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## BEST OF SHOW

THE 2020 LAKE FOREST SHOWHOUSE & GARDENS IS BACK, BRINGING THE BEST DESIGN IDEAS AND INSPIRATION TO LIFE IN A MUCH-BELOVED FUNDRAISER FOR THE CHICAGO INFANT WELFARE SOCIETY. OUR SPECIAL PREVIEW TAKES YOU INSIDE SOME OF THE ROOMS AND GIVES YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BOOK YOUR TOUR BETWEEN JULY 13 AND AUGUST 9.



The 2020 Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens is transforming a turn-of-the-century colonial estate.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JS ECKERT PHOTOGRAPHY

BY SHERRY THOMAS  
THE NORTH SHORE WEEKEND

The old adage that “the show must go on” has never been more poignant this summer as the Lake Forest Chapter of the Infant Welfare Society prepares to raise the curtain on its legendary biennial fundraiser.

While new protocol will be in place to help adhere to state-recommended Phase 4 guidelines, the 2020 Lake Forest Showhouse &

Gardens will open daily from Monday, July 13, through Sunday, August 9, with all the glory and spectacular design fans have come to expect for 36 years.

This year’s show home is a magnificent, turn-of-the-century East Lake Forest Pullman estate that has been transformed—pro bono, no less—by a team of more than 30 interior and landscape designers.

The 23-room, 11,000-square-foot, 1906 mansion by Frost & Granger was completely renovated by architect Stanley Anderson in

the late 1920s for investment banker William Allan Pinkerton Pullman, the grand-nephew of George M. Pullman, the developer and manufacturer of Pullman cars.

An avid gardener and co-founder of the Chicago Botanic Garden, William A.P. Pullman worked with New York landscape architect Annette Hoyt in 1937 to create world class gardens on the property. Some of the original plantings still exist—from a Ginkgo

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# DESIGNER SHOWCASE

STEP INSIDE THE 2020 LAKE FOREST SHOWHOUSE & GARDENS WITH AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW BY SOME OF THE EVENT'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS DESIGNERS AND LANDSCAPERS. FROM OPULENT DINING ROOM TRANSFORMATIONS TO GARDENS TO DIE FOR, PREPARE TO BE INSPIRED.

BY SHERRY THOMAS  
THE NORTH SHORE WEEKEND

For 36 years, the Lake Forest Chapter of the Infant Welfare Society has put together what many consider the show house of dreams. Pulling the time and talents of the nation's most acclaimed interior designers and landscapers, the Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens is regarded as one of the best in the nation.

With doors opening on the 2020 Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens on Monday, July 13, we put together an exclusive preview of some of the rooms (and designs) you will be seeing during the showhouse's run through Sunday, August 9.

Honorary Chair Paloma Contreras, an award-winning interior designer whose work has been featured in multiple publications including *Architectural Digest*, *House Beautiful*, *Domino*, *ELLE DECOR*, and *Vogue*, says it was fun to work on this year's showhouse—a historic East Lake Forest estate owned by investment banker William Allan Pinkerton Pullman—because of its architectural provenance.

"I love this house because in spite of its large size, it's not overly grand. It's elegant, but not formal," says Contreras, who has been named to *ELLE DECOR*'s prestigious "A-List" and ranked No. 4 on *Forbes*' list of the Top 10 Social Media Influencers in the home category for her *La Dolce Vita* blog. "My goal is to honor the original architecture and spirit of the house."

She had good company in the endeavor to transform the turn-of-the-century mansion into a modern-day masterpiece. Here are some of the acclaimed interior designers and landscapers (and their respective spaces) to look for as you prepare to tour the 2020 Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens.

## THE FORMAL DINING ROOM: Paloma Contreras

"My dining room at the Lake Forest Infant Welfare Showhouse is a reflection of various pillars of my signature style—chinoiserie wallpaper, French antiques, and contemporary art—executed in a fresh way that melds classic style with a modern twist," says Contreras. "It has such great bones and the original millwork is gorgeous."

Built on the belief that the most beautiful interiors are also the most personal, Contreras released her first book, *Dream Design Live*, with Abrams in September 2018. And she recently launched Paloma & Co, a highly curated retail concept for the home.

"I truly believe that a home tells you what it wants and needs, so my design for the showhouse dining room features a mix of classic design elements including a beautiful wallpaper by Iksel and custom tole lighting fixtures by Coleen and Company," she explains, adding: "I'm pairing these with fresh, modern elements such as abstract art by Jane Timberlake Cooper and some striking fabrics by Schumacher."

A modern take on traditional pieces has become a Contreras signature.

