



SEGRET Ovignettes

Leslie Sinclair

Introduction

When I first traveled to Italy I was in my forties. Staying with a dear client in a villa she had rented in Tuscany, I got to visit some stunning century-old homes that had been modernized to today's trends. I was mesmerized by the Europeans' ability to seamlessly integrate necessary amenities and fresh looks while respecting historical designs and styles. This trip further reinforced my belief that the evolution of a home is not exclusively about what is trending today. It also entails incorporating pieces purchased from the past, either too expensive to ignore or too cherished to part with.

I took this to heart when redoing my own home recently. John and I have lived in the same house, built in the 1960s, since our marriage in 1987. Raising three children who are now adults and renovating countless times to accommodate our family's changing needs, we contemplated customizing a new home that would better suit our current lifestyle. Being sentimentalists, however, we decided to stay and renovate once again with an entirely different aesthetic. Thanks to my trip to Italy and others to Europe, I had the confidence to not only consider what's stylish today but also reflect on different eras and keep what I love regardless of whether or not it's in fashion. Using a variety of finishes, I was able to retain most of my meaningful pieces and mingle them with current trends, which created a whole new look. Now, my home feels not only current, but it also reflects me.

The way a room feels is so important. Whenever I meet new clients for the first time, I try to determine what feeling they want for their home. While our initial discussion often begins with colors and treatments at the forefront, it's the feeling they desire - warmth, comfort, a soothing aura, or a bit of glam - that inspires me to create the perfect backdrop for their home. My goal is to design color palettes and finishing treatments that marry and complement the room's furnishings, fabrics, art and surfaces. This allows the room to be seen as a whole rather than drawing your eye to any one element.

Bringing you these gorgeous vignettes and sharing my knowledge of the craft of finishing gives me great joy. As you flip through the pages ahead, I hope that you are inspired to apply these principles to your interiors and that this book serves as a useful design reference for you to visualize and implement ideas in your own home.

Enjoy *Segreto Vignettes!*

– Leslie Sinclair

Designer – Katie Design. Architect – Newberry Architects LLC. Builder – Sims Luxury Builders.

Photography by Tria Giovan. Plaster by Segreto.





