

ORNATE ORIENTALISM

A FOCUSED REMODEL IS SATURATED WITH STYLE

BY LINDA HAYES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY PIASSICK

"It all started with an opium bed," interior designer Larry Lott says with a laugh about a 5,000-square-foot remodel he took on for a client with very specific tastes. "She is attracted to ornate Orientalism. The bed was the first thing I found for her for the house."

Beyond that fortuitous find, the meticulous process of touching every surface of the house—ceiling, floors, walls, doorways, windows and window treatments—became a true collaborative effort between Lott and the homeowner. "We got to know each other very well," he explains. "She gave me an idea of what she wanted, and I

would find her beautiful things that were amazing. I was able to suggest, 'What about this, this and this?' It was a luxury."

Set within a private, gated community and surrounded by greenery, the exterior of the house barely hints at the extravagance within. But the picture changes once the oversize

Off the front entry is a piano room. Two antique Syrian chairs covered in Schumacher fabric provide seating, and a Moroccan mosaic lamp offers soft lighting. Antique rug sourced from Esmaili Rugs and Antiques. A rock crystal chandelier with amethyst comes from Crow Chandelier. Draperies are Irish velvet from Allan Knight and Associates.





The dazzling chandelier is from Allan Knight and Associates, as are the custom dining table and pair of antique Buddhas. The dining chairs are from AOI Home. Lott found the candlesticks, originally from France, on a shopping trip in New Orleans.

front doors swing open to the interior foyer. "Originally, there were regular glass French doors there," says Lott. "I replaced them with heavy, antique wood doors I found at AOI Home (formerly Art of Old India) and added custom platinum and 24-karat gold hardware." He also refinished the existing sponged-gold barrel ceiling with Moroccan tile from Ann Sacks.

Establishing a theme that would carry throughout the house, Lott specified travertine tile flooring with a decorative pillow top that was specially cut with a water jet. In the adjoining piano room, named in reference to the grand piano that once belonged to the owner's mother, another theme was set—the strong turquoise and coral color palette that appears again and again in furnishings, rugs, draperies and artwork.

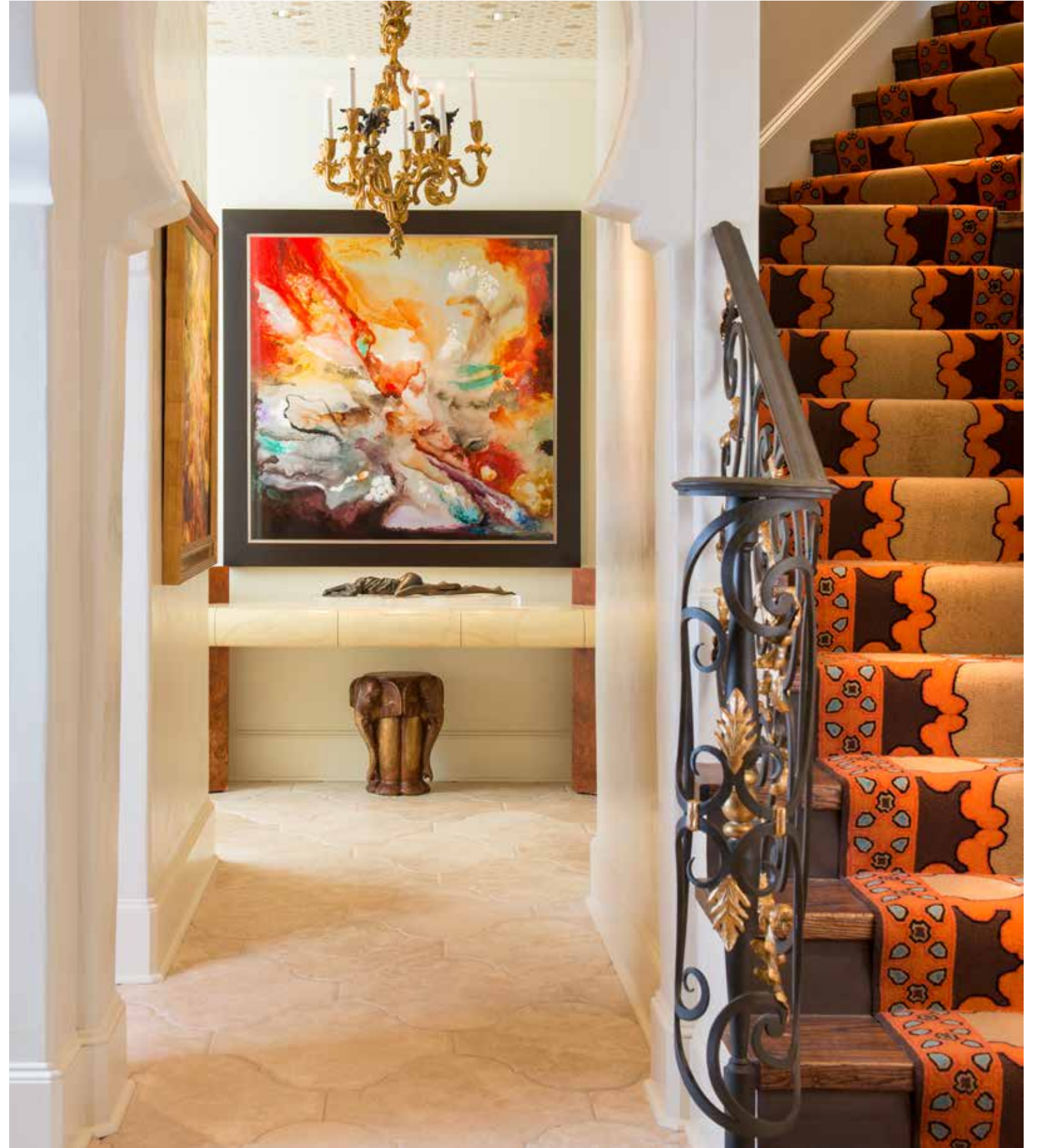
Not overlooked was the fact that, while very private, the owner often entertains, which called for several key spaces to be treated with both function and form in mind. In the kitchen, for instance, Lott topped paint-grade, distressed and faux-finished builder cabinets with varying types of decorative marble or granite. Overhead, he added dimension and drama via



