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# Interiors

CHICAGO

## DESTINATION DREAM HOME

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# LARGER THAN LIFE

Texas transplants embrace city life with a new home base in the Gold Coast—a condo reimaged by Sarah Whit Interior Design.

By Amalie Drury  
Photography by Tony Solari

Step one: Give away all of your furniture. It was an inevitable part of the process when Ana and Patrick McCauley gave up suburban life in Houston to follow Patrick's executive pharmaceutical career path to Chicago. And none of their Texas-size sofas or tables, it turned out, would be able to come along.

The couple initially thought of looking for a suburban Chicago home similar to their Houston spread, but after a stint in temporary corporate housing in River North, they decided to give city life a whirl. "I loved being able to walk everywhere and not have the need for a car," says Ana. "The energy of being outside with so many people—we really liked that."

They found a nicely sized condo—four units combined by a previous owner—in the Gold Coast, a neighborhood they gravitated toward for its leafy, established character. "This place was the only one we saw that felt homey," says

**COUNTER CULTURE**  
Chippendale-style counter stools add a grounding hit of black to the light, open-concept kitchen. A pretty, iridescent pillow-tile backsplash is like jewelry accessorizing the open space.





**BLACK AND WHITE**  
A custom rug designed by Sarah Whit Interior Design anchors the living room, allowing colorful accents to pop.

Patrick, who disliked many of the linear, front-to-back floor plans they toured. "It's a big U shape, so it has a great flow for entertaining and hosting guests." (Ana and Pat are both from families of seven siblings; nieces and nephews abound.)

With four bedrooms and clocking in at roughly 3,500 square feet, the condo was large, but scale is relative when you're living in a high-rise for the first time. Their old dining room table, for instance, wouldn't fit into the elevator at the new place, so they had it cut in half and reassembled upstairs. Still, the table felt too massive.

They needed to start fresh, with decor to match their new lifestyle, so the McCauleys turned to Sarah Vaile and Hayley O'Hara of Chicago-based Sarah Whit Interior Design. "We interviewed six or seven different designers, and Sarah really took the time to listen and get a sense for our taste," says Patrick. "She made us feel like we were her only client."

Vaile and O'Hara took stock of the space, the bones of which had been tastefully updated by its prior occupants. "We came in for the fun part, which was to give it a personality," says Vaile. "We decided to go for a classic city feel with a clean palette that wouldn't compete with the expansive views of Lake Michigan. Ana and Patrick gave us an empty canvas and invited us to bring our most exciting ideas."

The designers focused on black and white, then layered in pops of color and exotic accents that hinted at Ana's Latin American roots. Their inspirational starting point was a Mongolian print that covers a bench in the foyer; it was bright and worldly, and it reminded them of a beautiful Hermès scarf.



**ROUND TABLE**  
After many unsuccessful attempts at finding the right dining room table for the space, Vaile and O'Hara had one customized with a hand-painted design that subtly references the Asian influence of the colorful upholstery on the chairs.



"HAVING A HOME IN THIS LOCATION THAT CAPTURES OUR SPIRIT HAS MADE ME LOVE CHICAGO," —HOMEOWNER ANA MCCAULEY.

**BAR NONE**  
Previously a children's room that was a result of combining units, the cozy man cave features a full bar, two TVs, custom hide stools and vintage football photos from Patrick's alma mater.





**RIGHT STRIPE**  
From top: The airy bedroom comes alive with bold pops of color; wallpaper that runs horizontally and gilded accents create a pretty retreat in the powder room.

A space that had previously been a children's playroom is now Patrick's "man lounge," complete with a custom wooden bar; a clubby chestnut leather banquette; multiple TV screens for game-watching; and walls filled with vintage football photos celebrating his alma mater, Notre Dame. In the living room, a black-and-white wool-and-silk rug features a striking geometric pattern designed by Vaile, O'Hara and their clients specifically for the project. Black wainscoting was added to play up the drama of a 15-foot-long hallway, and piles of pillows in contrasting prints have turned the home's low rectangular radiators into inviting window seats.

The McCauleys thought they'd miss their Lone Star amenities—the big house, the yard—but Ana says they feel comfortable and happy here. "I always say I was born near the equator for a reason, but being in this location and having a home that captures our spirit has made me love Chicago," says Ana. "Our life is completely different than it was in Texas, but Sarah and Hayley made the transition so seamless. There were zero challenges. When we met, we clicked." ■