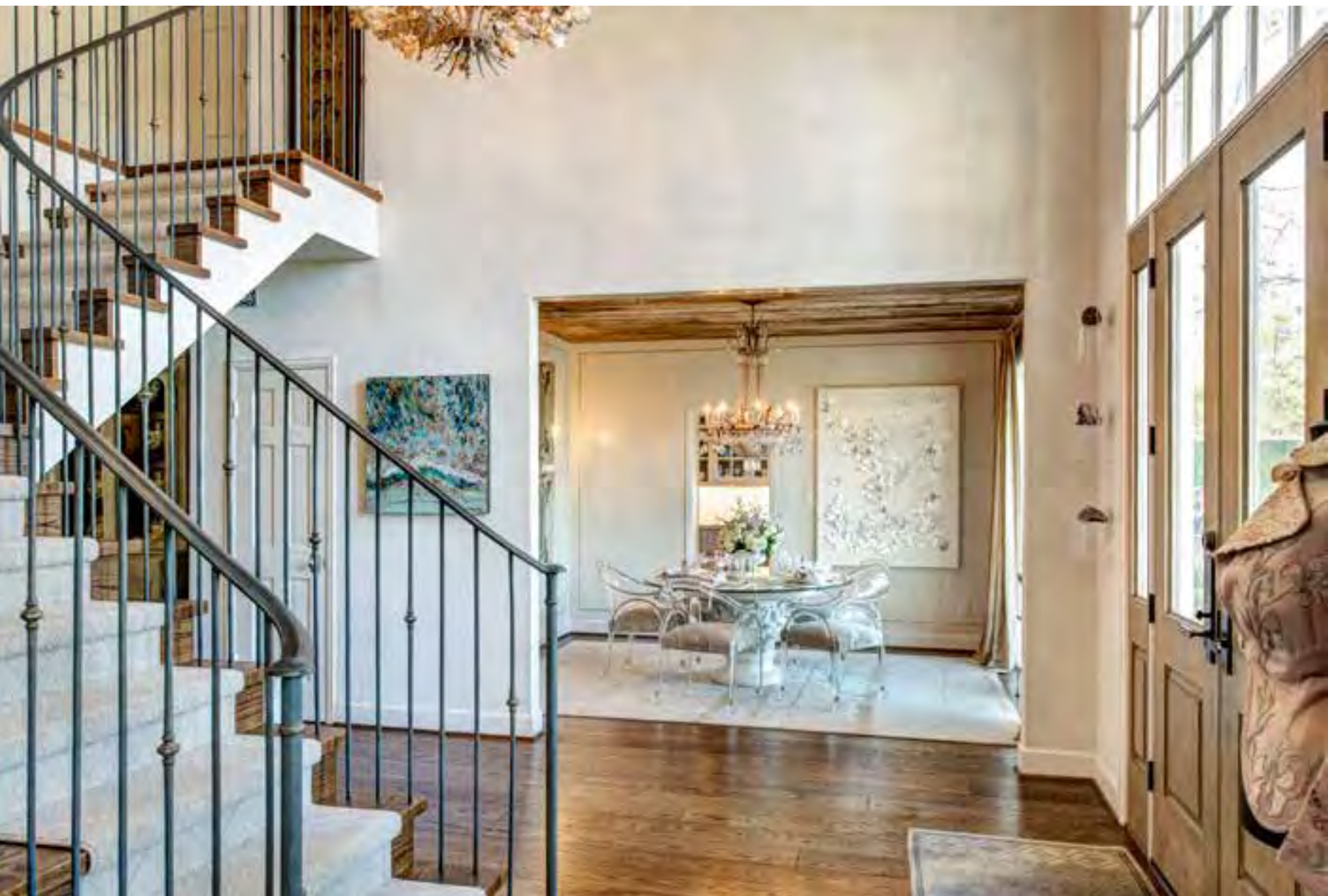
Today's veneer plasters can be hard-troweled to create a sleek backdrop for even the most modern of interiors. Incorporating plaster into avant-garde design instills a warmth that softens the contemporary elements of the space while retaining a sleek aesthetic. To the right of this gallery-like entrance resides the living room infused with pops of color and a custom banquette, providing multiple seating vignettes for entertaining.

Designer – Katie Design. Architect – Newberry Architects LLC. Builder – Sims Luxury Builders.

Photography by Wade Blissard. Ebonized cocktail table from Jan Showers. Vintage brass and acrylic coffee table, framed prints and gilded chair from Shabby Slips. Floor lamps from Circa Lighting. Pillow from B. Viz Design. Acrylic side table from Bremermann Designs. Plaster by Segreto.

Creating Panels with Paint

In today's open floor plans, panels can be an exceptional way to delineate a room without interrupting the home's flow. In my entrance, which has wide openings leading into the living and dining spaces, I plastered all the surfaces the same to keep an open feel. To set the dining room apart in a subtle yet distinctive way, a reclaimed plank ceiling was installed and enhanced with a hand-painted design, and panels were created on the walls with a refined gold leaf detail.



Designed by Homeowner Leslie Sinclair. Architect – Newberry Architects LLC. Renovator – Goodchild Builders.

Photography by Wade Blissard. Plank ceiling and flooring by AR Floor Designs of Houston, Inc. Table from Denny Register Antiques. Chairs from MAI. Drapery rods and chair endcaps from LuxHoldUps. Vintage Fortuny draperies from Atelier Fifteen-O-Five. Bar console from Mecox. Rug from Madison Lily Rugs. Chair fabric from Donghia. Antique French sconces and overdoors used as hangings from Joyce Horn Antiques. Chandelier from Janet Wiebe Antiques. Acrylic cubes from CB2. Entrance rug from Matt Camron Rugs & Tapestries. Butterfly art by Alicia Kowalski and painting in entrance by Blakely Bering from Segreto Boutique & Gallery. Staircase railing by A.C.I. Metal Works. Staircase runner from The Great Rug Company. Plaster, hand-painted artistry and finishes on front door and staircase railing by Segreto.



