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GIORGIO ARMANI STAMPED-CROC PATENT-LEATHER COAT \$10,500, KNITTED CAP \$395, CYLINDER BAG \$1,245, AND ENAMEL BRASS NECKLACE WITH GEOMETRIC LINKS, PRICE ON REQUEST, ALL BY GIORGIO ARMANI AT THE GIORGIO ARMANI BOUTIQUE, NEIMAN MARCUS. PHOTOGRAPHY GRAY SCOTT. ART DIRECTION AND STYLING, FASHION EDITOR KATE ALLEN STUKENBERG, MODEL WALLA KJARTANSDOTTIR FOR FORD MODELS, NEW YORK. HAIR WESLEY O'MEARA FOR THE WALL GROUP, MAKEUP CLARE READ FOR B.T.G. NYC, INC. PHOTO ASSISTANT JOE POLIFRONE AND VICTORIA STEVENS.



# MODERN *Makeover*

NEVER *content* TO LIVE IN ONE SPOT FOR LONG, DESIGNER KATIE STASSI UNVEILS HER LATEST HOUSE PROJECT: *her own.*

BY LAURANN CLARIDGE | PHOTOGRAPHY TRIA GIOVAN

**M**any people are stymied by major life changes, but interior designer Katie Stassi of Stassi Antiques & Interiors is definitely not one of them. This gutsy girl relishes the very idea of change. In fact, she seeks it out. In the 10 years since she and her husband, Matt, married, they've moved four times — buying, renovating, beautifully furnishing and then selling each house for a little profit,

sure, but mostly because this couple craves change.

"The financial is a perk," Stassi says, "but it's not the reason we do it. We love taking something that's terrible and not too pretty and turning it into something beautiful. It's the creative process that's so fun for me — and seeing the transformation over a short period of time."

The latest place to profit from the Stassis' creativity is a pristine white house with a judicious splash of color — the perfect home for the couple and their daughters, six-year-old Susan and

four-year-old Sophia. For now, at least. "All our friends have bets on us," Stassi admits. "We've said we're going to live here at least five years, and everyone says, 'We bet you won't make it that long.'" Their wanderlust seems almost tangible; several passersby, intrigued by the windowless stucco façade with its checkerboard grass walkway to the entry, have stopped to inquire if they're selling soon. But for now, the family plans to stay put. After all, they'd like to enjoy the house they've only recently renovated top to bottom.

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Left: In the sea-foam-green and white breakfast area, the custom banquette was created by Quatrin. Black-and-white pillow by Shabby Slips. Frosted-glass Tavola table and Eames Eiffel chairs from Design Within Reach. Black dyed cowhide rug through cowhidesinternational.com. Antique flamingo outdoor ornament and painted reproduction trumeau from M. Naevé. Wineson swing-arm wall lamps at Walter Lee Culp Associates.

Below: The glass-enclosed shower in the master bath has Carrera marble tile from Architectural Design Resource and fixtures by Grohe. Towels and accessories from Waterworks. Nickel-finish chrome stool from Restoration Hardware. Watercolor by New Orleans artist Karen Edmunds.



Left: Pulled up to the custom kitchen island are Bertisa stools from Design Within Reach. In lieu of wall-hung cabinetry, Stassi installed a trio of paintings by Meredith Pardee from Walkins Colver.

Below: In four-year-old Sophia's very pink bedroom, the monogrammed linens were custom-created by Leontine Linens. Italian crystal chandelier from M. Naevé. The Louis XVI-style fuchsia-lacquered armchair is covered in SeaCloth "big bloom" fabric at David Sutherland Showroom.

Bottom: In Susan's room is a Louis XVI-style headboard, hand-painted by Katie Stassi, from Bremermann Designs in New Orleans. Linens from Kuhl-Linsecomb and Leontine Linens.



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With the major layout changes set, this one-woman design show got busy — really busy, decorating her own house between jobs in Houston and Aspen. She used white, punctuated by myriad hues, as her jumping-off point. "I love simplicity," she says. "I feel like these days everyone lives on computers and BlackBerrys, cell phones ... it's nonstop. When I come home ... it's the one thing I can make simple. I love white because it's clean and fresh and relaxes my eye. It's easy to look at and easy to make fun changes. You can change out a pillow or

reupholster a chair and have a whole new look without going to any great extremes."

