



A SENSE OF PLACE

While planning the restoration of his historic cottage, this interior designer found plenty of inspiration just outside the window.

When designer Ken Stückenschneider approaches a space, he begins by looking at the light. So, when he was searching for a place closer to his childhood home in Missouri, he considered more than 40 properties to find the right one. "I knew from experience having grown up on the plains . . . what good light should be in a house, and this house had it," he says.

The winning candidate was a 1920s painted brick bungalow in St. Louis, Missouri, with beautiful views of the surrounding historic neighborhood. "Light and the views outside always determine how I decorate a room," Ken says. "You have to connect the interior with the exterior views."

It's a concept that he picked up as a protégé of New York-based architect Robert A. M. Stern, who places an emphasis on what he calls "a sense of place." To give the bungalow the right sense of place, Ken chose to paint the walls a creamy yellow tone to reflect the light and visually enlarge the rooms without overwhelming the greenery outside. "There are also views of red brick buildings," says Ken, noting that the views influenced furniture choices like the cane-back sofa in the living room.



To one side of the fireplace, which Ken Stückenschneider notes was stripped of about seven layers of paint, a club chair features a fresh upholstery job with a vintage-style finish. "Brush fringe makes people feel cozy," Ken says, pointing out that the style was popular in the 1930s and '40s. A white Swedish chair with hand-embroidered horse hair sits next to the onyx-topped table. TOP: A Spanish fireside hearth chair upholstered in a red silk velvet sits by the front door beneath the leash for the family's golden retriever, Brooklyn.



Ken points out that all of the woodwork and walls in the home are brush-painted, noting that he doesn't use rollers in his work. "You detect the human hand, and you can just feel the difference—especially in an older house," he says.





In much of his work, Ken references the comfortable, timeless designs of firms like UK-based Colefax and Fowler. "I really am a student of classic English style," he says. "I like an interior to look like it's accumulated over time and hasn't just been decorated yesterday by a decorator who's following the most recent trends."

He translated that timeless, comfortable vibe into the home by filling the space with a collection of antique and vintage pieces balanced by touches of the contemporary. In the dining room, a Capodimonte chandelier and Indian dhurrie rug ground the center of the design while a sleek chrome bar cart stands in the corner. "So, one thing in each room kind of jogs it out of its period-ness," Ken says.





Inspired by trim visible from the window, the blue-and-white-striped pattern in Ken's office is a break from the yellow shade in the main living areas. Antique woods and bird prints on the wall introduce darker tones while the roman shades soften the more masculine elements of the furniture.







Departing from the yellow walls in the main living areas, the master bedroom is papered in a reproduction design by Colefax and Fowler based on an 18th-century hand-painted paper used in the Drottningholm Palace in Sweden. "It works really well with the colors outside, and it's lovely to look at at night," Ken says, adding that it reflects the garden. While the paper features a tan tone in the sleep space, the dressing room is swathed in a warm blue that backs a 19th-century Empire dresser passed down from Ken's family.

True to the spirit of the home, Ken's design carefully takes into consideration not only the cottage's history but also its surroundings to create a style that feels perfectly placed. And with such beautiful views—both inside and out—it's sure to stand the test of time. 🍷

TEXT BY BETHANY ADAMS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALISE O'BRIEN



When designing his daughter's room, Ken chose a color palette with a range of shades that would accommodate dolls and other toys. A hand-painted pillow rests in the chair, and drapes featuring a pom-pom fringe conceal the bed, creating a space that Ken believes is crucial in a child's room. "The niche is really important—having a place for kids to snuggle up in bed and close the curtains and do a puppet show behind them and that kind of thing," he says.