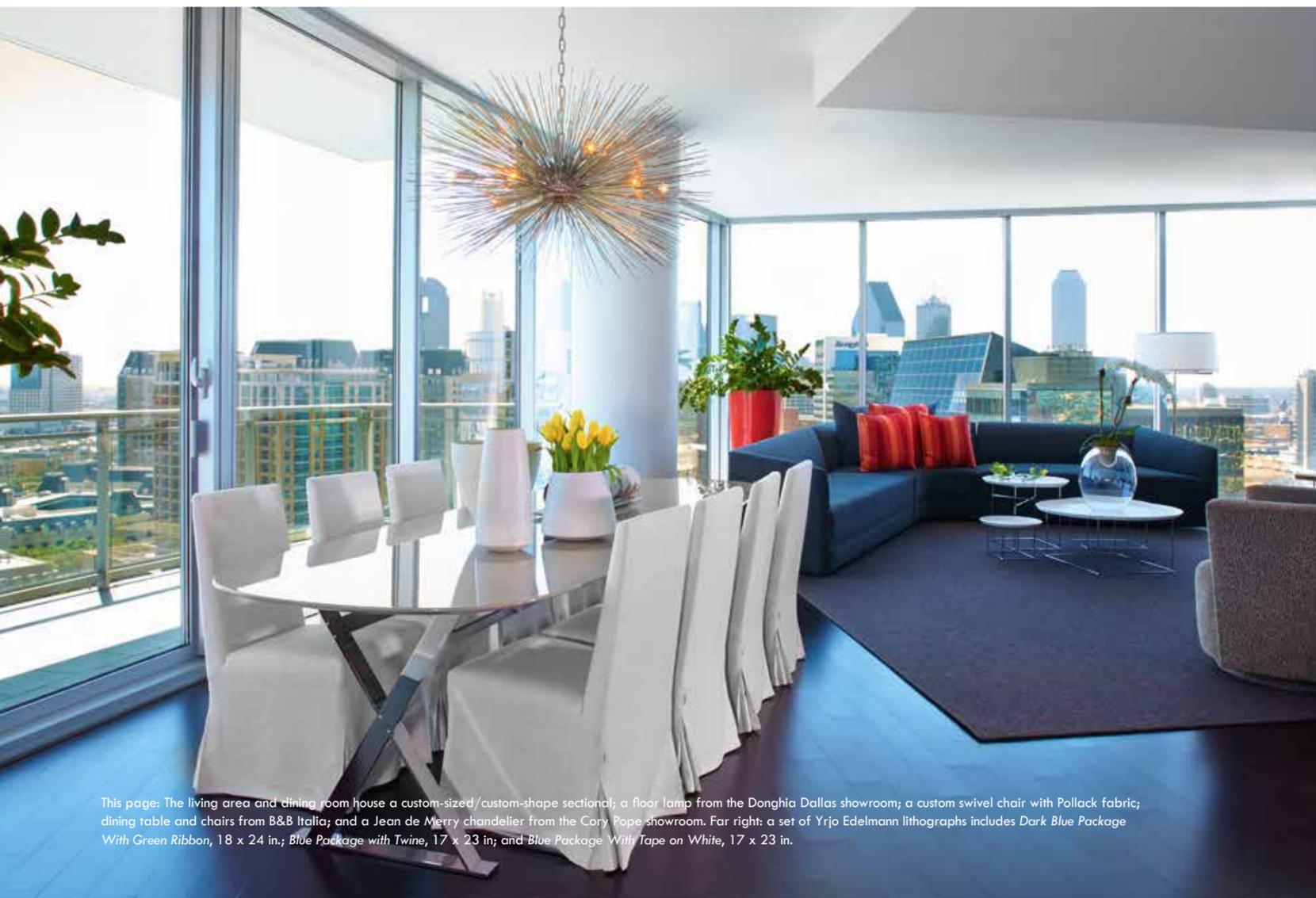


# URBAN AERIE

TWO ADROIT DESIGNERS BRING A MODERN, COMFORTABLE AESTHETIC TO A COUPLE'S HIGH-RISE HOME.



