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Designer Hilary Bailes removed thronelike chairs from the dining room of John and Christine Pruban, replacing them with these contemporary chairs upholstered in faux ivory leather. Other touches in the room include two modern-looking crystal chandeliers.

Fashioned to fit

Their default suburban interiors didn't match their style sense, so this couple decided on a makeover

BY TATE GUNNERSON
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When John and Christine Pruban bought their four-bedroom home in 1998, they thought less about how they wanted the interior design to feel and more about how they thought it should look.

"We sort of mimicked our friends and neighbors," Christine says, recalling the palette of yellows and golds they selected

as a backdrop for their traditional large-scale wood furnishings and decorative accessories, which covered nearly every surface. But as time passed, the couple realized their interiors weren't a good fit. "We're much more contemporary and very simple," says Christine. "All the little pieces had started to make us feel claustrophobic."

In 2010, the Prubans had finally had enough of the staid decor. They hired designer Hilary Bailes to make the house match their personal style.

"Christine and I were sitting in her heavy, almost medieval-looking dining room discussing the style direction for the project. I pointed out that in contrast to her traditional home, her personal style was very modern, minimalist and cutting-

edge," Bailes says, recalling her client's black jeans and black heels.

Those fashion choices helped provide direction. In the family room, Bailes selected a long sectional covered in charcoal wool. Above the sofa hangs a bright violet and black abstract painting by Wesley Kimler.

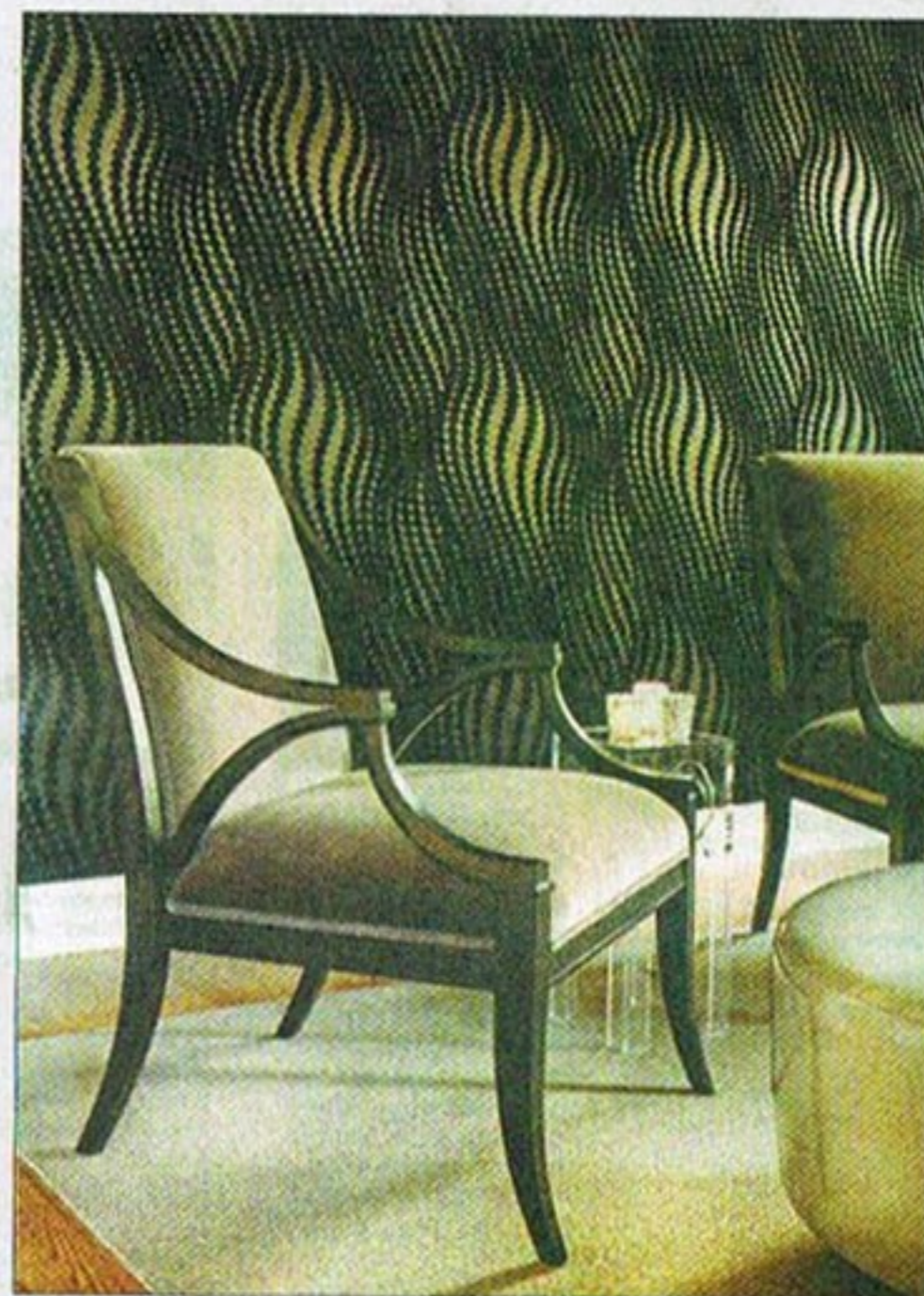
"One great thing about doing a more monochromatic color scheme is that any accent color really pops," Bailes says.

Although the custom sectional sofa wouldn't arrive for six months, the Prubans were so eager to clear the decks that they hired a company to organize a sale of their furniture, light fixtures, blinds and accessories.

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Designer Hilary Bailes gave a sleek, contemporary look to John and Christine Pruban's home, as seen in the house's front entrance, opposite page, and the sitting room, above.



Sleeker, more stylish

How to get a fashion-forward look: ■ Nix the clutter and peripheral accessories. "Negative space is an important part of how a home feels," Bailes says. "The pieces in a room should have enough space around them so that they can be appreciated."

■ A monochromatic palette will often create that urban aesthetic. To keep it interesting, make sure to incorporate materials that add depth, sparkle and texture.

■ Don't be afraid to mix materials. Wood, metal, glass and lacquer coexist peacefully yet intriguingly.

■ Add contemporary art. Abstract paintings, large-scale photography and modern sculpture will help to create that urban ambience.

were starting over," John recalls. "Our family likes adventure, so for us, that was kind of exciting."

Even more exciting for the family was watching the new design come together as the pieces finally arrived. Bailes re-imagined the formal living room as a swanky lounge area. A quartet of chairs covered in gray velvet surround a round cocktail table covered in metallic leather.

"There's a sophisticated palette, but there's contrast throughout," Bailes says. "In most of the rooms, there's an element that's either a brighter color or a different texture."

To lighten up the dining room, Bailes replaced an ornate marble mantel with one made of simple white lacquered wood, and she replaced the thronelike chairs with more contemporary ones upholstered in faux

ivory leather. In a nod to the home's more traditional past, two crystal chandeliers hang above the table, although each has a simple Mylar surround, giving them a more modern look.

"They're my two diva lights," Christine says.

Bailes says those little details can make a monochromatic design scheme feel warm and livable, from silver threads woven into a rug to Venetian glass beads on the master bedroom wallcovering.

The extra attention paid to those details ensures that the contemporary design feels warm and family-friendly.

"We realized that the decor of the house didn't have to be a certain way in order for us to be a certain kind of family," Christine says.