

IN FLIGHT

GREAT LAKES **BY**
DESIGN



Landing at Lake Lapeer

This timber frame style home is designed by Creekwood Architecture Inc. and New Energy Works for clients who have a love of the outdoors and smooth, lakefront landings.

To the bold and the historic

Text: Diane Kolak

When interior designer Jasmin Reese of Jasmin Reese Interiors in Chicago proposed five chandeliers—one for each family member—the homeowners paused.

“Then they said, ‘You know what, let’s just do it,’” Reese said. “That’s the moment you know the design is working—it’s playful, it’s personal, and it still feels right.”

That touchstone of “when to say when” has allowed Reese to test clients’ boldness and give them designs that surpass their expectations while also remaining true to their authentic style. She first establishes a client’s personality and design-risk tolerance with a style session.

“It’s a two-stage process we use to help clients understand their own style. We explore, gauge comfort levels, and keep people from get-

ting too far out of their comfort zone. We try to understand the client’s threshold and only push them 10 percent beyond it,” Reese said.

Jasmin Reese Interiors is known around Chicago and the Naples, Florida area for the firm’s colorful blend of tradition and whimsy. It’s on full display in this historic Evanston home where color tumbles from room to room and personality glimmers from every corner.



Originally designed in 1891 by famed Chicago architects Burnham and Root, the 8,000-square-foot Queen Anne with a coach house has the grand bones and craftsmanship of another era. The homeowners, a couple with three young daughters, wanted to infuse the historic structure with warmth, practicality, and joy. Having previously collaborated with Reese, they knew she could translate their love of color into something vibrant yet timeless. Their first project with Reese, a master suite in their former home nearby, revealed their style on a smaller scale. It allowed the designer and clients to launch into this whole-house renovation with confident self-expression.

The home's grandeur speaks for itself, but a step inside makes it clear that this Queen Anne is anything but stuck in the nineteenth century. Bold patterns, daring shapes, glossy surfaces, and abundant details live within spaces defined by original millwork, natural light, and that sense of solidity that old houses exude.

Jasmin Reese holds great respect for the history of the home, but she acknowledges that a little irreverence—classic design with a twist—brought this renovation to life. She finds joy and energy in juxtaposition, which suits itself well in bringing a modern spirit into a historic space. Reese loves to mix high and low, dark and light, antique and modern. The contrast sets up a visual rhythm that connects different rooms without overt repetition of design elements, and the fanciful style harmonizes with the original spirit of Queen Anne architecture, which is known as a playful and flamboyant subset of Victorian style.

Reese's understanding of the home's architecture was enhanced by her partnership with the renovation's chief architect, the late David Raino-Ogden, who carefully designed an addition and revisions to the home's plan to enhance flow and function. While the end result preserves the significant features and intent of the original, major structural work was required to deepen the basement and add on a primary suite.

"David really respected the bones of the house," Reese said. "Working with him was amazing. He didn't want to disturb too much, and we took his lead on all the issues of preservation."

One of the biggest changes to improve flow and function was the complete redesign of the kitchen and surrounding family spaces. It's the technical and aesthetic centerpiece of the project, fusing performance and personality. Reese collaborated on the effort with O'Brien Harris, a Chicago studio that specializes in handmade bespoke cabinetry.

"O'Brien Harris isn't just a cabinetmaker," Reese said. "They understand space and user function. They took time to understand the homeowner's needs and thought about every bell and whistle that she could possibly use. There were so many details, but they made the process really simple."





With O'Brien Harris leading the kitchen layout process, Reese delved into surface and hardware selections to assure visual flow between the kitchen, butler's pantry, dining room, and transitional spaces. Ceredis oak cabinetry fills the main kitchen wall alongside a substantial island in the same finish. It's topped with a heavily veined marble slab and an integrated walnut butcher block on the end. A custom range hood in brushed steel with graceful brass straps and large brass pendant lights bring a touch of shine to the subdued woodwork.

Ann Stockard, senior designer at O'Brien Harris, said she enjoyed the project partnership. "Collaborating with Jasmin was such a rewarding experience. Her fearless use of color brought incredible energy to this historic home," Stockard said. "Our team focused on

creating a timeless, classically detailed kitchen that honored the home's architecture, while Jasmin layered in the personality."

Because this client was especially organized, O'Brien Harris took a meticulous inventory of every item in their existing kitchen to ensure efficient storage and flow.

"The kitchen is a perfect balance of history and modernity," Stockard said. "Smart storage, expressive color, and thoughtful design all work harmoniously."

The adjacent butler's pantry, by contrast, is anything but subdued. It's a tiny space with a huge personality, outfitted with floor-to-ceiling cabinetry that shines like a box of emeralds. Reese infused the space with the clients' favorite color by specifying Benjamin Moore Gondola Ride in a high-gloss finish, a verdantly veined

stone slab for the counters, and intricate mosaic tile flooring. Historic cremone bolts on the upper cabinets fit with its era while adding another layer to the materials palette.

Reese also sees rooms as opportunities to tell stories through design. The five symbolic dining-room chandeliers are a fun example, but other rooms also have a narrative origin. The dressing room was inspired by a luxury car on the Orient Express, with dark-stained built-ins and a ceiling treatment that accentuates the long shape of the room, and while each room tells its own story, the home feels united by tone and mood.