This page: The living area and dining room house a custom-sized/custom-shape sectional; a floor lamp from the Donghia Dallas showroom; a custom swivel chair with Pollack fabric; dining table and chairs from B&B Italia; and a Jean de Merry chandelier from the Cory Pope showroom. Far right: a set of Yrjo Edelmans lithographs includes *Dark Blue Package With Green Ribbon*, 18 x 24 in.; *Blue Package with Twine*, 17 x 23 in.; and *Blue Package With Tape on White*, 17 x 23 in.

Shimmering surfaces in Petta Thompson's *Moon Gold* sculptures greet visitors to Sarah and Doug Monsour's 20<sup>th</sup>-floor home. In the darkened foyer, they create a lunar glow, which is contrasted by the natural light flooding the living areas just beyond. The Monsours, whose primary residence is in Longview, initially bought a sixth-floor unit in an Uptown high-rise as an executive retreat. It provided their family with a place to lay over on trips in and out of DFW airport, as well as a place to entertain Doug's Dallas clients. The couple hired Vicki Crew and Susan Smith of Urban Interiors to help transform it into an urban oasis. The Monsours were so pleased with the site and the project that when they moved into this larger upstairs unit a year later, they called the team in again. To Crew and Smith's pleasure, the work that they had done on the original unit could easily be moved upstairs. Now spectacular views of Uptown, downtown, and Victory Park surround the family on the outside while a focus on soft contemporary design envelops them inside.

This was a plum job for the designers, who have worked together for close to eight years. The way they finish each other's sentences and continue one another's thoughts reflects their symbiotic relationship. And their taste is impeccable. Here they have created a space that is casual yet stylish. Says Crew, "It is so cool and comfortable. They (the owners) can be comfortable with children and sophisticated with clients." The couple has three teenage children.

Faced with designing an entire interior, Crew and Smith work methodically from the ground up. "We usually start with rugs and then with neutral upholstery and then we add punches of color," Crew explains. Their first challenge came in the living room. "This room has an unusual angle to it, so we started with the rug and moved on to the sectional. If you don't follow the angle, you create a new angle," she continues. As a result, they had the sectional totally custom-made. It took several templates to get it right, but what now exists is a perfectly balanced area with a boomerang-shaped sectional sitting atop a similarly shaped rug. David Truett of Truett Fine Carpets and Rugs in the Design District designed this and many of the other rugs in the home. They are used to advantage throughout, creating a visual transition from space to space.

The charcoal grey flannel sectional in the living room contrasts elegantly with the white B&B Italia





coffee tables, while a six-foot-tall poppy-colored planter behind it echoes the hues and shapes of the Gregg Coker painting on the opposite wall. Though the overall effect is serene, the grouping of three *Climbing Men* wire sculptures by Chris Mason lends the room an air of whimsy. Two stools from Ligne Roset and two custom-made barrel swivel chairs complete the look.

