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10 Stellar Things to See,
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Special Section
THE FALL SOCIAL
CALENDAR
in All Its Glory

DESIGNER

KATIE STASSI

Reinvents the
Frantz Home

And, Oh Yes, PARTIES!

DREAM COAT. PHOTOGRAPHY GRAY SCOTT AT VERITAS MANAGEMENT. ART DIRECTION AND STYLING. FASHION EDITOR KATE ALLEN STUKENBERG. LOUIS VUITTON COLLARED COAT \$22,400. AT THE LOUIS VUITTON BOUTIQUE. MEREDITH WENDELL LEATHER BELT \$295. AND BACKBONE BRACELET \$495. MAKEUP TOMMY JOINER. HAIR ANDRÉ GUNN FOR WALL GROUP. MODEL JOHANNE FRIIS AT FORD MODELS. PHOTO ASSISTANT KYLE GANSON. FASHION ASSISTANTS CAMERON COOPER, ESTHER SILBERMAN.

A LIGHT Romance

How one designer's rescue took a dark, chaotic home into the light



BY LAURANN CLARIDGE. PHOTOGRAPHY JACK THOMPSON.
INTERIOR DESIGN KATIE STASSI.

This is the story of a woman with four gorgeous girls who needed not one fresh start, but two. You see, Lisa Frantz had divorced and was ready for the proverbial clean slate.

She searched and searched for the perfect house to raise her children (now aged 12 to 20 years) and found a new construction on a bucolic spread in Memorial, not far from the home and life she wished to leave behind. Her family needed the generous space afforded by the new property, but decorating the 12,000-square-foot behemoth was a mighty undertaking indeed.

For months, Frantz worked with a designer whose tastes swung toward earth tones and dark woods, toile, gingham, patterns and trims galore

with beaucoup accents of gold. Together they bought rooms full of furniture, custom-made draperies and worked to match the paint and stain colors to the decor. Then on the eve of moving day — or what design pros call the big install — Frantz and her designer had a falling out.

The homeowner lapsed into a panic. She turned to a friend, who in turn rang up designer Katie Stassi of Stassi Design. Stassi recalls, "Apparently Lisa wasn't left a floor plan. She didn't know where any of the pieces went." On moving day, Stassi arrived at the Frantz home only minutes before a convoy of trucks ascended the drive with the contents of an entire house. "I'll never forget it," Stassi says. "I drove up, and Caroline [the youngest daughter] was the first person I met. I asked her to show me around really quickly. Then it was a mad

dash to unload and place furniture." The organized new designer deciphered the best arrangements and consigned to a holding station all the pieces she had no idea what to do with at the moment.

Frantz was grateful to have Stassi's spur-of-the-moment help, and a bond was forged. "Within the first two weeks," Stassi recalls, "she asked for my honest opinion of what I thought of the interior style and asked, 'If I were to start over, what would I do?'" The designer's reply was concise: "Not this."

Stassi envisioned a peaceful, calming retreat with gardens and thoughtful outdoor rooms. The interior would have a very livable, comfortable Swedish vibe, enhanced by fine French antiques and awash in whites, creams, light blues and beiges. Convinced, Frantz decided to start afresh (again) and set Stassi off on a whirlwind job that,



in less than two and a half years, transformed the home into the sanctuary captured on these pages.

Stassi, who grew up in New Orleans, bought some pieces at shops she frequented there, such as Mac Maison Ltd., P.W. Rosenthal Antiques, Maison de Provence, Bremermann Designs, Karla Katz Antiques, Shabby Slips

and Soniat House. In Houston, she prowled Tara Shaw, W. Gardner, Ltd.; M. Naeve; Chateau Domingue; Kay O'Toole Antiques & Eccentricities; Carol Piper Rugs; Watkins Culver; Skelton-St. John; and Shabby Slips, among others. She took snapshots of possible acquisitions, then sent them to her client for a quick "yes"

or "no" verdict.

"Lisa had always lived with dark surrounds, but once she realized how it helped the ambiance, everything had to be light," says Stassi. "It's funny, looking back ... I laugh at how I eventually had to convince her we need a few darker things to balance it all out."



Opposite page: A peek into the living room reveals a carved stone mantle from Chateau Domingue. In the alcove, one of a pair of Italian consoles from Maison de Provence and a pair of 18th-century Venetian gilded mirrors from Shabby Slips. Foreground: a jardiniere base from Tara Shaw with a custom marble top.

