

Interior designer Rob Bowen combined several rooms to create this large lounge that overlooks a rooftop deck. For a year, he says, the room had bare white walls—until inspiration struck and he installed this gold-leafed horsehair wall covering.



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# BRONZE AGE

A DESIGNER'S OWN HOME IN  
DOWNTOWN ST. PETERSBURG  
GLISTENS WITH LAYERS OF STYLE

ABOVE: "It was difficult to put art into this home, because of the layers and textures, but also because of the many windows," says Bowen, who selected quiet art like these geometric pieces. He used a darkened mirror to make the room appear larger and to camouflage a support wall.

*INTERIOR DESIGNER ROB BOWEN* and his husband weren't looking for new digs. But the location of a newly constructed three-story home was too perfect to pass up. Located in downtown St. Petersburg (within blocks of Bowen's design studio and the couple's new restaurant, Social Roost), the 2,760-square-foot home was quintessential Florida coastal—but not for long. Bowen spent nine months stripping it down to its studs and restructuring the space.

He began by staining the white oak floors with vinegar and steel wool, and then coating it with a matte black finish. "Black floors create a blank canvas to layer upon," he says. "It's classic and neutral, and everything you put on top of it becomes a statement piece." Next up: the layering. "I was obsessed with bronze, black, emerald, white, and every shade of each," he recalls. "I threw it all into the mix and then started to edit, edit, and edit. There are layers in very specific details. It's a

RIGHT: To counteract the linear look of the kitchen, Bowen chose two curved Holly Hunt sofas in the adjacent seating area. "Think: subliminal hug," he says. He upholstered the back of the sofas in shaggy green cowhide and the front in titanium velvet. The two contrasting fabrics are separated by a bronze leather pinstripe. The oval houndstooth rug adds drama.



LEFT: "We entertain often, but we would never go to a dining table to eat. We eat in the kitchen because that's where all the memories are made," says Bowen. Standing in place of a dining table is a honed slab of black marble that slices through the four-inch thick marble island.

*With windows on every wall in this room, privacy and natural light were competing with one another—and Bowen didn't want to give up either. So he outfitted the space with a floor-to-wall metallic drapery that the couple can leave closed—without feeling closed-in.*





The windows along the staircase offer the perfect light box for Bowen to display a sand-cast glass sculpture of Buddha by Clearwater, Florida-based artist Marlene Rose.



ABOVE RIGHT: "We wanted a bed that made a statement—but whispered that statement. Lucite was the easiest," says Bowen. "It provides all the function of a bed, with the lightness and airiness that keeps the room pure." The green leather headboard and footboard are a nod to the couple's love of Rolex watches.

LEFT: Inspired by the courtyards and squares of Savannah, Georgia, the master bath floor and walls are done in reclaimed black glazed bricks in a herringbone pattern. "With all this craziness in the bathroom, I had to be laser sharp with the lighting. I found these [sleek lighting fixtures] in Paris. They pivot so if you need more light, you can grab them," Bowen says.

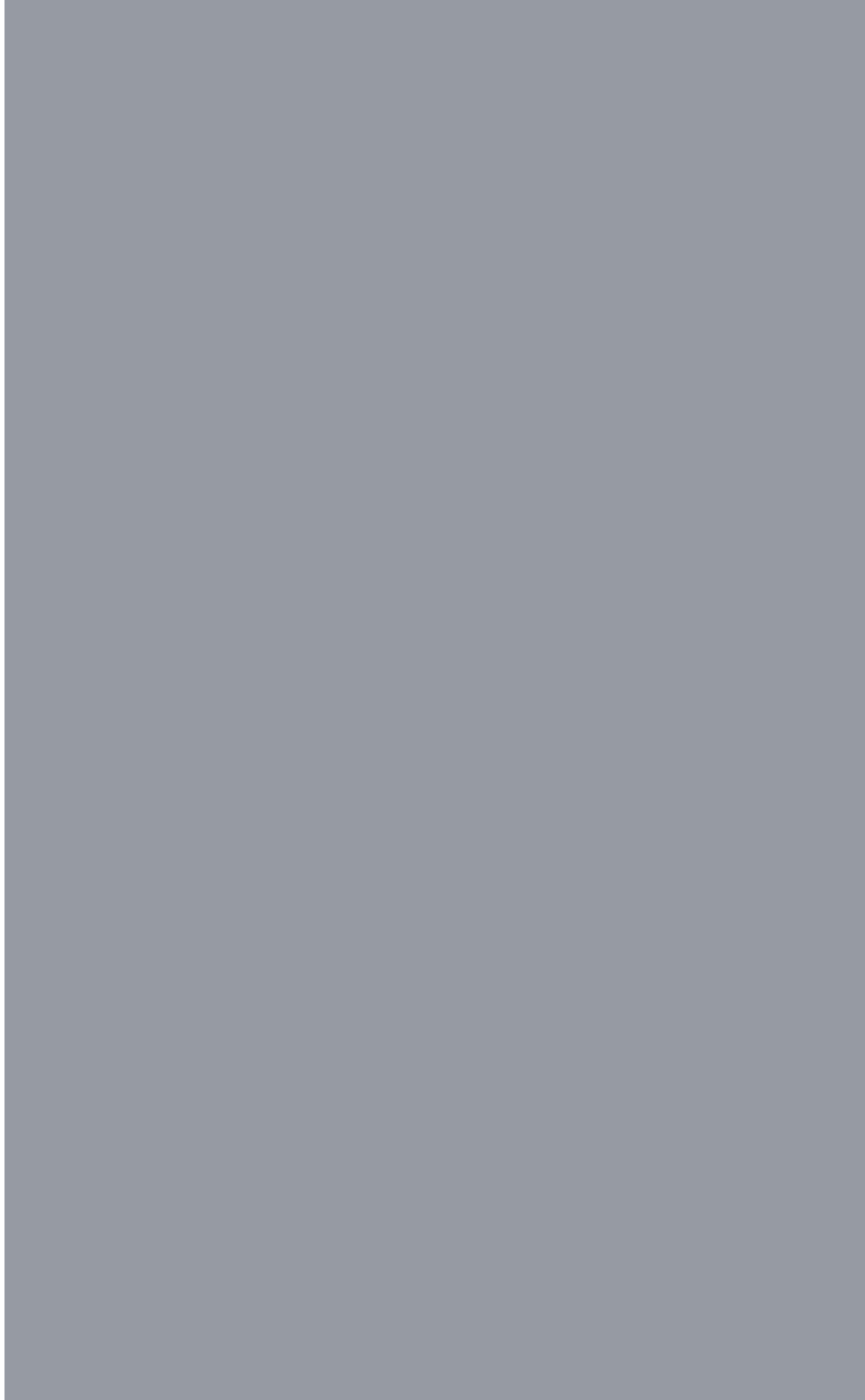
bold palette, so I gently applied each respective color as to whisper, not yell."

