

# *An A+ for* DESIGN

Anelle Gandelman of A-List Interiors transforms a spec house in Scarsdale into a bold and customized home for a family of four.

*By Jenn Andrlík*

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**The Team:**  
**Designer:**  
Anelle Gandelman,  
A-List Interiors  
**Builder:**  
JAF Builders

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What was a high-end spec house was transformed into a beautiful bespoke home — perfect for the family of four who now dwell in it. Designer Anelle Gandelman of A-List Interiors was hired for the project when the home was in the framing stage but was able to make all of the finishing decisions to make it feel more customized than a typical spec house.

“The owner was partial to furnishings with clean lines, but she wanted the colors and textures to feel very luxurious, like a jewel box,” says Gandelman. “My job was marrying those two aesthetics: the contemporary, clean lines and the jewel-tone color palette.” Gandelman added that the homeowner was open to incorporating bold colors and patterns, which proved fun.

The color palette included a lot of navy, the homeowner’s favorite color, and Gandelman added black-and-white in the living room. She then added other elements the homeowner loved, like hammered details, brass accents, and Lucite.

The finished look is described by Gandelman as “tailored with a little bit of an edge and a lot of luxury throughout; there is a freshness to it.”



### **Artwork**

Gandelman says that choosing artwork is likely the hardest decision during a project. “Unlike furniture, people have a more emotional reaction to art. It has to speak to you.” She adds, “We choose artwork based on what the client responds to.” “Some people don’t like portraits or abstracts. Artwork that is the right size, price point, and something that our clients respond to — whether it starts a conversation or makes them happy — is key.”

This client values abstract art and wanted to showcase original work throughout the home. “In the dining room, we have a solid-painted wall, so we could use colorful art to create a beautiful focal point,” Gandelman says. “In the living room, we wanted something with a lot of white space, to balance the wallpaper.

We found this painting by Kelly O’Neil, who is based in Texas, which brought in other colors and movement with the gestures of the painting.”

### **The Kitchen**

The all-white kitchen was intentionally designed to balance the bold color choices and materials in the other rooms of the home. “While the other spaces were more colorful, and we took lots of risks [like in the dining room and living room], for the kitchen, we kept it very white because the homeowner conducts cooking classes there, so we wanted to keep it more like a chef’s kitchen.”

### **The Living Room**

In the living room, Gandelman started with the striking black-and-white wallpaper by Kelly Wearstler. “The client wanted a black-and-white space, so when we started with the initial ideas, we presented this wallpaper, and the homeowner fell in love with it.”

Gandelman’s favorite element in the home is in this room: the living-room wall with the sofa. She says, “When you’re standing in the space, it is very inviting. I think most people would be scared by doing something like this, but I love that black-and-white room. I think black-and-white is timeless.”



### ***The Dining Room***

In the dining room, Gandelman decided to paint the walls Benjamin Moore's Hale Navy, one of her go-to colors, instead of using wallpaper. She explains: "We painted it in a washable matte finish, so it would hold up to little hands touching it." She adds, "The paint is next to the velvet drapery, which gives you that rich feeling. We wanted it to be stylish and beautiful, but we didn't want to make the house feel too formal."

The table is custom-made, with hammered-brass detail on the apron. The buffet was found on a trip the homeowner took to Maison & Objet in Paris with the designer; it is from a Portuguese vendor. It has leather, brass, and lacquer, making it a beautiful find for the space. "We repeated the brass in the dining room, with the mirror and light fixture with the agate discs," says Gandelman. "The drapes are not gold, but there is a brass undertone."

### ***Family Room***

This space was all about contrast. The walls are a bright white, with sheer window treatments, which are light and airy next to the solid, darker built-ins.

The built-ins were the starting point for this space. The designer drafted several drawings with different designs for the bookcases and chose these because they were interesting but not overdone. They are dark oak with metal-inset detail around the doors. "Everything else came from there," says Gandelman. "They're not super decorative, but they are very interesting and anchor the space. They were the contrast we wanted."

For the sectional, the designer mixed two materials, to break up the form, using a tighter material on the frame and a softer texture on the cushion seats.

# DESIGN TIPS

Designer Anelle Gandelman of A-List Interiors shares tips and some of the biggest mistakes homeowners make when it comes to design and how to avoid them.

**Choose the right scale.** “One of the biggest mistakes is not figuring out the floor plan and the size of the pieces they need,” says Gandelman. “It can be the most beautiful piece in the world, but if the scale is wrong, it’s going to look terrible.”

**Choose a focal point.** “If you don’t pick a focal point and want everything to be special, then there is no balance, and everything is over the top and doesn’t work,” adds Gandelman.

**Artwork doesn’t need to match the room.** “But you need to make sure it’s the right size,” says Gandelman. She suggests having a furniture plan before you purchase new artwork for a space. In some cases, a client comes with their own collection, and then you use that as the inspiration. But if it’s new artwork, the space should be designed first.

**Stay away from overstuffed spaces.** With regard to choosing pieces for a design, Gandelman says, “We like to mix things, and we like everything to feel purposeful. None of our projects, even if they are traditional, are ever going to feel cluttered, maximalist, overstuffed. You have to have space.”



## Entry

The entry and halls are done in a silvery palette. The wallpaper has a subtle texture, with a woodgrain pattern, and is a “palette cleanser” from the dining room to the living room. “The lighter wallpaper has texture and a silvery finish,” says Gandelman. “It’s not bright, but it feels cozy.”

## The Powder Room

The powder room has a marble floor and classic marble countertop, and there is a lot of white, so the designer chose this floral wallpaper (Trove through Holly Hunt New York). “Because of the subtle wallpaper outside in the hallway, we felt we could do whatever we wanted in this room,” says Gandelman. “The wallpaper has an abstract quality in tones of blues and purples, without feeling too dark.”

## The Materials

When it came to materials, the homeowner did not want anything standard. With two young children, she wanted a beautiful design that needed to be durable and hold up to the everyday wear and tear that comes with kids. “We used vinyl on the inside of the dining room chairs and a more decorative fabric on the back of the chairs, to balance the durability and style,” explains Gandelman. In the kitchen, she used resilient materials: “The counters are quartz, and the chairs are a vinyl material. We elevated [the chairs] by doing navy lacquer legs, so they didn’t feel too boring or sterile.”

As Gandelman likes to mix metals, she says, “In this home, we have brass, polished nickel, and other satin-silver finishes throughout. I think if you are using them in a way that there is balance, there is a composition. I generally try to repeat shapes and balance them throughout a home and think about how it will look when you’re walking through and how they all relate to each other.” ■■