

# Among Friends

By Tanya Zager Chisholm

*Photography and Videography by WayUp Media*



See how a bit of house-swapping and a whole lot of trust among friends helped these homeowners secure their ideal lake house.





A treelined driveway guides visitors to a large crushed-gravel motor court surrounded by pristine hedges and lush landscaping.

### SUMMER SANCTUARY

Nestled among a mature woodland, less than a mile from Lake Michigan and just a stone’s throw from Saugatuck, is the summer home of Patrick Jakeway and Dr. Lawrence Wentworth. Built in 2014, the home is situated on the largest parcel of land in an enviable Douglas, Michigan subdivision. “A friend of ours built this home,” Jakeway says. “In the past, we purchased a different home that he built in the same area, so we appreciate his design aesthetic and attention to quality construction. We also know the architect and found the layout of the house very appealing and livable.”

Trusting their friend’s eye for excellence, the couple purchased the home. They then sought out another friend, Kevin Serba, of Birmingham-based *Serba Interiors*, to make the house their own. “The previous owner favored a dark palette, and although dramatic, we requested that Kevin lighten up the feeling of the interiors to reflect a casual ‘beachy’ environment,” Jakeway says.





Ringed with gorgeous landscaping, the home is in all its blooming glory during the summer months.



*“We visited this home for a party years ago and thought it was great, especially for entertaining, but we didn’t think at the time that we’d eventually own it.”*

*— Dr. Lawrence Wentworth*





## MODERN FARMHOUSE

This is their second project with the designer, and the homeowners put their full faith in Serba’s vision. “I have a good grasp of their aesthetic after working closely with them on their other home,” the designer says. “They purchased the house fully furnished, and everything was very modern, like black leather furniture and lots of chrome accents. We gave the home more of a cottagey, modern farmhouse aesthetic.”

*“We requested that Kevin incorporate some of our collections, such as mercury glass, into his design; he is very skilled at mixing old and new to create a homey feeling.”*

— Patrick Jakerway

Serba creates multi-layered, multi-faceted designs that require a second or even a third look to really appreciate all the thought he puts into his work. For instance, his placement of a pair of marble finials on either side of the fireplace. “I found them while antique shopping through the years and had a metal iron base made for them as well as the pedestals to set them on,” he notes. “I like how they created some symmetry on each side of the fireplace and were something sculptural. I put floor lights behind them, so they light up at night.”

**AVAILABLE AT MDC: Kravet | Lee Jofa | Brunschwig & Fils** pillow, drapery, and sofa fabric; **Tennant & Associates** chair and daybed fabric.



Living Room BEFORE





Best known for his kinetic “mobile” sculptures, an Alexander Calder painting takes center stage in the foyer. Double glass doors infuse the space with light, and a large floral-motif rug is a lovely contrast to the black and white entrance.



The living room flows seamlessly into the dining room and kitchen, creating an aesthetically pleasing sightline and easy entertaining.

## GO WITH THE FLOW

Serba removed all the furnishings from the original space including black wood blinds and repainted the gray walls white to lighten up the room. “The intention was to keep the space really bright, so we kept the drapery off the windows to bring in maximum light,” the designer explains. “The open concept kitchen, dining room, and living room flow effortlessly into one another which makes entertaining easy. I like to sometimes separate a space a little bit, especially in this case because it’s so long. So, there are sofas, followed by a daybed, and two chairs by the fireplace. It’s a very large room, but it works.”

This is one of the rooms that the homeowners particularly appreciate. “We really enjoy spending time in this area of the house as it’s one large space,” Dr. Wentworth says. “Kevin cleverly used a daybed to differentiate two distinct seating areas that can be used individually or together. We also like having coffee each morning in the smaller seating area in front of the fireplace.”





Serba has a knack for mixing interesting antiques and vintage pieces into his designs, like a children's rocking horse and farmhouse dining table that give this space a unique character.

**AVAILABLE AT MDC: Kravet | Lee Jofa | Brunswick & Fils** seat covers.



## WELCOME SURPRISE

Serba swapped out a dark and heavy black dining table with a farmhouse-style antique pine table and added delightful black and white spotted seat cushions to the original rake-backed dining chairs giving the space a lighter and cohesive look. “Kevin added an over-sized lantern light fixture over the dining room table where none had existed before which was a welcomed surprise,” Dr. Wentworth enthuses.

**AVAILABLE AT MDC: City Lights Detroit** chandelier.



Dining Room BEFORE





Undershelf lighting highlights thoughtful accents like an antique breadbox and wagon.

**AVAILABLE AT MDC: Kravet | Lee Jofa | Brunschwig & Fils** barstool seat fabric.



Kitchen BEFORE



## CASUAL KITCHEN

Serba built upon the basic footprint of the kitchen, swapping out pendant lights and barstools at the island giving the space more of the “beachy” aesthetic that his clients requested. He made use of open shelving for easily accessible crockery and added interesting accessories, giving the kitchen a lived-in look. The couple enjoy cooking, and a mini herb garden thrives under the window next to the sink.

