

GLAM REVIVAL

A foursquare in Ravenswood goes from dilapidated to drop-dead gorgeous.

By Korey Huyler | Photography by Anthony Tahlier

While out driving one day in 2012 through the northwest Ravenswood neighborhood, Chrysa, an observant mother of three, spotted a foursquare on its last legs and had a gut feeling. Even though she and her husband, Jeff, had been searching for months for a single-family home in the city that would fit their family of five, their realtor didn't mention the house on Hermitage. It simply seemed too far-fetched for this vibrant bunch. The owner had let the home fall into deep disrepair and was selling it "as is" with rotting floorboards, peeling paint and graffiti on many of the surfaces.

The first thing Chrysa did was call her longtime friend, interior designer Georgeann Rivas of Leo Designs, to accompany her on a walk-through. "I have seen a lot of bad houses," says Rivas, "and this was one of the worst." But Chrysa was determined. Four weeks later, the deal was sealed. "Not really a bidding war," Chrysa jokes. Soon after, the couple connected with Rivas to start making plans to create their dream house out of this diamond in the rough.

The family's requests were simple: ample room for their three children to live and lounge with





FAMILY TIES
The serene and cozy first-floor family room—with its custom Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams sectional and vintage chairs—overlooks the spacious outdoor patio designed in partnership with Chicago Roof Deck and Garden.





friends, some fun and functional spaces to entertain and an outdoor area that flows from the home to the backyard—all with a nonmuseum-like feel. “We wanted the house to be welcoming and comfortable,” says Chrysa. “We wanted it to be special, but not precious. We wanted a true family house.”

Soon the homeowners and Rivas, along with architect Julie Gross and builder Demetrios Markopoulos, got to work. The initial vision was “rough-luxe;” says Rivas, “warm and earthy but refined”—similar to the jewelry Chrysa loves to wear and once designed for her career. The couple, whose three children range in age from 10 to 16, is constantly entertaining friends and hosting overnight guests, which explains why it was vital to have comfortable yet chic couches and chairs throughout the home, along with five bedrooms—four on the

second level and one in the basement. “The home has spaces for each of the kids to be here with friends, and for the adults to be here too, and no one is stepping on each other,” Chrysa explains. “But it’s still cozy.”

In homage to the home’s historic landmark status, the existing front door was moved to the far right of the house and a front-facing stained-glass window in the living room was left intact. And, like much of the house, the living space features pieces that are technically vintage but have been reupholstered or refurbished to look modern. For the stunning sofa with a brass base, Rivas and the homeowners had found a swatch of fabric at the beginning of the renovation process and carried it around until they found the perfect piece on which to use it. People who enter through the front door into the foyer also see the first of the home’s 15 vintage

MOODY HUES

Above: Chrysa sits at the custom Leo Designs kitchen table under a vintage light fixture from New Metal Crafts. The vintage Lugano chairs are from Assemblage. Opposite page: The dining room features another vintage light fixture (found at Cavalier Antique Lighting) above a table from Jayson Home.

ROUGH LUXE From the first level to the second, the home's stairs are a focal point as soon as you walk through the front door. "I feel like it sets the tone for the home," says Rivas. "I liked the idea of the really warm wood stain juxtaposed with the cool glass. It sort of exemplifies Chrysa's taste to me—very earthy with a bit of luxe." Opposite page: The soothing master bedroom (a must for this busy couple) features Phillip Jeffries' Manila Hemp walls in graphite.

light fixtures. The rest of the first floor includes a dining room with an eight-person table found at Jayson Home. "We have had a few smaller dinner parties," Chrysa laughs, "but not many."

Down the stairs from the dining room is an awe-inducing open kitchen. A built-in breakfast nook with a custom table takes one corner; a 5-by-10 foot iceberg quartzite island anchors the space; and rift-cut oak cabinets in a custom stain that echo the wood floors throughout the house frame the prep area. For the backsplash, the team chose a custom back-painted glass. The kitchen adjoins a huge family room (one of three in the house) filled with vintage chairs and a custom Franco sectional from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams. No matter how cozy this room is, however, all eyes are on the outdoor garden (designed in conjunction with Chicago Roof Deck and Garden), thanks to the floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors.

The basement has another entertainment area, plus a wet bar, guest room, secret play space for the youngest child, steam room and a gym that can act as a Bikram yoga studio if Jeff is so inclined (yes, it gets to 105 degrees). Two floors up, the second level is home to the kids' bedrooms—all painted in various shades of Benjamin Moore gray—and the serene master suite, which includes a master bath with a Contura tub by Americh that floats on ash gray floor planks, purchased at Mosaicos Tile. The bathroom also features a dramatic crystal fringe chandelier from Arteriors.

The third floor is also full of surprises. The son has taken it over for himself, according to Chrysa, and it's decorated with antlers, a petrified wood stump and a suede sleeper sofa. There is also a children's homework and craft area on this level—another room that lets family members have a place for privacy. An additional outdoor area on the third level boasts a hot tub, illuminated Carpyen chairs and a view of the bustling neighborhood. From here, if guests stand in the right spot, they can catch a glimpse of the city skyline—not that they need a view to be impressed. "Georgeann is incredible at interpreting people's visions," Chrysa says. "Every day here feels really privileged and really special."

Also impressive is the timeline, with the to-the-studs gut rehab and interior decoration all coming together in under 18 months. A life lesson to be learned: One person's trashed house is another's treasured home, as long as you assemble the right team. ■





DESIGN DETAILS

HOME TYPE
Single-family home

LOCATION
Ravenswood

ARCHITECTURE
**Julie Gross of Stoneberg
+ Gross Architects**
(stoneberggrossarchitects.com)

BUILDER
**Demetrios Markopoulos
of Atlantis Homes**

INTERIOR DESIGN
Leo Designs
(leodesignschicago.com)

RESOURCES
Andreu World
New Brandy chairs in dining room
Arteriors at Creative Visions
Fixture in master bath
Assemblage Ltd.
Vintage Lugano chairs by Mariani For Pace in kitchen
Cavalier Antique Lighting
Vintage fixture in dining room
Circa Lighting
Micah sconces in stairwell
Community Home Supply
Americh Contura Tub in master bathroom
Jayson Home
Table in dining room
Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams
Franco sofa in family room
Mosaicos Tile
Ash gray honed plank tile in master bathroom
New Metal Crafts
Vintage fixture in master bedroom
Ultimate Glass Art Studio
Custom kitchen table by Leo Designs
Back-painted glass backsplash
Main stairs
Exterior balcony
