

A BOLD RETREAT

OVERLOOKING THE LAZY MISSISSIPPI RIVER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY COLLEEN DUFFLEY

Those who have visited New Orleans, Louisiana, or call it home know the city is famous for its artistic side. From jazz music to galleries galore, there's no escaping creativity in the Crescent City. This artsy townhouse fits right in. Cara McBroom of Lovelace Interiors based in Destin, Florida, shares her inspiration and the process behind creating the look for this colorful retreat.



VIE: How did you work with the homeowners and other collaborators on this space?

McBroom: I worked with the homeowners long-distance on this project. Because I live in a vacation destination, I tend to meet a lot of out-of-town clients who ask me to help them with their permanent homes, or in this case, with their New Orleans retreat.



The condo had already been completely gutted and renovated. The previous owner was a local antique store owner, so you can imagine how filled the unit was with “treasures” and antiques. Beautiful, I’m sure, but too dark and cramped for my clients’ taste. There were a lot of partitions that needed to be opened up, and that view of the river needed to be maximized! All this had been completed by the time I entered the picture.

I was asked to come up with a furniture design that complemented the home’s new light and airy design. My clients loved bright pops of color against a mostly light backdrop, which was right up my alley. I made them a design book and mailed it to them, and they loved everything. I’m grateful that the builder was there to help me hang wallpaper, handle large items, et cetera, as he was finishing up his part of the work.

VIE: What was your inspiration when designing this penthouse?

McBroom: That wide, sprawling view of the river was inspiring! I was also inspired by all the clean, light finishes inside the unit. I walked in and saw a perfect “canvas” as the backdrop to “paint” this design. Even the lightest stroke of color has a dramatic impact on such a clean backdrop. Also, New Orleans is a colorful city in and of itself, so that was certainly inspiring.

VIE: Are there any key elements that you feel make this a “New Orleans” home?

McBroom: Every day I was there, I got to watch the large steamboats pass by, and if I listened, I could sometimes hear jazz music in the streets. I chose color pops that were what I felt to be the embodiment of jazz. They evoke the same feelings that the music evokes. The clients didn’t want a traditional New Orleans design, so I had to give homage to the city in a more abstract way.



Luxurious details and plenty of style make this second home feel less like a temporary abode and more like a place you never want to leave.



Although the homeowners did not want "traditional" New Orleans style, colorful accessories bring to life the otherwise neutral palette and capitalize on the view of the Mississippi River.

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VE: How did the owners' use of the home affect your design?

MeBroom: Because it's a vacation home, I had no heirlooms to consider or personal items to work into the design. I needed to finish the space from scratch, even down to the silverware and wine glasses. When my clients visit the city, they fly in for a few days to watch basketball or to have a quick minivacation, so they wanted to be able to walk into a completely usable, finished getaway.

VE: How does the design of this home differ from other projects you have created in the past?

MeBroom: This design differs from some of my other projects in that I was able to use bolder colors than I typically am asked to use. In Northwest Florida, I am often asked to use blues and greens a lot and to keep the contrast gentle and flowing like the ocean. In this unit, I was able to use bolder, louder colors with a brighter contrast. I would say my signature would be the way I use color to create balance and movement throughout a space. No matter the style, this is something I always try to do.

VE: What was the most challenging element of designing this space?

MeBroom: Luckily, there was a large elevator that accommodated big pieces of furniture, but I was worried about getting the living room sectional into the unit. The living area begged for a sprawling and comfortable curved sofa, and the client wanted this as well. It took some coordination and planning to make

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sure all the furniture would successfully fit before ordering, and everything worked out as planned. Also, being that this was an out-of-town job, I was not able to leisurely go back and forth from the unit to the Lovelace showroom to find key pieces that finished each space. I had to carefully plan all of my art and accessories so that we would be able to complete the design in as few trips as possible! ▣

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Reflecting New Orleans's reputation as an artistic mecca, art is strategically placed throughout the home.