"Just about everything I do is rooted in the classics. I wanted to pay homage to Frances Elkins (David Adler's sister) so I'm incorporating a pair of her loop chairs into the dining room. Even though the dining room will feel fresh and current, these loop chairs have a place there, too."

But perhaps Contreras' favorite part of the dining room is its wonderful views of the beautiful gardens.



CLOCKWISE: Paloma Contreras in The Formal Dining Room, Family Room, Sunporch

"My hope is to bring the outdoors in and have the room feel like a garden," she says. "That's why I'm calling this room 'Eternal Eden.'"

## SUNPORCH AND OUTDOOR TERRACE: Shelley Johnstone Design

Venerable interior designer Shelley Johnstone of Shelley Johnstone Design is also returning to this year's Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens, taking on the sunporch and adjacent outdoor terrace.

The Lake Forest tastemaker is nationally recognized for creating elegant, modern European-influenced interiors. Her projects have taken her from London to Newport to Naples, but her heart is never far from Lake Forest and one of her favorite passion projects.

Like Contreras, she was inspired by the architectural details of this historic colonial home and wanted the spaces to work cohesively together, bringing the outdoors in. "We did this by painting the existing

brick floor in a chevron pattern with a Greek key border—two strong architectural motifs that work beautifully in this home," says Johnstone. "We lacquered the ceiling a sage green color and used hand-painted Gracie wallpaper depicting birds and flowers, perfectly marrying the outside and indoor space."

A notable detail of the sunporch is that the background of the hand painted Gracie wallpaper is custom cocoa brown, Johnstone's signature color.

"Overall the space is architecturally interesting with layered details, creating a tranquil, lovely place to relax and enjoy views of the beautiful garden beyond," she says.

## FAMILY ROOM: SZ Interiors

When Soledad Zitzewitz of SZ Interiors Inc. got assigned to take on the family room makeover, she was excited to reinvigorate the space.

"I love designing spaces that bring contemporary and traditional elements together. My family has always loved to spend time together playing table games and conversing, and I wanted to design a space that fits the needs of the contemporary family by being both



sleek and functional," says Zitzewitz, who started the transformation by painting the original dark knotty pine walls and ceiling with an off-white Sherwin Williams paint to give the room a smooth, bright feel.

Zitzewitz and her team then created two separate seating areas—one lounge area, and one dining and game area, each defined by unique wooden drum lighting fixtures. The glossy finishes on the wooden pieces accentuate the lighting, and the white upholstery contrasts with the black and white art and throughout the space. Caramel-colored accents, plants, and modern and traditional art lend an organic feel to the room.

"I love how we transformed the look of the space to be sleek and bright with the lighting, wall, and ceiling paint, and the wooden surfaces all coming together beautifully. These aspects of the room are a stark contrast to the knotty pine that originally dominated the room," she adds.

Zitzewitz's favorite touch is the artwork provided by Argentine painter Jorge Simes, which depicts a scene from Jorge Luis Borges' short story, "The Garden of the Forking Paths."

"In the story, one character creates a novel where different possibilities and stories diverge infinitely, and the painting depicts birds who weave the words from the actual stories together to create a labyrinth. It was



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so important for me to pay homage to my roots in Argentina with this representation of one of our most treasured stories," she says.

#### THE GALLERY: Relativity Textiles

On the topic of inspiration, often a simple descriptor can be transformative, as is dubbing the back hallway of the estate "The Gallery." Erin Minckley and her team at Relativity Textiles of Chicago were thrilled to take on the challenge of reimagining the original hallway with dark, red plaid wallpaper and a warm tonal pine woodwork trim.

"The space needed to be calm and quiet since the house has a lot of ornament and pattern going on. I wanted to have an all-white space, or at least the feeling of emptiness or airiness," she says, noting that "Touch of Gray" was used for the walls and "Lunar Lite" was implemented for the trim molding.

"The windows are a sage green and add some softness and the draperies are a light linen gray. I normally design with layered textiles and patterned walls, but this space was a leap of faith in some ways," Minckley says. "I wanted to feature some of my own artwork in a gallery-style viewing room. That's why I decided to paint the floors gray and subdue the space. The architecture of the ceiling beams is also highlighted, as I didn't touch them."

Another leap of faith was the thought she put into art choices and an intention for them to be reflective of issues going on in the world right now.

"It's a cultural shift that is taking place, a metamorphosis," she adds. "And for that reason, we need to incorporate imagery from all cultures into our everyday lives. Only a fully formed butterfly can describe to a caterpillar how beautiful the transition will be, but it's a hard process to go through. I hope to build a bridge by way of art from the past to the brighter future where all people are equally represented in everyday design—thus a passageway was the perfect space for this conversation."

