

MODERN LUXURY

Interiors

BOSTON

OUTSIDE EDGE

THE POSHEST PIECES FOR
AN ALFRESCO LIFE

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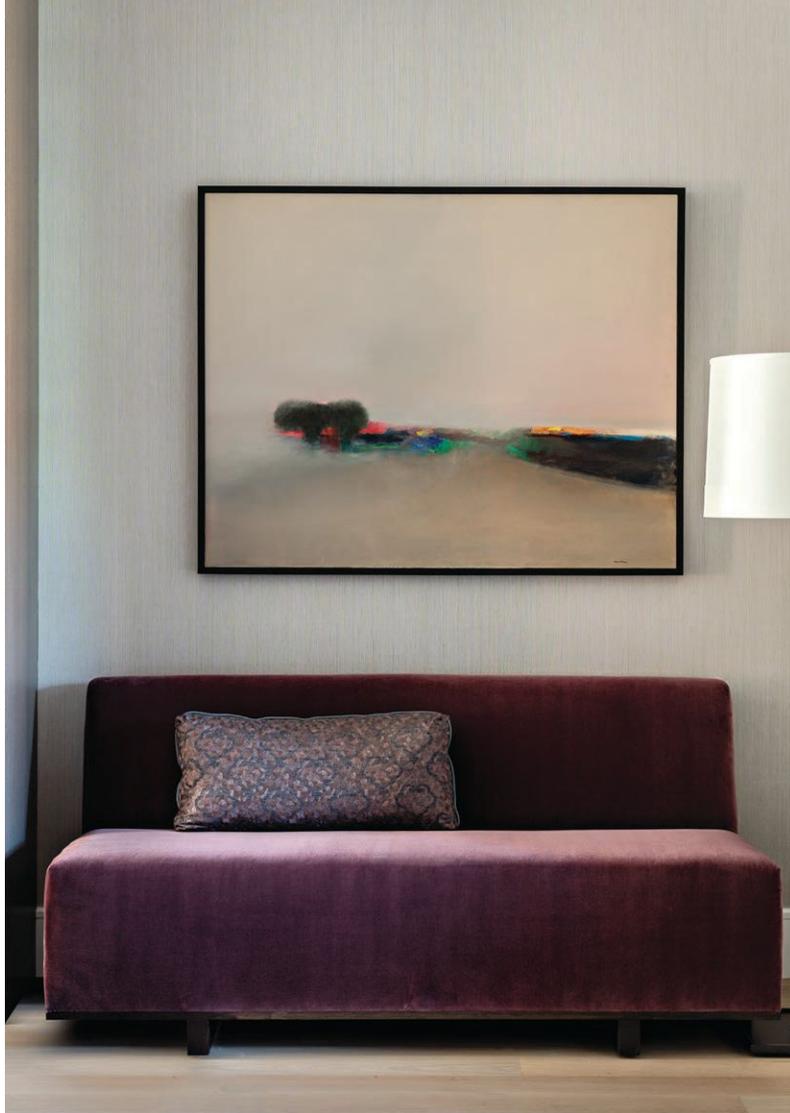
A SPLENDID SIX-STORY BROWNSTONE IN THE
SOUTH END, A WESTON RESIDENCE WITH SPRING
FLAIR & A BEACON HILL PAD PRIMED FOR FUN

ALL HANDS ON DECK

IT TAKES A TEAM EFFORT TO TRANSFORM A SIX-LEVEL SOUTH
END TOWNHOUSE INTO ONE COUPLE'S DREAM HOME.

BY JENNIFER BLAISE KRAMER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL J. LEE





Tony and Gina Groves are no strangers to the South End. They've lived in the hip neighborhood for 15 years, enjoying the restaurants, jogging together through the tree-lined streets and dreaming of owning a townhouse. Fittingly, it was one of their friendly neighbors who alerted the couple to an off-market opportunity one block away from the brownstone they were living in at the time—a single-family townhouse with good bones that was move-in ready. Or so they thought.