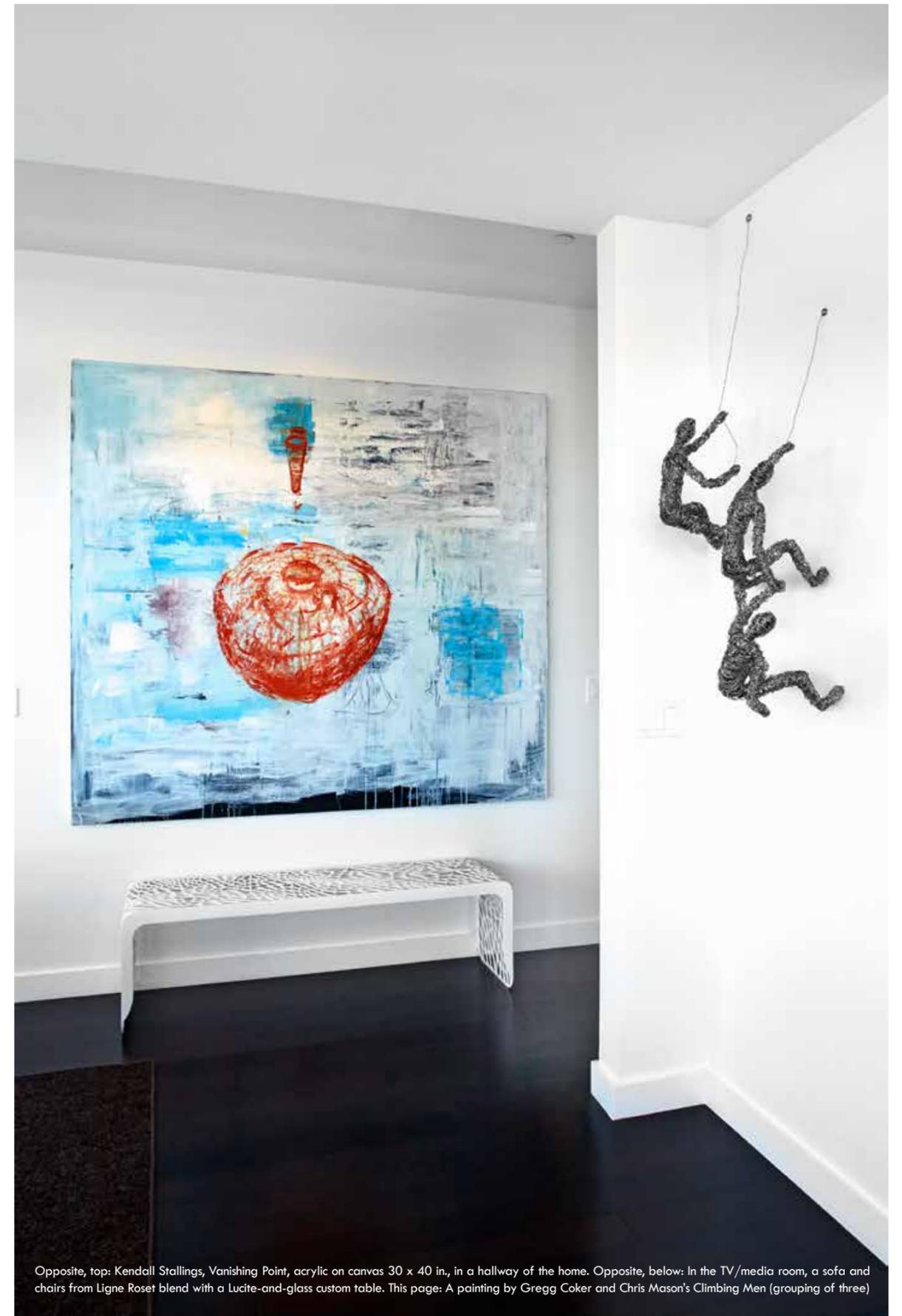
Unlike their first unit, the Monsours now have a dining area whose table and chairs are also from B&B Italia. A Jean de Merry chandelier pops like a starburst above the table. Ligne Roset barstools are tucked under the granite countertop nearby, providing a casual spot for a quick bite.

While Crew and Smith had the walls painted museum white, they left some room to play. The guest powder room features textured wallpaper with big splashy tree motifs made by the French firm Elitis. Notes Smith, "Wallpaper is coming back with a rage. In this bathroom we added it just for drama." The wallpaper, as with many of the other aesthetic flourishes including Thompson's sculpture wall pieces in the foyer, comes from the Donghia showroom in the Design District.

Unique structural features abound in this home. Although it is in the downtown area, it is serenely quiet. There are four outdoor balconies, three of which have fireplaces and all of which offer stunning views.

Much of the art comes from Craighead Green Gallery. As Smith says, "It was a natural migration to the gallery," since Sarah's mother is also a gallery client. According to the designers, having the opportunity to place all of the art was one of the most enjoyable aspects of this project—and something they rarely have a chance to do. Their relationship with the gallery helped, too. As Gallery Director Scot Presley

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Opposite, top: Kendall Stallings, *Vanishing Point*, acrylic on canvas 30 x 40 in., in a hallway of the home. Opposite, below: In the TV/media room, a sofa and chairs from Ligne Roset blend with a Lucite-and-glass custom table. This page: A painting by Gregg Coker and Chris Mason's *Climbing Men* (grouping of three)



The back hallway features a painting by Dallas artist Brad Ellis and Gordon Chandler's kimono; to the left is a custom-made shelf with two pieces from the Allan Knight showroom above.



