

A homeowner's heritage inspires a style that is comfortably

familiar yet strikingly fresh

Asian Fusion

The configuration of two clean-lined sofas with chow legs accompanied by transitional-style chairs bring symmetry and balance to the family room addition. Splashes of red invigorate a predominantly neutral palette. The coffee table was made of reclaimed wood flooring from a farmhouse in Korea. Two hand-tinted oversized "Tree of Life" prints on the far wall emphasize a connection to nature.

INTERIOR DESIGNER LORI LEVINE WAS ASKED TO BLEND ASIAN SENSIBILITIES SEAMLESSLY WITH TRANSITIONAL FURNISHINGS

in a Far Hills colonial-style home. "I call it Asian suburban chic," Levine says of the aesthetic, which pays homage to the multicultural parts of the family.

A 25-foot-long family room addition — off an existing 13-by-15-foot living room — sparked the design direction for both spaces. "It was very important to plan the design of both rooms simultaneously so the flow was balanced," says Levine, an associate member of the American Society of Interior Designers and principal of Lori Levine Interiors Inc. in Basking Ridge. So was making the rooms feel tranquil, peaceful and family-friendly.

EAST MEETS WEST

In the new family room, the designer combined old and new, reclaimed and antique. A red lacquered

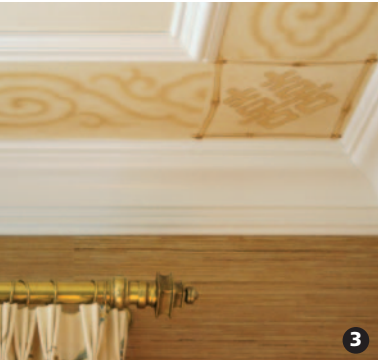
WRITER MEG FOX PHOTOGRAPHER PETER RYMWID INTERIOR DESIGNER LORI LEVINE, ASSOCIATE MEMBER ASID



Opposite: Fretwork designs — a unifying theme — are expressed in rattan chairs and a custom window cornice. The game table, used often, has a built-in chessboard. “My client has a great eye and purchased chess pieces that are hand-carved figures from an Asian dynasty,” designer Lori Levine says. A bamboo-inspired open lantern prevents unwarranted glare over the game table and allows the eye to travel around the room.

Above: Silk grass-cloth covered walls feel organic, Levine says. Vintage-looking hardware adds character to a custom wood console. The red chair is an antique.

DETAILS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



- 1** Stenciled borders along the perimeter of the family room ceiling symbolize the traditional Chinese maze and miniature Shinto shrines.
- 2** The open lantern in the family room is inspired by bamboo.
- 3** Stenciled designs along the perimeter of the living room ceiling represent “Happy Clouds,” a prominent Asian motif, as well as “Double Happiness,” a Korean symbol often associated with weddings and a happy marriage. Note the window treatment rod’s pagoda-shaped finial.
- 4** The embroidered edges of silk window panels echo the subtle tone-on-tone fretwork pattern on the cut chenille daybed. Rattan and bamboo accents figure prominently.



accent chair, for instance, is an antique and the cocktail table is made of reclaimed wood flooring from a farmhouse in Korea, Levine says. Situated on both sides of the table are two clean-lined sofas with chow legs and complementary transitional chairs, a placement that allows the whole family and several guests to relax or watch television in comfort. A vibrant dragon print fabric and dabs of red invigorate an otherwise neutral palette.

In the adjacent living room, which can be closed off with pocket doors for privacy, Levine repurposed a rattan armoire and a delicate writing desk. All other



Opposite: The existing living room, dubbed the “chi cave,” was transformed into a calming and meditative space for the lady of the house. Plush chenille-covered daybeds are “amazing to stretch out on,” the designer says. The chandelier is reverse-painted silk with a silk and crystal tassel.

Left: A rattan armoire — repurposed from another room — conceals a television and reflects light and views. Shoji panel mahogany doors support an Asian aesthetic and lead to an adjacent music room.

pieces are new, including the plush chenille daybeds the depth of twin beds. “This room can be used not only for TV watching and catching up on paperwork, it is also a quiet and meditative space to take a Mommy timeout,” Levine says. Still, “The whole family likes to follow [Mom] in there and relax on the daybeds because it’s so inviting a space.”