With a fresh backdrop of white walls and bleached parquet floors, Stassi deftly combined French and Italian antiques with streamlined pieces from Design Within Reach and Roche Bobois. Colorful contemporary art balances the best of two eras in one peaceful house.

The kitchen, which flows into the dining and living rooms, has become a focal point and the hub of all activity during the Stassis' frequent parties. While you'll find the couple cooking together in this efficient space

(Stassi used to work with her mom in her New Orleans catering company), what you won't find is a typical kitchen. In lieu of wall-hung cabinetry, there's a triptych of oil paintings, while storage overflow is diverted to a generous walk-in pantry and tidy niches under the marble countertops.

Now that the house is complete, we can only wonder when the talented Mrs. Stassi will change everything around again. Frankly, we can't wait to see what she does next. This is one case where change is good — very good.





"We found this house over a year ago," Stassi says. Originally, they considered building from the ground up in the West University area, but they couldn't find a lot large enough to accommodate the pool they wanted. This house, constructed in 1968, was in its original condition. "Apparently the owners loved to entertain, and the thing that drew us to this house was the floor plan and the openness. Even in its worst condition, we knew it had potential and that it would be a fun house to live in."

Stassi took it down to the studs and modified the space by removing several walls, raising the ceiling and adding a carport, as well as a playroom for the girls. Even though the house had a huge yard enclosed by its U-shaped structure, there originally wasn't a pool, so Stassi installed one, along with a punchy black-and-white-canopied pagoda.

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Opposite page: In the corner of the living room, the Louis XVI daybed from Tara Shaw Ltd. is upholstered in Randolph & Heir's empire stripe, through George Cameron Nash. Sheepskin throw from Design Within Reach. Acrylic side table from Bremermann Designs, New Orleans. Antique frame sculpture from Kay O'Toole Antiques and Eccentricities. Nude pastel by Katherine Phelps.

Top: In the living room, two sofas from Guatrine are slipcovered in white linen. Silk-velvet pillows with antique appliques from Becky Wizard.

through Watkins Culver. The Lance table from Design Within Reach holds a pair of 18th-century gilt-wood candlesticks from Chateau Domingue and a plaster 1920s bust of a Madagascar woman from a Paris art school, found at M. Kaeve. Silver-and-gold-leaf cocktail table custom-made in New Orleans. Hanging, an homage to Cy Twombly. French Louis Philippe mirror hangs above one of a pair of Louis XVI demilune tables.

Above: In the dining room, an antique English gate-leg table from Fireside Antiques is

Baton Rouge, with Louis XVI-style upholstered chairs from Tara Shaw Ltd. Pair of 18th-century Italian gilt-wood candlesticks from Chateau Domingue. The 18th-century Louis XVI mirror hangs above a Louis Philippe commode, both from Tara Shaw Ltd.

Right: In the living room, fresh, fragrant cherry blossoms from Plants 'n Petals in a Spanish jar from Bremermann Designs, New Orleans. Pair of 19th-century Louis XV carved gilt-wood side chairs from The Gray Door. Silver-leaf tall altar candlestick from Skelton-St. John.



Left: Susan and Sophia on a pair of chaises with black-and-white striped pillows, all from Janus et Cie. The awning and outdoor curtains were custom-made with Sumbrella fabric by Accurate Canvas & Awning, Jardinière from Tara Shaw Ltd.

Below: At the entrance of the Stassis' Tanglewood-area home, Katie Stassi and daughters, Susan and Sophia.

Center: The pool was installed by Platinum Pools, with landscaping by Fred Kirsten Garden Design. Saarinen dining table from Design Within Reach.



Above: In the master bedroom, the canopy bed from Williams-Sonoma Home is dressed with Matteo linens and Tibetan lamb's-wool pillows, all from Kuhl-Liscomb. Striped Missoni throw from Indulge. Philippe Starck Kartell chair from Design Within Reach. Dr. Pitt armless love seat and nickel-and-glass cocktail table are from Villa Vici, New Orleans. Zebra rug from Shabby Slips. Pair of white-painted lamps from Bremermann Designs, New Orleans.