Top left: In the dining room, a French painted buffet from Antiques de Provence, New Orleans, is paired with a gilt-top Régence trousseau from Mac Maison Ltd., New Orleans. Pair of 18th-century gilt mirror appliques and the 18th-century Tuscan candlesticks on the buffet are all from Chateau Domingue. Marble bust of Mother Teresa on an 18th-century gilded plinth from Soniat House, New Orleans. Reflected in the mirror, a pair of angels, circa 1800, from a chapel in Tuscany from Chateau Domingue.

Top right: Grand columns off the entry hall lead into the living room. Venetian sofa upholstered in CPLJ Baker Luca linen, with an antique applique pillow by B. Vir Designs. Verdigris iron cocktail table from P.W. Rosenthal Antiques, New Orleans. Washed wood grand bergères, upholstered in France, from Antiques de Provence, New Orleans. Pair of French armchairs upholstered in Salace fabric by Larven. Tall Italian altar candlestick from Tara Shaw Antiques. Mirrored nesting tables and Madonna, both from Kay O'Toole Antiques & Eccentricities.

Above: Antique books in the family room, many of which were found at Tara Shaw and in Round Top.

Left: In the dining room, a Louis XVI-style table from Bremermann Designs is attended by French painted chairs upholstered in Fortuny fabric from Mac Maison Ltd., New Orleans. Empire chandelier from Karla Katz Antiques, New Orleans.



Top left: Surrounding the kitchen island are villa bar stools from Mario Villa, New Orleans. Rain's head from Karla Katz Antiques, New Orleans. Dasha's runners from Carol Piper Rugs.

Top right: This kitchen cabinet holds vintage and antique apothecary jars from Dalton-St. John.

Left: The girls gather each morning in this breakfast room off the kitchen. Empire pedestal table from Samal House, New Orleans. Nineteenth-century Italian chairs from Tara Shaw, with custom slipcovers in Rogers & Goffigan's Porcini fabric. Italian chandelier from Karla Katz Antiques, New Orleans. Giant olive jar by the hearth from Antiques de Provence, New Orleans.





"Lisa had always lived with DARK SURROUNDS,
but once she realized how it helped the
ambiance, everything HAD TO BE LIGHT"

— designer Katie Stassi



Top left: A French iron table from The Gray Door welcomes guests in the entry. French jardinière from Antiques de Provence, New Orleans. Louis XV fauteuil from Tara Shaw. Eighteenth-century Italian chandelier from Karta Kutz Antiques, New Orleans. Landscape painting by Leo Leestemaker, through the Serey Christensen Gallery, New Orleans.

Top right: Twelve-year-old Caroline Frantz designed her bedroom, pretty in pink and blue, with a little help from Stassi. Louis XV-style bed from Lewis J. Solomon, New York. The 18th-century carved ribbon curve piece is upholstered in linen poplin from Leontine Linens. The bed linens are a combination of Clarence House small check fabric and Leontine Linens custom bedding. Swedish bench upholstered in Robert Allen's shell-pink mohair; from Anne Koerner Antiques & Interiors, New Orleans. Nineteenth-century Italian La Perle crystal chandelier from Sonier House, New Orleans. Early 19th-century Gustavian desk from Anne Koerner Antiques & Interiors, New Orleans. Nineteenth-century Swedish fauteuil from Wirthmore Antiques, New Orleans. Swedish painted settee, circa 1790, from Watkins Culver.

Bottom left: Owner Lisa Frantz's peaceful boudoir has a very "Sweden meets the South of France" feel. French mantle from Chateau Domingus. Framed drawing called Minerva from PW Rosenthal Antiques. Napoleon-style tufted chairs from W. Gardner, Ltd. Antique applique pillow by B. Viz Designs. Acrylic drinks table from Bremermann Designs, New Orleans. French washed bench from Watkins Culver. Custom headboard by Custom Creations with custom bed linens from Leontine Linens. Venetian chandelier.

Below: Three of the Frantz girls — Rachael, Caroline and Grace — sit with their dog Bella on Quatrone Washable Furniture's slipcovered Veranda chairs and ottoman. Italian candlestick lamp from Mac Malice Ltd., New Orleans. Nineteenth-century statue of Spanish virgin with child from Watkins Culver.