“The floors were pretty straight by brownstone standards. We thought we wouldn't have to do too much—maybe just paint and move some doors,” says Tony. But once they drew up their wish list and looked at six stories of potential, they started envisioning a walk-in closet, home gym, rooftop deck and a place to park that didn't require hauling bags and packages around to a front entry. Calling in help, they enlisted designer Paula Daher of Daher Interior Design and architect Catriel Tulian of Stack + Co. to turn their bold, trained eyes on the 1880 townhouse. Pretty soon, plans were drawn up, beams came down, the chimney went out and the roof was popped off, giving them a brick shell to start designing.

“Once we set more or less how it was going to look and feel, it didn't really change very much,” Tony says. “We created a very successful flow.”

Rethinking the dream home and its flow began with excavating at the garden level, where the team dug out an extra 6



In the family room, a green velvet antique-inspired chair by Dennis and Leen mingles with modern art from Sunne Savage Gallery. Opposite page: A plush purple settee, custom-built and covered in velvet from AltBox, offers a luxe place to lounge off of the dining room; Daher couldn't find the right Union Jack armchair for her British-born client, so she made one for the his- and-hers study, complete with custom cabinetry in Benjamin Moore's Polo Blue.







A luxurious bathroom has cool Cambria countertops and warm walnut cabinetry, opening up to a walk-in closet. Opposite page: Architect Catriel Tulian dreamed up this inventive carport-to-garden entrance, taking input from the neighbors.



The master bedroom is serene and soft with piles of upholstery including Sandra Jordan sheers and a custom headboard done in Marvic fabric. Opposite page: In the kitchen, they “took a bite” out of the island for cookbooks, which are best read at the Cambria-clad counter while perched on a bar stool from Lawson Fenning.

inches into the basement to create a larger workout room for the fitness enthusiasts. Since this space, which was run-down and unwelcoming, overlooks the courtyard at the rear of the house, the architect came up with the ingenious idea to install a carport—a place to park not one but three cars—right off of a direct entrance into the house. The design became a major architectural highlight, finished with a cedarlike composite called Trespa for a low-maintenance, modern element against the old brick.

“The holy grail of housing nowadays is to get something that looks like real cedar,” Tulian says. “Many companies do fake wood that looks like fake wood you’d see at Disneyland, but this has grain and tonality. It’s so sharp, it looks warm and appealing.”

Creating curb appeal (even from the back alley!) was so crucial to the team, they even asked the neighbors for suggestions. One commented that the original plan felt too enclosed with the fences connected directly to the roof. Taking this to heart, the team rethought and re-engineered a more open plan that used skylights for apertures and left peekaboo gaps in between them into the new courtyard lounge.



“In my experience, if you are open to what people have to say, sometimes you get better ideas,” Tulian says, adding that it feels much better now to be inside, surrounded by open air and 360-degree views. “It’s a long shot to do a carport in the South End. If you’re going to do one, you might as well go all out!”

Going all out didn’t stop in the driveway. Each floor up was carefully thought out, partly thanks to a standing Wednesday night meeting Daher kept with her clients throughout the project, which spanned nearly 2 ½ years. The homeowners, both busy professionals, came with strong points of view that weren’t always the same.