Above: Two antique doors from AOI Home stand on either side of the fireplace. The mantel is from Stone Carving Unlimited. Lott combined an antique Turkish chandelier with one sourced from Crow Chandeliers to create a mix of contemporary and old-world. The rug is from Esmaili Rugs and Antiques. **Opposite:** A custom rug from Interior Resources runs up the staircase. Painting by John Douglas. Antique chandelier from France.

brass and bronze light fixtures from AOI Home. "I shopped everywhere for light fixtures, but then kept going back to AOI," he says. Off the kitchen, a round breakfast dining table seats eight and features a turquoise mother-of-pearl peacock top set on a 22-karat gold leaf tiled base.

Also significant are the home's dining room and family room, both of which showcase Lott's keen eye and ability to finesse a space with layers upon layers of design elements. "The dining room has so much detailing," he says. "The walls are faux Venetian plaster, hand carved then filled in with gold



The centerpiece chandeliers used in the kitchen and dining area are from AOI Home. The art is by John Douglas. Silk drapes from Allan Knight were used for the window treatments. The tile is from Ann Sacks. The rug is custom made with Sicis tiles.

paint, and the Allan Knight chandelier was custom made to fit the space, with strands of semiprecious stones and faceted crystal beads". For the formerly claustrophobic family room, Lott "blew out" the ceiling (essentially nixing an upstairs bedroom the client deemed unnecessary) and designed an elaborate groined ceiling in its place. A pair of sofas, one of which he accented with a sculptural sapele mahogany frame that resembles an entry to a Tibetan temple, offers comfortable space to enjoy multimedia entertainment. (Audiovisual equipment is hidden behind a pair of antique doors, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, that flank the fireplace.)

All of this took a tremendous amount of searching, research and sourcing, in places as diverse as New Orleans, High Point, North Carolina, and the Dallas Design Center. It also required the assistance of at least a dozen different artisans and craftspeople. "Every surface was touched by an artist," says Lott. "I'd start conceptualizing, working on sketches and collecting photos, then talk to artists and collaborate with them to do what we could to make things look like what I had in mind. Working with so many specialty





Above: The oversize front doors, silver columns and console with mirror are from AOI Home. Rugs and antiques are from Currey & Company. The travertine floor tiles were custom cut using a water jet to form a pillow top. **Opposite:** Two doors from AOI Home lead into the master bath. The fixtures were sourced from the Sherle Wagner collection along with Edgar Berebi hardware and Ann Sacks tiles; rugs from Esmaili Rugs and Antiques.

artists and coordinating them all, so they weren't all on top of each other and could get their jobs done, was challenging."

Considering the end result of the project, which was quite a bit different from those he typically works on, Lott attributes its success to experience and versatility.

"I have such a broad appreciation of everybody's taste level, that I can do anything a

client wants," Lott says. "Whatever the client's tastes are, I can customize a project to reflect it and make it work." ▶

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