

Subtle shades of neutral hues are the backdrop for pops of color using artwork, fabric and accessories. Art work over couch by Ashton Shaw Despot.

Pied-À-Terre

AN AIRY LOWER GARDEN DISTRICT GEM

By Valorie Hart Photographed by Sara Essex Bradley

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Condo living is popular in New Orleans, whether it is a holiday home or a full time residence. Jim and George Ann Wesner bought a St. Charles Avenue, Lower Garden District condo because of their love of New Orleans and their ties to Louisiana. Living full time in Cincinnati, Ohio, they decided this condo was the perfect pied à terre, allowing them to spend more time with their friends and family in the city.

Jim is from New Orleans and graduated from Tulane Law School while George Ann grew up in Lake Providence, Louisiana. Newcomb College brought her to New Orleans. Despite attending college at Newcomb and Tulane, they met in George Ann's hometown at a wedding.

"Somehow, we never met while we were both in school together," says Jim. "Presumably, she was mostly in the library while I was mostly at the frat house."

Susan Currie of Susan Currie Design was called upon to pull the interiors together. Currie began by talking with the Wesners about their preferences for furnishings and colors.

"[The main goal was] to design a comfortable second home in a city my clients love to visit frequently surrounded by their books, music and

Top: Vintage table from Caravan Finds. Bottom: Sofa from Wesley Hall; Worlds Away coffee table

Facing Page: Master bedroom has custom drapes; bedding from Legacy Linens; nightstand from Busbin Fine Home Furnishings. Bottom, left: Concave front dresser in the master bedroom is Hickory White. Bottom, right: Custom drapery designed by Susan Currie





other favorite things,” says Currie. “We designed beautiful custom cabinetry to achieve this throughout the condo.”

Having a great floor plan that functions well was at the top of Currie’s priority list, but there were some structural challenges to overcome with this particular project.

“The low height of the windows in the condo dated the rooms so all the window treatments were designed to give the illusion of height to draw the eye upward,” she says. “Very limited lighting made the condo seem very dark. There were just a few overhead lights and the concrete ceilings limited what we could add so a great lighting plan was a

Top: The homeowner loves antique, vintage and reproduction furnishings as well as art with an Asian motif. Bottom: The Wesners are bibliophiles. Custom cabinetry was added in the study and living room to house their collection.

Facing Page: The guest bedroom features vibrant blue dupioni silk draperies and a roman shade with a cobalt blue large-scale design of cherry blossoms and vases.

must. We incorporated new decorative sconces in several bedrooms and attractive brass library lights over the custom bookcases, along with fabulous lamps to create ambience and sparkle in each room.”

The Wesners purchased their condo in May of 2015. It took about a year to complete the interior design. The building dates back to 1979 and was later converted to condos in 2005. The Wesners unit had been minimally updated over the years so they seized the opportunity to create a space that was fresh and functional. After the decisions were made about furnishings, Currie managed the project involving tasks from removing dated popcorn ceilings to adding new custom cabinetry. As Currie alluded to, the Wesners are bibliophiles, so adding a place to curl up with a good book was essential to every room. Custom bookcases were added to the living room and study while one bedroom also received a cozy window seat perfect for reading.

The condo is approximately 2,000 square feet with a gracious living and dining area. Jim and George Ann love collecting photos of New Orleans architecture and jazz musicians, as well as antique maps of Louisiana. On a shopping trip together with the designer they

discovered an old map of the Mississippi River and George Ann’s hometown. It was a must to add to the gallery wall off the living room. The Wesners were thrilled and it complements the photo of George Ann’s family home placed next to it.

There are two larger master bedroom suites, one with an adjoining study, as well as a guest room. The guest bedroom features vibrant blue Dupioni silk draperies and a Roman shade with a cobalt blue large-scale design of cherry blossoms and vases.

Jim loves antique, vintage and reproduction furnishings and art with an Asian motif.

“The Asian decor became a focus in many of the rooms and we capitalized on it by using great fabrics like the Jim Thompson No. 9 for the living room draperies; accessories and art; and finally the striking hand-painted Theodore Alexander Chinese leaf leather top desk for the study,” says Currie.

In the second master bedroom, a chinoiserie style the roman shade with oriental fans, as well as the reproduction Theodore Alexander Chinese leaf desk, bringing the design together. The inviting space has become a home away from home for the Wesners and their guests throughout the year. ■