Those choices, and everything about this project was a labor of love for Minckley. "I actually put a lot of elbow grease into this room. As an artist and a trained painting contractor, I didn't feel it necessary to hire out this work because I can do it myself," she explains. "I donated my time and efforts to this project because I feel very lucky to be involved. Of all the designers chosen to be represented, I feel so lucky to be on par with these talented people. This is our moment to show what we stand for and as a single mother, I can't think of a better way to give back than to a new mom and her baby."

She plans to donate proceeds from her art sales to the Infant Welfare Society as well.

"There are so many people who have much more than me, but there will always be even more who have less than I do. It is my responsibility to give back to those in need since so many people have been kind to me throughout my journey of becoming a mother and entrepreneur."

#### THE WOMEN'S RETREAT: Andrea Goldman Design

In keeping with the theme of creativity and honoring women, nationally recognized interior designer Andrea Goldman of Andrea Goldman Design created a "Women's Retreat" above the attached garage of the property—the kind of space most women only dream of.

"The minute we walked into the space, we knew it was the perfect room to convert into a sanctuary for a busy woman dealing with family, work, and daily commitments," explains Goldman. "I personally love light and bright interiors with comfortable furnishings and interesting yet quiet accessories and artwork. Our team decided to design a space that could exist easily in California overlooking the ocean."

The floors, initially painted plaid, were refinished. Dated built-ins were also removed and all trim was whitewashed with a brown treatment on beams. A Phillip Jeffries wallcovering with a subtle texture finished the look, along with a terrace deck makeover that includes light and airy window treatments with an ethereal quality.

"For the program of the space, we wanted room for lounging as well as a game table for cards with friends or a perfect spot to work on a laptop. Of course, we also needed a dry bar to mix a cocktail or pour a glass of rose," says Goldman. "We are thrilled with the overall organic and inviting vibe of our space. However, we think the showstopper is the custom light in the center of the room from Longhouse. We designed the entire layout and palette around the light fixture."

Like her colleagues Goldman is honored to be a part of the 2020 Lake Forest Showhouse and Gardens.

"It's a rare opportunity to use our time and talents for a great cause," she adds. "And especially with the current health crisis, it feels good to have an opportunity to make a tangible donation."

RIGHT: His Dressing Room  
BELOW: The Women's Retreat

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AIMEE MEZZINGA



#### YOUNG GENTLEMAN'S BEDROOM AND BATH: Mark David Designs

Lake Forest-based Mark David Designs was tapped for one of the most whimsical rooms in the Showhouse. Described as the "Young Gentleman's Bedroom and Bath," Sandy Priola and Mark David worked together to give the space a regal flair.

"Being inspired by a bed and nightstands with hair-on hide, an equestrian theme was chosen." Says Priola.

"There were no details overlooked in either room," adds David. "We added custom stirrup hardware to a black leather desk. Textures were predominantly used to give a warm masculine feel with a color scheme of many earth tones."

The team was also resourceful, incorporating a fret work found outside the home into a window seat, which is now the focal point of the room.

David says it was a pleasure for his firm to take on this part of the Showhouse.

"We are always excited to be involved and give back to our community," Priola says.

#### HIS DRESSING ROOM: Studio CAK

Christopher Kent of Chicago-based Studio CAK

believes we must revisit our past in order to inform our future.

So, when he took on the transformation of the "His

But, the element with the greatest impact, if I must choose, is the large abstract painting by Costel Iarca. With its vibrant colors and chaotic strokes, it gives



much needed contrast and visual interest to the calm of the flat green walls."

Kent says being a part of this project has been very rewarding for him and the firm.

"I believe life is about sharing one's time, talent, and generosity to give hope and amplify voices that might not otherwise be heard," he explains. "We must be allies for all of humanity."

#### MASTER SITTING ROOM: Wendy Labrum Interiors

Wendy Labrum of Chicago-based Wendy Labrum Interiors says her take on the "Master Sitting Room" was to add a touch of European elegance.

The more rustic, existing wood planks on the ceiling were covered in a warm, blush plaster. "Then we brought in a curated selection of furniture, lighting, and accessories to make the room an inviting and soothing space to relax at the end of the day," she explains. "We have several key pieces by French and Italian designers balanced by organic elements like the Jeanneret lounge chairs and jute and Moroccan rugs."

Her particular favorite? The large scale Royere scone.

