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AT HOME WITH COLOR

**Architectural Trends:
Building Better**

Grilling & Chilling

Made in America



WRITER MEG FOX
INTERIOR DESIGNER TESS GIULIANI, CKD
PHOTOGRAPHER PETER RYMWID

Left: A transitional sofa, multihued rug, mirrored accents and Chinese blue-and-white porcelains combine for a modern, sophisticated feel in the living room. White walls and a lavender ceiling offset the serene painting by Ridgewood artist John Muth. “A ceiling is typically the largest single expanse in a room, so when painted white, it looks like it’s waiting for color,” interior designer Tess Giuliani says.

Below: Giuliani stands in front of the home she owned for 36 years and recently sold. Colorful window boxes “smiled at everyone passing by,” she says. Hand-painted designs in the gable—which changed seasonally—also add color. The taxi? “It was our second car—a weekend folly,” says Giuliani, who brought it back from England 20+ years ago.



SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Behind a traditional 1920s exterior lies an escape to foreign lands

As a little girl, Tess Giuliani would get lost in the pages of *National Geographic* magazine,

fascinated by the people of other cultures, their dress, artifacts, ornamentation and how they lived. Whether they were primitive, exotic or elegant, “I was mesmerized by these cultures coexisting at the same time as my own,” the interior designer recalls.

Though traveling is in the DNA of her family, Giuliani’s own future as a traveler was sealed when she studied in Europe after college and as a young mother living and working as a designer in Tokyo. “We traveled extensively through Asia, and my appre-



Left: A photograph taken from a memorable stay in Antibes inspired the kitchen's French bistro theme and the inscription above the doorway: "Café de Giulio" (her son's nickname). Note the fun blue-and-white awning and the mural on the doors, which lead to a side entrance of the home. It features Wood-Mode cabinetry and white Corian® countertops.

Above: A floral table made of lava rock from Positano, Italy, is the centerpiece of the dining room (foreground). Mirrored artwork above the doorway echoes the table's motif with hand-painted spring blossoms. Beyond is a Moroccan-themed butler's pantry, a vibrant space that connects an addition to the original home. The antique lantern is from Turkey.

ciation of their cultures and design sensibilities exploded," says Giuliani, owner of Tess Giuliani Designs Inc. in Ridgewood.

HOME & AWAY

For Giuliani, "the foreign seems like coming home." That's why she filled her 1920s Ridgewood home—where she lived for 36 years and undertook two renovations—with objects from her travels. Whether

they were bronze rain drums from Thailand, a Chinese altar table or a headpiece from Bangkok, she purchased what she loved even if she had no idea at the time where she would put them. Describing it as a visceral reaction to a piece, "If they spoke to me and if I could afford them, I knew they would find a new life in our home," she says. The same goes for a London taxi, which she recently parted with after 23 years. "Although very road worthy, it was

our second car—a weekend folly," she adds.

Even the exterior has a foreign reference. As guests approach the house, they are greeted at the entrance with a painting in the gable inspired by an 1840 botanical titled "Flora of the Nile," a triangle of artistic expression that changed seasonally. "I decided to put character on the outside of the house to slow down the visitor" in our fast-paced world, Giuliani says. Colorful, abundant and happy, her flower-box

creations were a labor of love also. "I have had cars stop, back up and tell me they loved driving by my house for years," she says.

CAPTURING THE ESSENCE

Indoors, the kitchen—inspired by a memorable trip to Antibes with her then-teenage son and his friend—transports visitors to a charming French bistro with a hand-painted blue-and-white awning. A



mural on a doorway depicts a French village and bears the inscription “Café de Giules” (named after Giuliani’s son). “I brought home memories of charming architecture, cascading flowers and happy teenagers,” says Giuliani, a certified kitchen designer. The room was named the National Kitchen & Bath Association’s “Best Small Kitchen in America” in 1995 and still retains its classic good looks.

“*Chez Tess*,” meanwhile, is a timeless bathroom on the second floor, awash in white and soft terra-cotta tones. A phrase taken from an inspirational Chinese

poem from Giuliani’s feng shui studies — painted in reverse on the wall but clearly readable in the mirror — “was a nice way to start and end the day,” she says. It reads: “When there is light in the soul there is beauty in the person. When there is beauty in the person there is harmony in the home.”

In the master bedroom, Giuliani finds a scene of a rope bridge leading to a tree in the mist to be inspiring and relaxing. “I would love to live in a tree house, and when I saw this picture I thought ‘here’s the first step to getting there,’” she says lightheartedly.

REAL & IMAGINED

A second bedroom takes overnight guests on a trip to India with its lavender walls, colorful bedding and exotic pierced shutters purchased in Singapore. Giuliani attributes her love of India to her father’s sister: a doctor and Marist missionary who worked in Calcutta with Mother Teresa. “My aunt spoke seven languages...I was fascinated with the stories from abroad,” she says.

