

ELLEDECOR

HIGH
DRAMA
in an
ITALIAN
VILLA

WHAT'S YOUR
WALL POWER?

*why the
bathroom
is the new
boardroom*

*DINNER
at*
**RALPH
LAUREN'S**
garage



In an apartment in an Art Deco building in Chicago, designed by Steven Gambrel and renovated by the architect Phillip Liederbach, the salon's custom table is by Dune, the vintage chair is from Paris, and the vintage Harvey Propper side table is from Dual Modern; the 1960s Venini mirror is from Bernd Goeckler, the vintage Dahlia chandelier is by Max Ingrand for Fontana Arte, the custom silk shag rug is by Mehraban, and the custom mantel is by Jamb. **OPPOSITE:** A 1936 Eugene Schoen desk from Donzella and a C.J. Peters chair are tucked into a nook in a passage leading to the library; the flooring is fumed white oak parquet and the walls are in a custom oxblood lacquer.



THE LONG VIEW

New York designer Steven Gambrel creates an electric abode in Chicago that is all about personal style.

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In the living room, the custom sofa, in a JAB Anstoetz fabric, is by Dune, the 1950s chair (left) is in a Dedar fabric, and the custom armchair is covered in Arabel fabrics; the 1930s orange lacquer-and-shagreen sideboard is French, the 1950s Murano glass table lamp is by Seguso, the 1955 chandelier is by FontanaArte, the custom rug is by Beauvais, and the Venetian plaster walls are in Benjamin Moore's Stonington Gray.



In the salon's dining area, the custom rosewood table by Dune has an églomisé mirrored top, the vintage chairs are from Paris, and the console is by Lucca Studio Design; the chandelier is by Max Ingrand for FontanaArte, the custom rug is by Mehraban, and the drawings are by Richard Koppe.



The salon's custom sectional is covered in a Zinc Textile cotton blend; the custom ottoman is in a Keelen leather, the tray is by Lucca Studio Design, the sconces are by Besselink & Jones, and the curtains are of a Templeton fabric.



The sink fittings in the butler's pantry are by Kallista, the counter is in Indigo Green marble, and the antique mirror is from Olde Good Things; the cabinetry was painted in a custom high-gloss lacquer matched to Pantone's Mallard Green.



NO AMERICAN CITY exudes the excitement of early 20th-century architecture—from Art Deco to the International Style—more than Chicago. After all, this is the home of the Carbide & Carbon Building and Willis (formerly Sears) Tower. New York designer Steven Gambrel recently put his own spin on that optimistic spirit when he created a leather-paneled library in a landmark 1929 Art Deco gem with enviable views of Lake Michigan. Channeling the late grande dame interior

decorator Frances Elkins—who once swaddled a room in a house on Chicago's North Shore in gossamer goatskin—Gambrel paired red leather-sheathed walls with a stately bolection fireplace that was carved from an eight-inch-thick slab of Belgian Rouge Griotte marble. The aforementioned building is the Palmolive, a 37-story tower that originally served as the headquarters of the Colgate-Palmolive corporation. In the early 2000s, after a stint in the 1960s as the home of Hugh Hefner's very



and ivory walls—the interiors initially weren't at all what the homeowners had in mind.

Rarely does the transformation of a loft take the direction of adding enough walls and warrens to create a veritable house within an apartment, but this was exactly the design team's approach here. The electric mood is established as soon as you step out of the elevator. Liederbach introduced pilasters and pedestals to craft a thoroughly classical entrance with Art Deco nuances; Gambrel in turn designed lozenge-shaped door panels inlaid with antique mirror and terrazzo flooring lined with brass. No detail was ignored. Each board of Macassar ebony for the pedestals and door panels, for instance, was hand-selected for perfection. "There was a guy out in Oregon who had a barn full of exotic wood and everything was marked 'NFS,' as in Not For Sale," Liederbach recalls with a laugh. "It gave us a responsibility to elevate it. We obsessed over it."

Throughout, a brilliant palette—a Gambrel trademark—punctuates the spaces. The living room is furnished in soothing shades of pale gray, from the Venetian plaster walls to a high-gloss ceiling. "It's a soft environment," Gambrel explains, "that reflects the beautiful light from the lake." But the wake-up call comes from a 1930s French sideboard in orange lacquer, a high-octane shade repeated in the chic welting of a club chair. The bar is painted in a peacock blue.