Echoing what other designers have said about their involvement with the 2020 Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens, Labrum says it's an ideal way for the industry to come together to use their professional skills for the common good.

"As a mother of three kids myself, children without access to basic medical resources is a cause that is near and dear to my heart," she adds. "The Infant Welfare Society of Chicago is a wonderful organization that provides comprehensive medical services to disadvantaged families in Chicago."

#### THE READING ROOM | THE CARRIAGE HOUSE: Stephanie Kaslow Interiors

When Stephanie Kaslow of Stephanie Kaslow Interiors of Chicago walked into the room that is known both as "The Reading Room" and "The Carriage House," she was overwhelmed by its charm and potential.

"The walls were clad with a yellow-tinted wood, there were thick dark beams, and a Neo-Federal style fireplace that was surrounded with the same yellow wood and framed a red brick surround," she says. "My goal was to infuse the space with my modern aesthetic while staying true to most of the original bones."

Kaslow says this space is unique to the house because

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## DESIGNER SHOWCASE

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it encompasses three areas: a bookshelf corridor leading into the main space, the main room, and a stairway corridor that leads to the room upstairs.

She used Sherwin Williams “Eider White” in a matte finish on the wood walls and “Charcoal Blue” in semigloss for the beams and ceiling for a crisp, yet cozy feel.

“The fireplace was unique because the mantel was asymmetrical and fireplace itself included a firebox and a separate storage niche with a wrought iron door,” Kaslow explains. “It was very busy, so I enlisted a decorative artist to plaster over the brick surround and hearth to create a smooth surface. She then painted a faux onyx finish on the fireplace surround and a concrete look was applied to the hearth. This juxtaposition of finishes between luxe and less refined is a common theme throughout the room.”

At the bookshelf corridor, she covered hundreds of vintage books in canvas during the quarantine and

chandelier and beveled crystal Katonah Hardware.

“This beautiful piece is complemented with a custom white velvet slipper chair made especially for this space adorned with a blush fur throw. One of the other major changes that were made was done by using the existing structure on both sides of the closet and creating architectural steel and wood doors completed by Exclusive WoodWorking,” she says. “The next step in our process was thoughtfully planning the interior closets by making this an art piece as well.”

Each closet bank was decorated with a gorgeous black couture weave paper from Phillip Jeffries. The back walls of these custom armoires with enclosed shelves are clad with a blush leather wallcovering and the shelves are wrapped with a black silk paper, also by Phillip Jeffries.

“Previously, there was a space that had hanging racks for scarves, belts, and pants and we transformed this into a tall velvet lined jewelry closet enclosed with mirrored doors and crystal Katonah hardware,” says Chase. “This little ‘peek a boo’ is one of my personal

**LEFT TO RIGHT: Espresso and Wine Bar** PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCEL PAGE PHOTOGRAPHY, **The Reading Room, Her Master Closet**



tapped decorative artist, Studio Lunaris, to paint a modern mural across the book spines. At the staircase mural, Studio Lunaris, mixed plaster with Sherwin Williams paint to create more texture.

“She then painted graphic Grecian goddess figures with doves over the color blocked design. The female figures create a nice transition from my space to “The Women’s Lounge” upstairs,” she adds. “The doves are a symbol of hope and unity which feels relevant to the unrest the country is currently experiencing.”

#### HER MASTER CLOSET: Ilene Chase Design

Ilene Chase of Highland Park-based Ilene Chase Design says her concept for “Her Master Closet” was inspired by travels during the 2020 Paris Deco Design Week.

“Knowing that we were doing this spectacular master closet while being in Paris, I knew there was no better place to be inspired by haute couture for our fabulous design. Everywhere I walked, I was constantly being flooded with inspiration and it did not stop,” she says. “Even at my last showroom visit, I was graced with the wallpaper for my custom bench area. Many of my vintage finds were pieces from the Paris Flea Markets that I brought back with me. Walking through all the boutiques and reminiscing on all the highlights of my trip was what drove my influence on how to style the room.”

That style began with a custom two-sided dresser that is graced with an Italian marble mitered countertop which sets off the Fine Arts beveled crystal



favorite parts of this room.”

Similar feminine touches can be found throughout, designed to bring out both the inner and outer beauty of anyone who walks through.

“It’s truly a personal sanctuary that brings you happiness and joy as you enter,” Chase adds. “Our signature design encompasses you with its timeless details, femininity, and a touch of edge that has been a look Ilene Chase Design has become known for.”

#### ESPRESSO AND WINE BAR:

Lori Lennon & Associates

Lori Lennon had a distinct vision in mind when her Lake Forest-based Lori Lennon & Associates took on the “Espresso and Wine Bar” of this year’s showhouse.

