it feels very tranquil.”

AVAILABLE AT MDC: CAI Designs side chairs, wall sconces, floor and table lamps; Schumacher drapery fabric.



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*“The draperies are stationary,
but we installed remote-controlled blackout
rollers for privacy and to block the light
when necessary.”*

—Paige Loperfido



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Custom closets were installed in the primary suite, providing ample space for everything from apparel to accessories. Floral wallpaper adds a splash of color while the Roman shade and ottoman add texture.



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The designer took great care to get the space planning perfect to meet her design goals as well as the client's needs in this primary bathroom.

UP TO THE CHALLENGE

“The primary bathroom was a real challenge,” Loperfido says. “I spent a lot of time at the house just sitting in the evening with my phone flashlight and a tape measure trying to figure this space out,” she recalls. Part of the design dilemma came down to the focal point in the space. “I really wanted to have a tub that had a window behind it that I could drape with interesting fabric and a terrific light fixture above,” she explains. Equally important, the client wanted a private water closet with a door.

The space boasts a bevy of amenities including a steam shower, heated flooring and a heated towel bar. The shell of the tub is heated as well. “I think this is a nice, serene space that brings in natural elements such as the leaves on the drapes and chandelier—and of course a bird or two,” she says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Cercan Tile tile; **Rozmallin** drapery and Roman shade fabric; **CAI Designs** wall scones.



Designed to impress guests, this powder room has a delightfully feminine appeal. Feathered Jujú hats above the wall bench are a nod to the owner's heritage.

FUN & FEMININE

Off the main hallway near the foyer of the house is a striking powder room featuring waterfowl and floral motifs. But the inspiration for the space started with the sink. "I'm obsessed with the sink," Loperfido enthuses. "The Calacatta viola marble sink was the starting point for me." With a clear vision in mind and a little research, she had the piece custom-made for the powder room. "Smaller spaces like the bathrooms and powder rooms are a great place to try bold materials and statement wallpaper," she advises.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Schumacher wallpaper, bolster pillow fabric, and window treatment trim; Cercan Tile floor tile; Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils settee trim and window treatment fabric.



“I love a bold, dramatic statement.”

—Paige Loperfido



Loperfido installed red oak wood flooring, antique brass eight-point star pendants, and custom seating in the hallway of the upper floor.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils bench upholstery and bolster pillow fabric; Tennant & Associates bench fringe and drapery trim; CAI Designs ceiling light fixtures.



The designer surprised Mr. Alger with a gallery wall filled with important people and periods in his life.

FAMILY TIES

Loperfido conspired with Mrs. Alger to surprise her husband with a gallery wall marking important milestones and celebrating loved ones. “Mrs. Alger sent me some of his family photos and I had them framed and arranged them on a gallery wall in the upstairs hallway,” she says.



The gorgeous Alger guest room in the spirit of the original Show House room.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Inspired by Loperfido's 2022 JLD twin bedroom, the homeowner asked the designer to reinterpret the twin bed guest room for grandchildren and adults alike. The design reflects the spirit of the original Show House room with soft green hues and botanical themes. She elevated the space with custom scalloped headboards, clever transparent trunks with color-coordinating books, and plush seating.

When asked which room was her favorite, Mrs. Alger said, "I love my primary bedroom and the green guest bedroom. The primary bedroom does an excellent job of mixing masculine and feminine, and the guest room is similar to the Show House room I asked Paige to replicate; the green is so calming, and you can tell I love birds."

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Schumacher bed frame fabric; Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils wallpaper; Rozmallin drapery fabric; CAI Design lighting.



The original 2022 JLD design.



“Mrs. Alger says that this is one of the rooms that she loves most. She loves coming up here and sitting in that chair in the corner with a cup of tea and reading a book.”

—Paige Loperfido



Filled with light, this guest bathroom pairs beautifully with the guest room.

PERFECT COMPANION

The guest bathroom perfectly complements the guest room, and the designer said that she didn't make many major structural adjustments. "We did move some doors for the water closet, and we adjusted the floor plan so that it made more sense." This included expanding the shower as well. A pair of floral sconces stand astride a scalloped mirror that reflects the pattern of the headboard, and Loperfido draped the walls in a pattern that she said reminded her of Missoni. "It has a 70s feel—I just love it," she says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Cercan Tile wall and floor tile; **CAI Designs** lighting; **Rozmallin** wallpaper.



The king guest suite is a medley of blue and green hues with South African accents.



SOUTH AFRICAN FLAIR

The guest suites span the entire second story and offer magnificent lake views. In the second guest room, Loperfido wanted the space to have “more of a South African flair,” she says. This includes large Kudo horn table lamps perched on nightstands on either side of the king bed, leopard print artwork above the bed, and tiger print accent pillows on the bed. While many of the bold expressions are conveyed through wallpaper in other areas of the house, the designer layered dramatic botanical and animal prints as well as a medley of blue and green hues in this space. “This room is bold as well, but I left the walls toned down for a more serene atmosphere in this suite,” she explains.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Rozmallin drapery fabric; Schumacher hallway chaise lounge fabric.



The designer replaced a shower/tub combo with a freestanding tub and walk-in shower. Loperfido selected the wallpaper in keeping with the suite's color scheme.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Rozmallin wallpaper; **Schumacher** window treatment fabric; **Cercan Tile** tile; **CAI Designs** wall sconces.

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Located off the primary bedroom, this outdoor space is a refuge for the homeowners to relax and appreciate time in their beautiful garden.



This outdoor space off the dining room creates an alternative alfresco dining option.



An exterior view of the home on Lake Saint Clair.

FINAL SURPRISE

The project took 18 months to complete, and although Loperfido was given leeway to create what she loved, she never lost sight of her clients. The home is a thoughtful combination of Mr. and Mrs. Alger's personalities. However... "There was always the hope that maybe they would move in, but it was planned to be used as a guest house," she says.

On the day of the grand tour, her clients were overwhelmed with delight. "I was very happy during the reveal of the house," Mrs. Alger says. "I left most of the design vision and decisions up to Paige and she exceeded my expectations." The Algers were so happy with the final product, that they had a surprise of their own...they were moving in! A dream come true.