After her son left the nest, Giuliani converted a third bedroom into a Japanese library, a room of

A family room addition with a gold metallic cathedral ceiling and contrasting Brazilian cherry floors doubled the size of the first floor and created a canvas for objects from around the world. Minimal trim work around windows promotes a smooth visual transition to the tranquil garden beyond.

The well-lit goldleaf niche at right displays small treasured items. Foreign coins are affixed to the corners of the frame. “When anyone came to visit I asked them to bring a foreign coin. Nothing of value, just interest,” Giuliani says. Alongside the Chinese altar table in the distance are other prized possessions: a bronze rain drum from Thailand, a Japanese temple, a headpiece from Bangkok and a framed rubbing from a women’s temple in Cambodia.



Above: Giuliani finds the expansive picture of a rope bridge leading to a giant tree in the mist inspiring and relaxing in the master bedroom.

Right: A “Chez Tess” French tile inscription personalizes the master bathroom, timeless in white and soft terra-cotta tones. “I had an artist paint a few lines of a lovely Chinese poem backward on the wall so it would be read correctly when you looked in the mirror,” Giuliani says. “It was a nice way to start and end the day.”



quiet repose where books, fond objects and memorabilia from living in Japan are stored behind shoji screens. Among them is a Japanese doll her father gave her when she was two and a magazine photo of her son when he modeled for Mitsukoshi, a Tokyo department store. An antique table, blue-and-white sake jars, and bamboo garden fences resonate with the aesthetic.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

A 2008 family room addition doubled the size of a small first floor and gave Giuliani the perfect canvas to place and display her furniture and art. Whether they are pieces from her travels, such as a wood Thai box in the form of a dog or a Chinese temple, a special gift from a friend, talented artisans created them, so “there is a life in every piece,” she says.

Distinct in character but harmonious in interest and energy, all rooms stimulate a memory, excite the senses or produce a calming effect. Several people described it as a happy house when they visited during a 2012 town-sponsored tour. “Many pledged to



A sari of crème silk with gold elephants marching along a magenta stripe forms a “canopy” above the bed in a deep-lavender guest bedroom. The bed skirt — purchased in Singapore — is an “Indian banner-like decoration used in festivals,” Giuliani says. Exotic pierced shutters, also purchased in Singapore, “cut the heavy sun and create the most gentle flow of light,” she adds.



A room of quiet repose, the Japanese library features an antique table, blue-and-white sake jars and bamboo garden fences. Shoji screens conceal books and memorabilia from Japan.

go home and start decorating with color. “I think they were inspired to be daring,” Giuliani says. **DW**

EDITOR'S NOTE: After deciding to downsize, Tess Giuliani moved a few blocks to an uptown apartment. “It’s chic and fun,” she says, with a lavender living room ceiling and ample closet space. “Organization was key. The only thing I haven’t found is the iron—and I haven’t missed it. The last time I lived in an apartment was in Tokyo. It was good living then, and it’s good living now.”

To see more from this home, visit the articles archive at designnewjersey.com and search for “Haven at Your Doorstep” (the backyard published in April/May 2006) and “Water’s Edge” (a bathroom addition published in December 2010/January 2011).

SOURCES Overall: interior design, Tess Giuliani Designs Inc. in Ridgewood; color consultant, Amy Wax of Your Color Source Studios Inc. in Montclair; lighting designer, Robert Newell Lighting Design in Westfield. **Exterior:** painting, Painting by Zygi through Tess Giuliani Designs; decorative botanical painting at front entrance, Arielle Designs LLC in Ridgewood; landscaping/contributing designer, Ardy Runckel of A. Runckel Design in Ridgewood. **Living Room:** plein-air oil painting, John Muth in Ridgewood; furniture and area rug, Wostbrock Home in Ridgewood; custom framing of artwork here and throughout, Opus One & Art Gallery in Ridgewood. **Kitchen:** cabinetry, Wood-Mode through Ulrich Inc. in Ridgewood. **Dining Room:** lava stone table, Lillie K. Traders in Hudson, New York; glass painting and floral design above doorway, Tess Giuliani Designs in collaboration with Ornella Muth of Arte Nova, Artique Glass Studio Inc. in Glen Rock and Folly, Flowers & Joy in Ridgewood. **Family Room Addition:** builder, Bill Braunius Construction LLC in Midland Park; gold metallic painted ceiling, Painting by Alfonso through Tess Giuliani Designs; assorted silk pillows from India, Lillie K. Traders. **Master Bedroom:** large picture, Ikea. **Second-Floor Bathroom:** French tile inscription, American Olean. **Hindu Bedroom and Japanese Library:** personal mementos and antiques from the designer/homeowner.

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