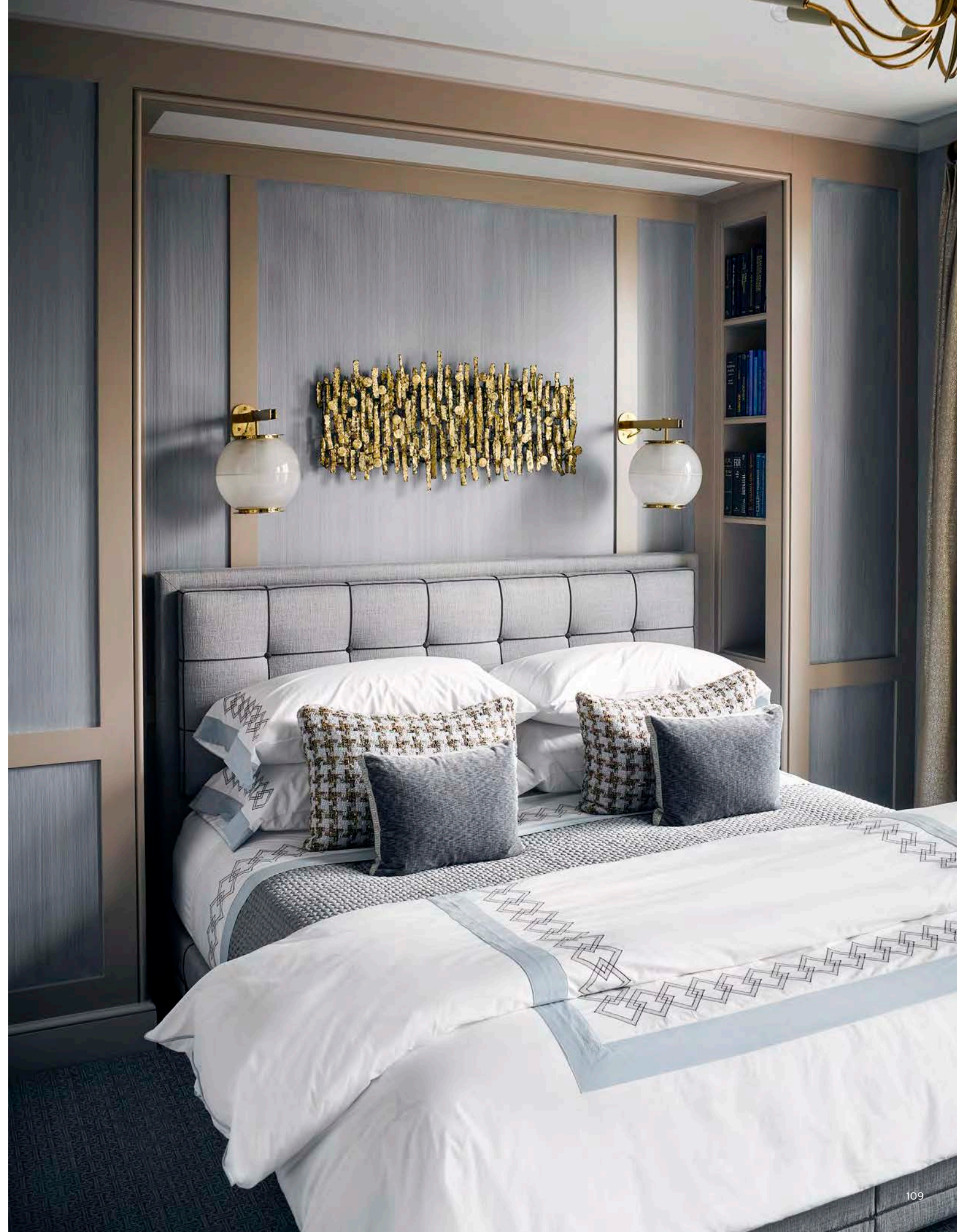
A graphic punch continues in the master bathroom, which is paneled with dramatic black-veined marble—slabs of Calacatta Capri. "It's a stone found at only one quarry in Italy," says Gambrel, "and only one in 20 blocks has veining that can yield this kind of character." Whether he is designing a Hamptons retreat, the interior of a 155-foot yacht, or a furnishings collection (such as his new line of light fixtures for the Urban Electric Co.), that perfectionism is a hallmark of Gambrel's personality and work. "I like to be challenged," he says, flashing a smile. ■

first Playboy Club, the building was converted into condos.

The designer, together with Chicago architect Phillip Liederbach, who specializes in restorations of classical architecture, sought to conceive interiors that embody, as Gambrel puts it, "Chicago-ness: what it really means to be in Chicago. We were trying to cull from the past while establishing a unique vocabulary." Although the 5,500-square-foot apartment had ample space—a clean-lined open plan with dropped ceilings



ABOVE: In the dressing room, a custom slipper chair is in a Mark Alexander velvet, the 1930s lantern is American, the window treatments are in Romo fabrics, the tray is from Serena & Lily, and the carpet is by Stark. **LEFT:** The master bedroom's bed is in a Mark Alexander velvet, the bench in a Dune leather, and the club chair in a Stroheim fabric are all custom; the 1950s Tommi Parzinger chest (next to the bed), Ico Parisi 1970s cabinet, and vintage Jules Leleu side table are all from Bernd Goeckler; the circa-1930 English mantel is from Westland London, and the carpet is from Stark. **OPPOSITE:** In the guest room, the custom bed is in a Zimmer + Rohde fabric, the hounds-tooth pillows are in a Holland & Sherry fabric, and the 1950s sconces are by Ignazio Gardella.





In the master bath, the Waterworks tub has fittings by Barber Wilsons & Co., the circa-1905 Viennese stool by Julius and Josef Herrmann is from Bernd Goeckler, and the room is sheathed in Calacatta Capri, Grigio Carnico, and Belgian Black marbles; the abstract plaster sculpture is unsigned and from the 20th century. **OPPOSITE:** The master bath's custom vanities are in Belgian Black marble supported by bronze columns; the Waterworks sinks have Barber Wilsons & Co. brass fittings; the Collier Webb sconces and Charles Edwards ceiling light are custom, and the floor is Belgian Black marble with bronze inlay. For details, see Resources.