The third-floor lounge room—which opens out to a rooftop deck—exemplifies Bowen's layering strategy. The structured Minotti sofa is paired with an organic and free-flowing chandelier by Bocci, while a thick, shaggy rug quiets the room. "This home needed a sense of warmth and luxe that could only be created by applying layers of luxe material to the walls," Bowen says of the woven horsehair wallpaper he used. "It's a commitment, but well worth it." If the wallpaper itself wasn't enough, Bowen added yet another layer: His sister-in-law painted gold leaf on top of it.

In comparison to the rest of the home, the kitchen is serene. "I went a bit quiet to allow the memories of entertaining to not be distracted by too bold a kitchen," he says. The symmetry of the chandelier singlehandedly drove the entire design of this space. "All of the lines on the cabinets, the marble slabs, the bronze pulls, the table—they come together and replicate

what's going on with the chandelier." Juxtaposed is a dramatic sitting area, and the room is veiled with an airy, metallic drapery that offers the couple privacy from the surrounding commercial and residential buildings without sacrificing natural light.

"I wanted this house to be warm, and I kept adding layers and layers," says Bowen. "But we had to be very careful with this execution because [these layers] could go completely sideways. But used strategically, it's just right amount of what it needs."



## SOURCES

### **LIVING ROOM**

Modular sofa – Minotti, Casa Italia, Naples, FL

Cocktail tables – RH Modern, Restoration

Hardware, Tampa, FL

Chandelier – BOCCI, Luminaire Lab, Miami, FL

Wall covering – Phillip Jeffries, D&D, New York, NY

Fabricated by Paula Bowen,

St. Petersburg, FL

Area rug – Stark Carpet, D&D, New York, NY

### **SITTING AREA VIGNETTE**

Club chair – Holly Hunt, New York, NY

Artwork – Owner's Collection

Wall covering – Phillip Jeffries, D&D, New York, NY

Area rug – Stark Carpet, D&D, New York, NY

### **FAMILY AREA**

Sofas – Holly Hunt, New York, NY

Frame fabric – Kyle Bunting, Austin, TX

Gold leather stripe – Garrett

Leather, D&D, New York, NY

Seat fabric – Zinc Textiles, D&D, New York, NY

Cocktail table – RH Modern, Restoration Hardware, Tampa, FL

Side table – Holly Hunt, New York, NY

Drapery – Romo, D&D, New York, NY

Area rug – Kyle Bunting, Austin, TX

### **KITCHEN**

Cabinetry and island designed

Rob Bowen Design Group, St.

Petersburg, FL and T2theS, St.

Petersburg, FL

Countertop – Custom Marble Work, Tampa, FL

Stools – Nuevo, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Chandelier – Venice M, Holly Hunt, New York, NY

### **MASTER BATH**

Sinks – Cielo, Disegno Agency, Miami, FL

Sconces – CVL Luminaries, France

Tile wall coverings designed by

Rob Bowen Design Group, St.

Petersburg, FL

Fabricated by Walker Zanger, New York, NY

Flooring – Walker Zanger, New York, NY

### **MASTER BEDROOM**

Poster bed – Bernhardt Interiors, Lenoire, NC

Fabricated by Caribe Interiors, St. Petersburg, FL

Bedding – Frette, New York, NY

Chest – NOIR, Los Angeles, CA

Table lamp – Arteriors, Los

Angeles, CA

Area rug – Stark Carpet, D&D, New York, NY

### **STAIRWAY VIGNETTE**

Sculpture – Marlene Rose, Clearwater, FL