Designer – Kara Childress Inc. Architect – Newberry Architects LLC. Builder – Windham Builders.

Personalizing Mudrooms

Both of these spaces are mudroom hallways off kitchens. Providing ample storage for the kids' backpacks and shoes, their design and furnishings are an extension of the rest of the home rather than a utilitarian afterthought. The gray-hued mudroom (left) features the children's names painted beneath their respective lockers. For this personal touch, we used 1 Shot Enamel, a very durable paint that holds up well to wear and tear. On the stained wood lockers (above), we hand-painted designs on top of the wood, giving the look of antique plaques with each family member's name inscribed.

Designer – Mollie Oshman. Architect – Hollenbeck Architects. Builder – Levitt Partnership.

Photography by Wade Blissard. Artistry by Segreto.



Correcting Imperfect Sheetrock

Whenever a room's height is taller than standard-size sheetrock panels, multiple sheets are screwed into the framing to form walls, which are then taped and floated at the joints. In two-story entranceways, you can often see the seams. Plastering the surface completely hides these imperfections, making them impossible to spot even in places where light would have formerly highlighted the flaws.

Designer – Kara Childress Inc. Architect – Newberry Architects LLC. Builder – Kerry Galvin Homes, Inc.

Photography by Wade Blissard. Plaster and staircase railing finish by Segreto.



This home's formal living area features a beautiful and unique solution for hiding the TV. The antique tapestry can be pulled up mechanically, revealing the recessed television. In the more casual den (right), the TV is tucked behind reclaimed doors installed on an iron track, barn door style, for easy opening and closing.

Designer – Kara Childress Inc. Architect – Newberry Architects LLC.
Builder – Windham Builders.

Photography by Wade Blissard. Plaster by Segreto.



An antique zinc shop counter, which was converted into a working island with open storage, and a range hood constructed from a French zinc shop awning were the starting points for this kitchen's evolution. A pair of eighteenth-century Italian doors, both beautiful and practical, separate the kitchen from the living room. To enhance the room's old-world charm, we plastered the walls, ceiling and open shelving and layered the cabinets in a gesso sand finish for a truly reclaimed look.



Designer – Kara Childress Inc.
Architect – Newberry Architects LLC.
Builder – Kerry Galvin Homes, Inc.

Photography by Wade Blissard. Lanterns from Watkins Culver Antiques & Design. Concrete counters and range hood fabrication by James Dawson Design. Antique French zinc awning and Bars de Provence stone floors from Chateau Domingue. Custom barstools from Neal & Co. Antiques. Appliances from K&N Sales. Plaster and cabinet finishes by Segreto.



The Delft tiles embedded into the wall served as the inspiration for this peaceful "hers-only" bathroom. A sweet respite from a house filled with boys, dogs and happy chaos, the space is grounded by plaster, cabinet finishes and reclaimed terra cotta floors.

Designer – Kara Childress Inc. Architect – Newberry Architects LLC. Builder – Kerry Galvin Homes, Inc.

Photography by Wade Blissard. Plumbing from Newport Brass. 18th c. Delft tiles and reclaimed terra cotta Parefeuille flooring from Chateau Domingue. Chandelier from Joyce Horn Antiques. Sconces from Tara Shaw. Vintage French lounge chair from Back Row Home. Cabinet and plaster finishes by Segreto.



One element can often inspire an entire room's design. In my master bath, the pair of antique mirrors dictated the height and style of the cabinets, the type of plumbing fixtures, and even the room's color direction. Showing my love of custom cabinet finishes, each piece of cabinetry was built like furniture and then finished as a one-of-a-kind piece. To simplify the design and keep the room uncluttered, we ran tadelakt plaster seamlessly into the glass-enclosed shower. This water-resistant plaster just needs to be soaped every six months to hold up in a wet area.

