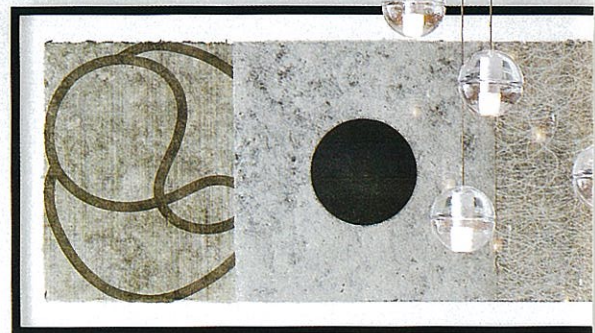


Designer Jessica Lagrange created a softly minimalist tableau with a lacquered pedestal table and Knoll Saarinen chairs on a bare floor and a 14-pendant Bocci chandelier.



A photograph of a modern, minimalist interior. In the foreground, two light-colored, sculptural armchairs with chrome legs are positioned on a light wood floor. Behind them is a white, curved table. On the wall, two framed abstract artworks are displayed. To the left, a cluster of white hydrangeas sits in a dark vase. Above the table, a series of spherical pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The room features white walls and a large, open doorway in the background.

LIGHT TOUCH

In a glamorously minimalist Mag Mile apartment, sculptural forms and subtle textures make the most of a pale palette

The split-face limestone tile fireplace lends texture to the living room's sleeker features, including a floating stainless steel shelf and the Christian Liaigre sofa and chairs. The rug from Tai Ping incorporates all of the room's subtle shades.





Designer Jessica Lagrange faced a dilemma.

Granted, she had a terrific client with great taste whose three-bedroom pied-à-terre in the posh 900 North Michigan Avenue building was turning out beautifully. It needed rugs to pull everything together, but her client was hesitant.

"I've never had rugs in my house on the North Shore," the homeowner says. "I like metal and I like wood, and I like the way they look against each other." So began a classic decorating dialogue—how to bring warmth to a modern space without compromising its cool.

From the beginning, they had talked about ways to soften the apartment's contemporary architecture. "The client is such a minimalist, she heard 'draperies' and thought 'swags.' She heard 'rugs' and thought 'Orientals,'" Lagrange recalls. "We had to show her that those things could be done in a contemporary way."

Lagrange and her senior designer, Christina Stillwaugh, approached the issue by adding texture and little hits of color within a largely neutral—taupe, gray, and white—palette. The living room got a tactile fireplace of split-face limestone tiles, and the dining room got luscious suede-covered armchairs. Art adviser Patti Gilford helped the family scatter some fascinating pieces of art around the 2,900-square-foot apartment, and Lagrange and Stillwaugh took permission from a painting in the family room to insinuate burnt orange and red accessories into various spaces.

In the two teenage daughters' bedrooms, Lagrange says, they got to go (relatively) crazy. "The colors we did in those rooms are basically what the girls responded to. For instance, the younger daughter wanted hot pink and orange." (That particular acorn apparently fell from Mom's minimalist tree and onto a passing truck.) For the older daughter, who is into fashion, a headboard covered with tribal Donghia suzani fabric inspired a plum-and-brown bedroom, finished with Missoni curtains. "It's a robust mix of patterns, that's for sure," says Lagrange. "But the colorful rugs came last. Rugs took some convincing."

With modernist touches such as the kitchen's stainless steel mosaic tiles and Bertioia stools in place, it was time to broach the question of a custom rug for the living room. After refining the design of a sample too many times to count, Lagrange and Stillwaugh had a rug they knew would make a difference. "When you're using so many shades of gray in a living room, it's important that the carpet has a pattern that pulls it all together," Stillwaugh says.

To the designers' delight, the client not only agreed but also became a full convert to the Church of Drapes and Carpets. "I asked Jessica to come out to our house on the North Shore," she says. "Now we have rugs, now we have curtains, and I didn't think I'd ever like color—but I do!"

Resources: See Buy Guide, page 88.

A sculptural chair from B&B Italia breaks the squared-off lines of the Cassina sectional in the family room; pops of orange and red enliven the look. **OPPOSITE** In the breakfast area, Niedermaier's Higgins sofa accommodates more people than two chairs would in the equivalent space. A glass-topped wood table on a bare floor embodies the clean-lined look the homeowner adores.









DETAILS

1. The kitchen's dark-stained oak cabinets contrast dramatically with light oak floors. Bertoia stools facilitate casual dining around an island topped with flamed granite. 2. In a teenage daughter's bedroom, a panel upholstered with brown fabric grounds the colors pulled from the vibrant headboard. Shelves run only halfway across the panel to create some breathing room in this small space. The striped rug echoes the headboard fabric with strong color and a large-scale pattern. Missoni drapes add another bold but compatible pattern. 3. Zographos Designs' glass-topped Metron table keeps the lively rug in sight in the living room. 4. Fusion wall-paper by Elitis jazzes up a daughter's study nook. 5. In the master bedroom, soft grays and taupes seem to spill from a dreamy painting above Roman Thomas's Avery chair and a dresser by Studiowai.