She wanted to create a sophisticated space that was equally ready to “wake you up” before you go with a morning beverage, and then greet you at the door to help you “wine-d down” before dinner.

“This high style interior is also designed to convert to an entertainment full-service bar for exciting parties in full view for visiting guests,” Lennon explains.

The beautifully designed space includes updated custom cabinets with sophisticated contemporary cabinet hardware that add a spark of elegance. Paneled walls and custom upper cabinets are painted in a shade of deep pearlescent blue with a durable quartz countertop by Cambria. Under cabinet wine and beverage storage flanks each side of the serving space.

Lennon particularly loves the romance of a custom-



painted piece by artist Joseph Taylor and pearlescent walls, courtesy of Sherwin Williams (who she says generously donated paint for this year’s showhouse).

“The final finish is a rain of silver and crystal balls of lights cascading from the ceiling,” she adds. “Spectacular.”

#### THE ARRIVAL GARDEN: Scott Byron & Co.

Inspired by traditional English manor homes, the team at Lake Bluff-based Scott Byron & Co. worked to carefully craft a sense of balance and rhythm throughout this elegant “Arrival Garden.”

“We followed cues from the symmetrical architecture,” explains Brett Byron. “Upon surveying the beautifully shingled wall, one immediately notices the seahorse shutters—each swimming in a cast iron window box featuring a harmonious balance of seasonal flowers, invoking a sense of color and whimsy.”

Once overgrown, a warm, inviting display of color now welcomes guests to the historic estate.

Byron says it was rewarding to work on this important project as a team. The local company also believes strongly in giving back whenever possible.

“It is of the utmost importance that we continue to help our community be better by providing empathy and compassion to those in need,” he adds. “We do this by supporting local groups that do well for the community. Also, it’s fun.”

#### THE REFLECTION GARDEN:

Schmechtig Landscapes

The final stop on our preview tour takes us to the back of the home, where an inspired garden now offers respite and solace.

Toni Callahan of Schmechtig Landscapes says “The Reflection Garden” was created to capture the calling of the human spirit.

“The newly patterned turf was designed to be playful yet controlled within a formal garden setting. The ‘Tree of Life’ begins from the bluestone patio westward beyond the formal evergreen walls and folly,” she explains. “The pattern is to attract close contact and creative inquisition with manicured high and low distinctive cutting patterns.”

The ultimate intention is to bring people into its

winding routes, with four strategically placed water basins and spouts within the turf panel to enhance vertical interest. Relaxing music provided by partners Reflections Water Gardens and Sound Living mesmerizes for a total body experience.

“This property has had an intense history and journey. For this reason, it truly deserved the elevated and elegant infusion of creativity from Schmechtig Landscape’s seasoned Landscape Architect Lisa Pollman,” says Callahan. “It’s wonderfully refreshing. We invite you to the backyard reflection garden ... to bring your friends, your spirit, and your senses!”

Schmechtig Landscape has been supporting the Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens since 2005.

“This is a meaningful event with amazing hardworking individuals in place to ensure donations and efforts go directly where needed. Schmechtig has found it especially gratifying to support infants, children, and women over the last 60 years of industry existence,” she adds. “Our owners and employees possess big hearts. We are uniquely blessed to be in a place to honor and support our clients’ charities.”

#### DESIGNER SHOWCASE: WEB RESOURCES

**Andrea Goldman Design**  
[andreagoldmandesign.com](http://andreagoldmandesign.com)

**Ilene Chase Design**  
[ilenebasedesign.com](http://ilenebasedesign.com)

**JMR Landscaping**  
[jmrlandscapingllc.com](http://jmrlandscapingllc.com)

**Lori Lennon & Associates**  
[lorilennon.com](http://lorilennon.com)

**Mark David Designs**  
Mark David  
Sandy Priola  
[markdaviddesigns.com](http://markdaviddesigns.com)

**Paloma Contreras Interior Design**  
[palomacontreras.com](http://palomacontreras.com)  
[shoppalomaandco.com](http://shoppalomaandco.com)

**Relativity Textiles**  
Erin Minckley  
[relativitytextiles.com](http://relativitytextiles.com)

**Schmechtig Landscapes**  
[schmechtiglandscapes.com](http://schmechtiglandscapes.com)

**Scott Byron & Co.**  
[scottbyron.com](http://scottbyron.com)

**Shelley Johnstone Design**  
[shelleydesign.com](http://shelleydesign.com)

**Stephanie Kaslow Interiors**  
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