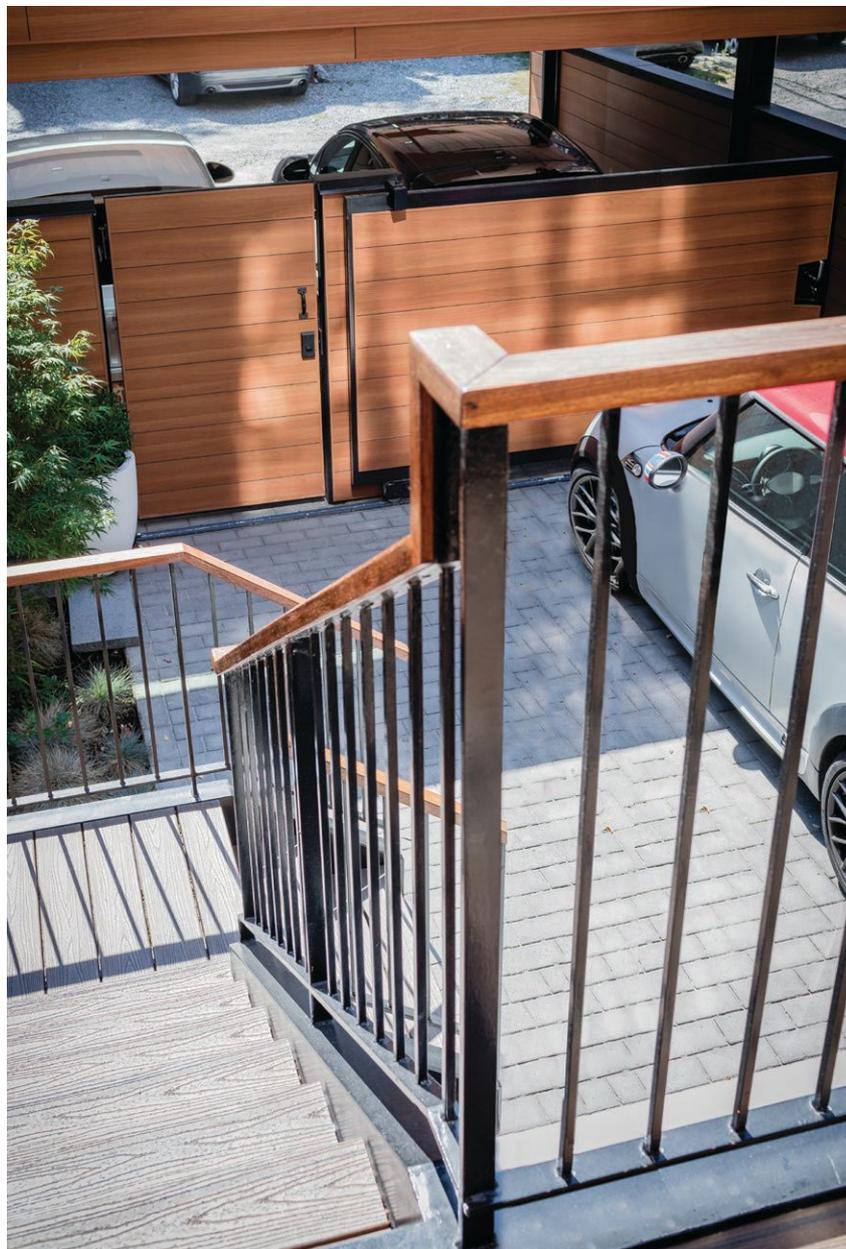
“He’s British with traditional sensibilities, and she loves clean, contemporary, modern lines. For us, it

was about creating a balance of warm and inviting with clean and modern,” Daher says.

The kitchen, set off of a large deck where an herb garden grows, successfully melded both his and her styles; there are walnut tones and lacquered cabinetry for warmth, and cool white tiles and a linear light fixture. Cookbooks get their own alcove in a geometric cutout space where Daher says they “took a bite out of the island.” The dining room similarly combines stone and shine with wood “cuffs” framing the marble fireplace and high-gloss woodwork on the custom table and chairs that sit under a sculptural “constellation” chandelier. By marrying gem tones with neutrals, Daher created a striking color palette while playing with different eras to juxtapose aesthetics through furnishings.

“Everything is pretty contemporary then you throw in the antique!” she says, which worked in nearly every room, offsetting superstraight lines and punches of color with period chairs and classic oil paintings. Upstairs, the hues perk up again with an aubergine bar off of the roof deck and a red and blue office where the homeowners have a collected spot to work from home, complete with a modern waterfall desk and custom Union Jack chair. The master suite is a respite from color with warm whites, cool marble and quiet patterns, plus a combined his-and-hers closet that they comfortably, happily share, even having a glass of wine as they get ready side by side.

“It’s all about sharing in narrow, vertical living,” Gina says, laughin. “You have to figure out how to coexist together!” ■



DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE

Single-family townhouse

LOCATION

South End

INTERIOR DESIGN

Daher Interior Design
daherinteriordesign.com

ARCHITECTURE

Stack + Co.
stackac.com

RESOURCES

CAMBRIA

Kitchen countertops
cambriausa.com

CASA DESIGN

Dining room light fixture
casadesigngroup.com

DENNIS AND LEEN

Family room green chair
dennisandleen.com

LAWSON FENNING

Kitchen bar stools
lawsonfenning.com

MARVIC

Master bed headboard upholstery
marvictextiles.co.uk

ROMO

Living room drapery
romo.com

RAMOS IRONWORK

Stairwell
ramosironwork.com