**AVAILABLE AT MDC: City Lights Detroit** pendant lights; **CAI Designs** counter stools.



Beautiful sunsets bid the homeowners a good evening from the west-facing windows of their primary bedroom.



Black French doors are the last vestiges of this formerly dark primary bedroom, framing the verdant view.

## STARK CONTRAST

Formerly a severe space with black walls and ceiling, Serba uplifted the primary bedroom with a coat of radiant white paint. “I wanted everything light and very neutral,” he says. “We softened the room with decorative drapery but added motorized shades for privacy.”

As a special housewarming surprise, Serba painted the landscape above the couple’s bed. “I painted it from a photograph I took while walking the beach at my place off Lake Michigan,” he explains.

**AVAILABLE AT MDC: Kravet | Lee Jofa | Brunschwig & Fils** chair fabric and rug; **Schumacher** ottoman fabric.





A large, framed mirror replaces a small vanity mirror and is flanked by new sconces, while speckled wallpaper adds texture to the primary bathroom.



**AVAILABLE AT MDC:**  
City Lights Detroit lighting;  
Tennant & Associates wallcovering.

The designer brightened the space by swapping out black doors, trim, and blinds with brilliant white counterparts. Silvery wallcovering resembling tree trunks lines the water closet walls.





A black and white color scheme doesn't have to be austere. Serba blended subdued patterns and soft materials to create a comfortable guest room.



Guest Room BEFORE



## MARVELOUSLY MONOCHROME

“What’s great about this house is that it has large windows that bring in a lot of light,” the designer says. “We decided to do two completely different guest rooms: one black and white and the other with color.” Serba mixed toile curtain fabric with striped wallcovering giving the space a relaxed atmosphere. “We added two antique chests to the room, and the antique horse was chosen because it was fun and sculptural,” he says. “It’s a cozy space even with the black and white color palette.”

It holds a special place for the homeowners as well. “We are very fond of the black and white theme using toile drapes and ticking wallpaper,” Dr. Wentworth says. “Kevin also reupholstered the seats of two unique chairs we brought back from an antique mall in Florida that we adore.”

**AVAILABLE AT MDC:** Tennant & Associates shade fabric; The Ghiordes Knot rug; Kravet | Lee Jofa | Brunswick & Fils chair fabric; Schumacher pillow fabric.





**AVAILABLE AT MDC:**  
Kravet | Lee Jofa | Brunschwig & Fils wallcovering.

Serba continued the monochrome theme into the guest bathroom this time adding movement to the space with woodgrain-printed wallcovering and a black and white-veined vanity top.



Comfy seating and a cozy atmosphere give guests a private area to relax and unwind.

## VISITOR'S SUITE

Located upstairs, a sitting room is situated between the guest rooms giving the upper floor an extended suite atmosphere away from all the activity downstairs. “The homeowners enjoy entertaining and having guests come to stay with them,” the designer says. “This space gives visitors a comfortable place to unwind or watch television.”

Serba says the homeowners like to use this space as well. With that in mind, he flanked chaise lounges on each end of the sofa to amp up the comfort quotient. “One of the homeowners works from home, so I placed the desk in front of the window so he can enjoy the view outdoors,” the designer adds.

**AVAILABLE AT MDC:** Tennant & Associates sectional, chair, and drapery fabric; Rozmallin wallcovering.





With a nod to the Modern Farmhouse theme, Serba selected delightful egg-print wallpaper which seamlessly coordinates with the second of two guest bedrooms.



A blend of soft colors and complementary patterns create a relaxing environment for this guest room.

## FARMHOUSE FRESH

The second guest room is awash in soft green, blue, and natural brown tones for a calming atmosphere. Serba says that his starting points for this room were the striped rug and diamond-patterned wallcovering. However, the homeowners weren't initially convinced the walls needed to be covered. "Once they saw the space, they recognized the room didn't look finished without it," Serba says. The designer's masterful combination of color and pattern, including a delicate country scene on the pillows, offers visual interest without being overpowering. He also layered multiple sources of lighting such as a flush mount fixture overhead and onyx bedside lamps for versatility.

**AVAILABLE AT MDC:** The Ghiordes Knot rug; City Lights Detroit lamps; Tennant & Associates lampshade and window blind fabric; Kravet | Lee Jofa | Brunschwig & Fils bed, ottoman, and drapery fabric.





## TURN-KEY SERVICE

After placing full confidence in their friend and his vision, it was time for the grand unveiling. The couple knew some of the basics of their designer's plan but had yet to even have a sneak peek. "I had everything ready, so when they walked in the door, the candles were lit, the champagne was on ice, and the flowers were all set," Serba says.

"What we love about working with Kevin is showing up for the 'big reveal' and having everything in place and every detail attended to," Jakeway says. "The artwork is hung, curtains and blinds are installed, and the accessories are arranged and placed strategically for maximum effect." Dr. Wentworth concurs, "Kevin never disappoints!"

Serba is now working on the couple's next project in Palm Springs, California—proof that when you design, dream, and dwell among friends, the possibilities are endless.