Dubbed the “chi cave,” the refurbished space is furnished with subtle tone-on-tone patterns and understated but elegant window treatments with pagoda-shaped finials. Explains Levine, chi, a life force or energy flow, is a concept that figures in

many Eastern philosophies. “When chi flows gently through a house, the occupants will be happy and have an easy passage through life.”

BALANCE & HARMONY

There’s a natural flow between main living areas. “The colors in the new family room are just deeper tones and richer values than the adjoining chi cave,” Levine says. Walls are covered in silk grass cloth, which “feels so organic,” immediately finishes off a room and adds texture,” she says. Other unifying features include graphic-patterned area rugs that ground both rooms

and ceilings that are lightly glazed in a sepia tone.

Stenciled designs around the perimeter of ceilings represent Asian characters or symbols. The chi cave, for instance, features “Happy Clouds,” a prominent Asian motif, as well as “Double Happiness,” a Korean symbol often associated with weddings and a happy marriage. The traditional Chinese maze and miniature Shinto shrines are captured along the borders of the family room ceiling.

Fretwork motifs subtly invoke the Orient in a number of applications, from hand-carved mirrors to the interlocking pattern on the area rugs and on the



An oversized lantern and dramatic pagoda-themed wallpaper make a bold statement in a first-floor powder room, especially at night when lights are on dimmers. Black lacquer molding and a creamy coffee tone ceiling provide the finishing touches.

embroidered edges of silk window panels. The custom geometric window cornices in the family room “are another way of carrying out the fretwork theme,” Levine says. They cover simple textured woven shades. “I seldom do anything too fussy or too tailored” for window treatments, she says. “My sensibility is to pull beautiful things together that I like and my client loves, and then watch the magic happen.”

HINT OF THE EXOTIC

Elsewhere in the home, such as in first-floor powder



room, the goal was to make a bold statement. Levine covered the walls in black wallpaper with a large-scale pagoda pattern. “I love drama in a small space,” she says. The glow from the oversized lantern is reflected in the black lacquer mirror and onto the ceiling, which was painted a creamy coffee color.

For the guest suite, the owners wanted B&B-style hotel ambience. “My client travels extensively and knew exactly what she wanted,” Levine says. The headboard was the jumping off point with its rich, dark wood that tends to ground the room. “I love the symmetry” it creates, she says. One wall is

accented with rich burnt orange grass cloth.

Influenced by an Eastern aesthetic, the red lacquered end tables have chow feet and gold ring pulls. When designing, Levine says: “I always try to think about the architecture of the room first — the blank canvas — then the lighting, both natural and created. Then I start to work with color, texture and furnishings.”

SOURCES Overall: interior design, Lori Levine Interiors Inc. in Basking Ridge; decorative painting, Damon Bopp through Lori Levine Interiors. **Family Room:** sofa and side chairs, Pearson in High Point, North Carolina; coffee table, Green Tea Design in

Canada; Asian commode, custom through Lori Levine Interiors Inc.; game table, Century; game table chairs, David Francis Furniture in Vero Beach, Florida, with fabric by Schumacher; light fixture over game table, Chelsea House Inc. in Rocky Mount, North Carolina (T); window cornice, Friedman Bros. in Medley, Florida (T); red chair, antique; wall art, Natural Curiosities in Los Angeles (T). **Chi Cave/Living Room:** daybeds, Ferguson Copeland in Morgantown, North Carolina; area rug, Stark in New York City; window treatments, Cascades through Lori Levine Interiors Inc.; armoire and trunk, homeowners; chandelier, Odegard Inc. in New York City (T); floor lamp, Arteriors Home in Dallas; carved mirrors, Lazy Susan in New York City (T); coffee tables, Emerson et Cie in High Point, North Carolina; French doors, custom; wallpaper, Wolf Gordon in New York City. T = To the Trade.

before



The dark fretwork-style headboard launched the redesign of a guest suite furnished with chic red lacquer end tables with chow feet and gold ring pulls. A burnt orange grass cloth was chosen for the accent wall. “I like the way the color bursts through the pierced wood of the headboard,” Levine says.

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