"Homes are composed of rooms," Reese said. "We choose pieces that belong in specific rooms—almost like children. Each has its own personality, but they come from the same parents."

Color is the clear connection, and while bright green appears most assertive in the butler's pantry and the color-drenched coach house, it brings a refreshing, natural energy to almost every space. Green has become almost neutral for this house because of the way it weaves throughout the plan and interacts with pops of other bright hues: cobalt, daffodil, teal, and paprika. The colorful design fits well with the fact that this sophisticated house must also appeal to children. It lightens the mood of the historic details.

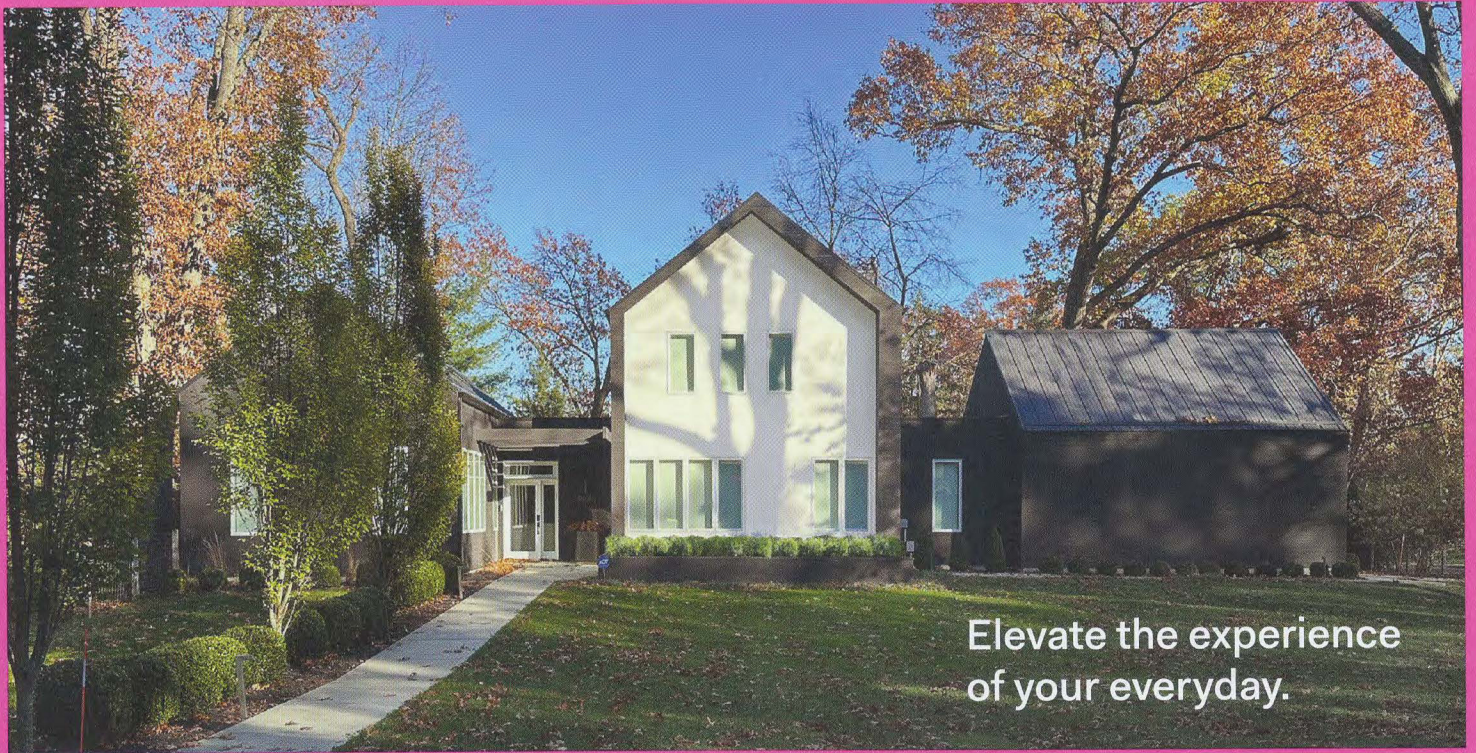
Reese's painterly color sense and love for detail are counterbalanced by her talent for editing. She has an instinct for finding that specific point where the design pushes the client's taste just enough. Her rooms have the verve of a maximalist but a sophistication that comes from knowing when to stop.

"People often think my work is maximalist, but it's actually very edited," Reese said. "Every piece has to earn its spot. That's what keeps it timeless."

The home remains true to its 130-year history while fully embracing the present. Imagination and heritage coexist effortlessly, reflecting both the architecture and the people who live within it. The family inhabiting the house today continues to write its story, proving that historic living can be both authentic and personal.



Step inside the colorful world of Jasmin Reese Interiors at Studio Sessions, an open house event series hosted by Jasmin Reese Interiors and Recovered Interior Upholstery that celebrates creativity, craftsmanship, and community. The events are part of the new Third Thursday series, happening every third Thursday: December 18, 2025, through the end of 2026; 4 to 6 p.m. CT; 4111 Rockwell Street, Chicago.



Elevate the experience
of your everyday.

Collective

Architecture | Interiors
collectiveoffice.com