## DESIGN DETAILS

**Type**  
Multi-Unit Condo

**Location**  
Gold Coast

**Design**  
Sarah Vaile and Hayley O'Hara,  
Sarah Whit Interior Design  
sarahwhit.com

## RESOURCES

**Smartmouth Designs**  
Woodwork in man cave, bar,  
sliding barn door

**Mecox**  
Accessories  
mecox.com

**Edward Ferrell + Lewis  
Mittman**  
Scones in family room  
ef-lm.com

**John Rosselli & Associates**  
Foyer flush mount lighting  
johnrosselli.com

**Paul Ferrante**  
Kitchen lanterns  
paulferrante.com

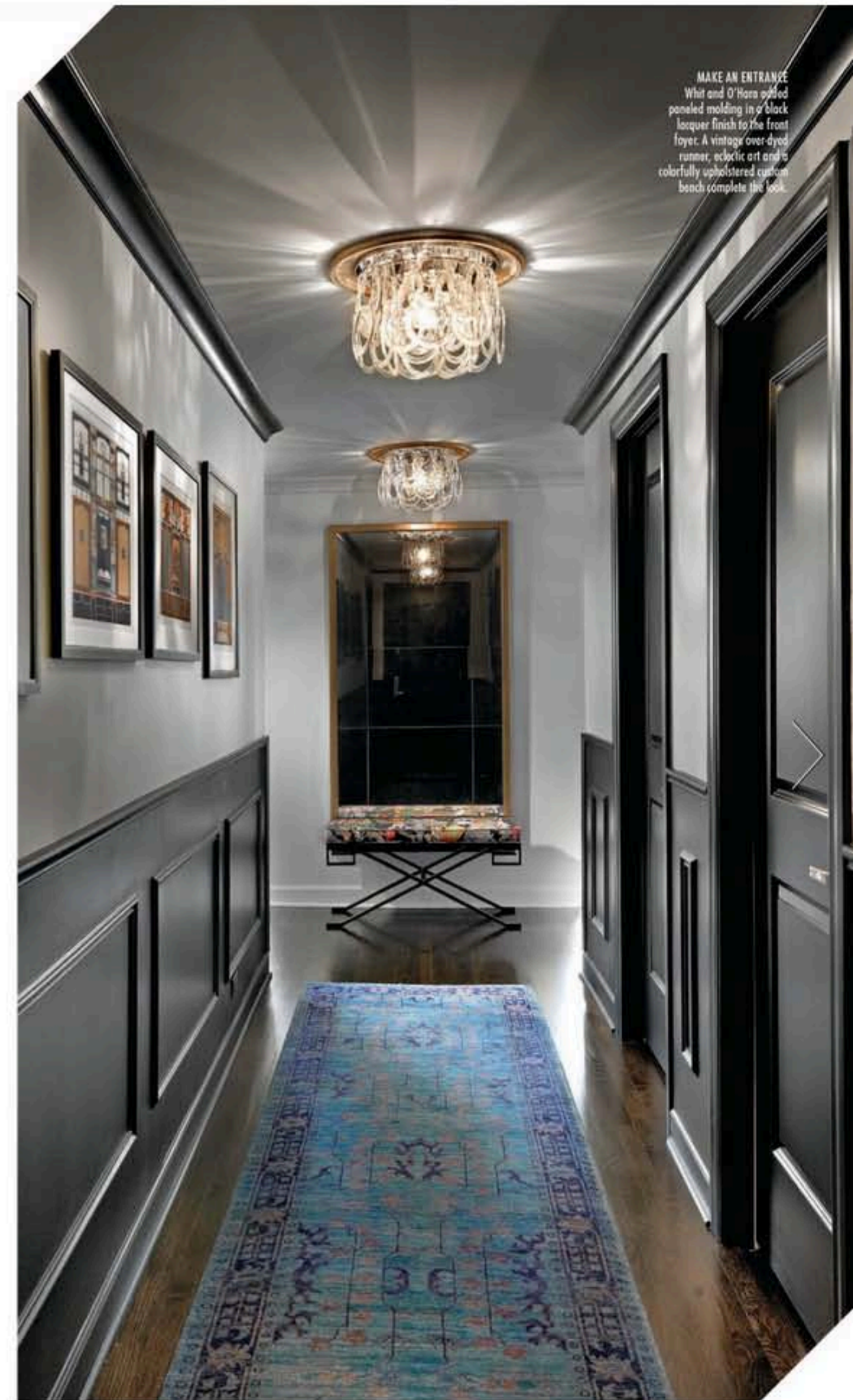
**Holly Hunt**  
Fabric, family room chairs  
hollyhunt.com

**Organic Looms**  
Custom runner in hallway  
organiclooms.com

**Jay Thompson Installations**  
Art installation  
847.587.2682

**Jayson Home**  
Flowers  
jaysonhome.com

**Direct Rug Import**  
Custom living room rug designed by  
Sarah Whit Interior Design  
rugimport.com



**MAKE AN ENTRANCE**  
Whit and O'Hara added paneled molding in a black lacquer finish to the front foyer. A vintage over-dyed runner, eclectic art and a colorfully upholstered custom bench complete the look.