Kenda North, *Cara 165*, photograph, 24 X 25 in., is on display in the sitting area of the master bedroom.

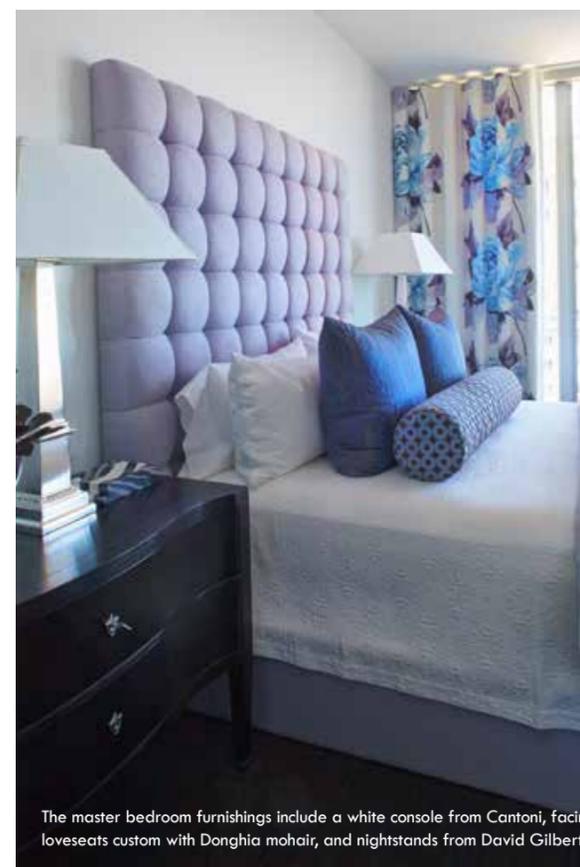
points out, "Understanding the aesthetic of a designer and their clients can be tricky, but not with Urban Interiors. Having worked with Susan and Vicki for many years, I've come to learn their sense of style. We built the Monsours' collection slowly and deliberately. Each piece they chose was first and foremost a piece they loved. The designers did a great job of pointing them in the right direction and allowing them to make good choices. The collection overall has great continuity with a fine balance of mediums including photography, paintings, sculpture, glass, and fine art prints."

Indeed the art does run the gamut, and its placement reflects a sense of fun. On the wall facing the Petta Thompson sculptures hangs a red kimono, but not a silken one that wafts in the moving air. This one is by Georgia artist Gordon Chandler, fashioned from oil barrels. It hangs rigidly while still providing a sense of elegance to the space. A painting by Dallas artist Brad Ellis provides a visual bridge between the two works.

The living areas are also filled with art, all great conversation pieces. One of Dallas photographer Carolyn Brown's floral works is in Sarah's bathroom, while an underwater photograph by local photographer Kenda North hangs in Doug's bathroom. The television room features a suite of 10 works on paper from Native American artist Poteet Victory's *Abbreviated Portrait Series*. A white piece of paper with a red box in the middle and a small black dot in the lower right corner represents Marilyn Monroe. This work was acquired through McLarry Modern in Santa Fe.

Finally, the bedrooms are a study in comfort. Each is swathed in linens and pillows from Casa di Lino, a local purveyor of luxury linens. Every tufted headboard was custom-made for the space. The drapery in the master bedroom is from the British firm Osborne & Little. Smith says that these drapery panels have a 48-inch repeat—the largest the designers have ever seen. Moreover, she says, "They are floral and fun, but at the same time art." They're balanced with the work of Swedish artist Yrjo Edelmann, whose images of wrapped packages are on the facing wall.

"The couple was seeking a stark contrast to their traditional home in Longview with this soft contemporary home," says Smith. And that is what Smith and Crew have delivered. Contemporary, comfortable, and convivial, they created a perfect urban refuge in the sky while still managing to keep it down to earth. **P**



The master bedroom furnishings include a white console from Cantoni, facial loveseats custom with Donghia mohair, and nightstands from David Gilbert.



In a second bedroom: custom headboard fabric, Christopher Hyland; sconces, Foscarini; and custom bench with Donghia fabric.