Designed by Homeowner Leslie Sinclair. Architect – Newberry Architects LLC. Renovator – Goodchild Builders.

Photography by Wade Blissard unless noted. Lighting and flooring consultation, Sarah West & Associates. Trumeau mirror from Joyce Horn Antiques. Plumbing fixtures from Acero Bella Inc. Flooring from Materials Marketing installed by Lucky Tile, Inc. Sconces from Brown. Mirrors over sink from Mitra Kilburn at Marburger Farm Antique Show. Window valance and chair upholstery by Manuel Upholstery. Hardware from Settlers Hardware. Calacatta Gold marble from Walker Zanger fabricated by Olympus Marble & Granite. Plaster and cabinet finishes by Segreto.

Choosing an Architect

– Kenneth A. Newberry, AIA, LEED AP, Newberry Architects LLC

Choosing an architect isn't as simple as it sounds. Though technical ability is at the core of the job, there are a number of other factors like personality, style and passion that contribute to the final selection. By taking all of this into account during the decision-making process, you'll be more likely to get the outcome and experience you want without surprises, headaches and hassles.

References

While it may go without saying, the first – and, in many cases, the most important – step is due diligence. You'll want to get references from any architect you're considering. But also take the time to ask key third parties for their thoughts. Talk to friends who have contracted with some of the architects you're planning to interview. Consult with your builder, designer or any other business whose projects have been completed by architects on your list. And never underestimate the value of a Google search.

When you're having these conversations with references, don't leave it at "did you or didn't you like the results?" Dig deeper, with questions like:

- Did they listen to you?
- Did they make any mistakes? If so, how were they handled?
- Did they understand your budget and work around it?
- When there were differences of opinion between you and the architect, how were they resolved? Did you feel heard?
- How much time did they spend with you explaining the

process, keeping you updated, helping you manage the other consultants, and asking for your input?

These are not insignificant questions. The architect-client relationship is central to the success of any project. Understanding how the architect deals with the unexpected, the difficult, and the challenging is critical. As is the case in life, how an architect responds to adversity speaks volumes about his or her professional character and commitment.

Passion

Interviewing each potential architect is your chance to not only ask any questions raised by your research but also to explore diversity in their portfolio and discuss collaboration and cost transparency.

Be sure to dig more deeply into an architect's sense of passion, both for what he or she is doing as well as for your specific project. Your project is among the most important undertakings in your life at the moment. You want an architect who shares that sense of importance.

Collaboration

You should get assurances that your lead architect will stay on top of the project and not hand it off to others. Know who will be on your team, when they will enter and exit the project, and who will be your main point of contact or project manager. Ask about the architect's current portfolio of work so you can be certain you won't get





Designer – Eleanor Cummings. Builder – Goodchild Builders. Photography by Jack Thompson. Plaster by Segreto.

lost in the mix or relegated to the back burner, and have a regular schedule for you and the architect to meet, discuss progress and work out any issues. This last point is at the heart of collaboration. If an architect doesn't offer or agree to set a schedule, which includes meetings and constant communications, you're not getting the service you deserve.

Cost Transparency

Regarding costs, be absolutely clear on the fee structure. Fees will vary immensely based on the services and documents provided. One of the biggest challenges in analyzing costs is the ability to make an apples-to-apples comparison. There are some architects who don't offer the degree of service or the detailed documents that might be essential to your desired outcome. The

contract should be specific and set forth terms that ensure you're getting exactly what you're paying for. The last thing you want is sticker shock brought on by unexpected add-ons or fees. If there is the potential to incur additional costs, that potential, and its accompanying expense, should be specified.

In the end, it's your money, and you deserve a maximum return on your investment. By practicing due diligence and digging deeper into passion, collaboration and cost transparency during your interviews, you'll be well on your way to choosing an architect who understands and can deliver upon your goals and expectations for the project.

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