

21ST-CENTURY HOME

Chicago is often referred to as the Second City, for years trailing New York City in key rankings like population, culture, gastronomy, and sophistication. But in the category of architecture, Chicago continues to hold its own. An architectural force that has helped shape the history of American design, the city features many prominent buildings in a variety of styles, most notably by important architects from Daniel Burnham and Frank Lloyd Wright to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Helmut Jahn, and Stanley Tigerman.

In 2000 a new structural masterpiece rose up on the city's lakefront landscape, designed by one of the Midwest's most respected architects, Lucien Lagrange. The eight-story French limestone luxury condominium residence offered a fresh and utterly sophisticated quality of living in an urban setting. Lagrange's classic design embraces a vitality for modern living while incorporating the grace of Chicago's past eras. The building caught the very discerning eye of one of the city's first families—internationally known private investors and their children. "The design was unique for Chicago," says the wife. "We particularly liked the scale and loved the neighborhood on the park."



LEFT The formal dining room is one of the many areas in the apartment that provide terrific views of Lake Michigan.

OPPOSITE A pair of antique Chinese screens flank a linen upholstered settee in the elevator landing just outside the home's entrance.





ABOVE A spacious mirrored private elevator landing leads into the apartment's distinguished formal entry featuring a limestone floor and custom plaster moldings. The six-arm giltwood chandelier is circa 1820 from Austria and hangs over a bespoke hand-carved Cabouca limestone hearth and mantel.

OPPOSITE The family can retire to the expansive media room to play pool or watch a movie on the built-in screen (not pictured) while lounging on a sectional sofa upholstered in cream and coffee fabric with rich fur throws.

When the building went up, the couple was expecting another child and needed a fourth bedroom. Having lived downtown for years, they were committed to staying in the city but sought a substantial amount of space to accommodate the family and their many responsibilities. "We required space designed for multiple needs," remembers the wife. "Family areas, entertaining areas, offices, an art studio, a media room, and private bedrooms." They ultimately acquired several units on two levels in the building, combining them for a sprawling houselike upstairs/downstairs effect. That was just a fraction of the custom work the owners would put into their new home: the space was delivered entirely raw, as the developer had intended to allow completely independent and individual build-out by each purchaser. Selecting and collaborating with an architect and interior designer of their own clearly became critical for the family.

Enter David Easton, the distinguished interior designer who began his career working for the iconic furniture designer Edward Wormley and then with the venerable firm of Parish-Hadley, before starting his own firm in 1972. Easton was first hired by the owners in the early '90s, to design a chic hotel and a private club in a popular Colorado ski town. "It has been a wonderful collaboration," Easton offers, when referring to his long-standing relationship with the owners. "But the Chicago project was a challenge—working with an open space completely separate from any previous structure or design idea and giving it the order that it now has." Easton brought in the residential architect Eric J. Smith, with whom he has partnered on various projects over the years, to help undertake the process of creating a logical floor plan and design concept. Complicating matters were issues such as connecting the home to the elevator lobby and to the service elevator and taking full advantage of the unfettered lake views to the east and views over Chicago to the north.

"We worked with David and Eric to create a clear and symmetrical layout, punctuated by circular hallways," says the wife. "The look is traditional in bones and architecture,

but pared down, more of a clean and contemporary 'Zen traditional.'" Smith thoughtfully laid out gracious groupings of rooms that create long spaces that divide as one progresses. On the lower level, a private elevator landing leads to the grand formal entry of subtle French limestone floors and exquisite period antiques. Off of this is an entrance to the media suite on one side and down the other, a series of stunning rooms with dramatic views of the lake: an elegant dining room leading into an enormous kitchen, then an intimate family dining room, culminating in the owner's favorite space, a whimsical round sunroom (complete with double-sided fish tank). Long views leading north from this side of the home look through the living room and the library, past a mudroom and a painting studio to a guest suite. Upstairs are the family's private rooms. Easton describes the home as the ultimate space for a twenty-first-century family. "At this point, the ideal space is one big room divided into living and dining, and a library with fireplaces at either end, so you have places for people to sit, watch television, work, and grab a book—all in what is really one large room."

A tranquil color palette and textures used throughout create a peaceful atmosphere that seems to mirror the lake views. Organic materials such as bark paper in the living room, Nordic pine in the library, and wide-plank cerused American white oak floors in the family area provide a nice relaxed contrast to more decorative details including the custom plaster cornice and ceiling ornaments. The wall coverings alternate between refined antique paper, fabric, and simple, beautifully glazed paint. Easton and the owners found specific furnishings all over Europe, the United States, at auction . . . Easton calls it a "big search for a combination of antiques and custom—whatever seemed to fit this part of the twenty-first century!" The home's savvy style—one of taste and culture—is an

RIGHT A vaulted-ceiling circular sunroom with infinite lake views has a hint of old-world charm and is easily the most magical room in the apartment. David Easton outfitted the space in relaxed furnishings like a tufted sofa upholstered in herringbone cotton and linen and an assortment of cushioned chairs, surrounding a coffee table by Costello Studio.





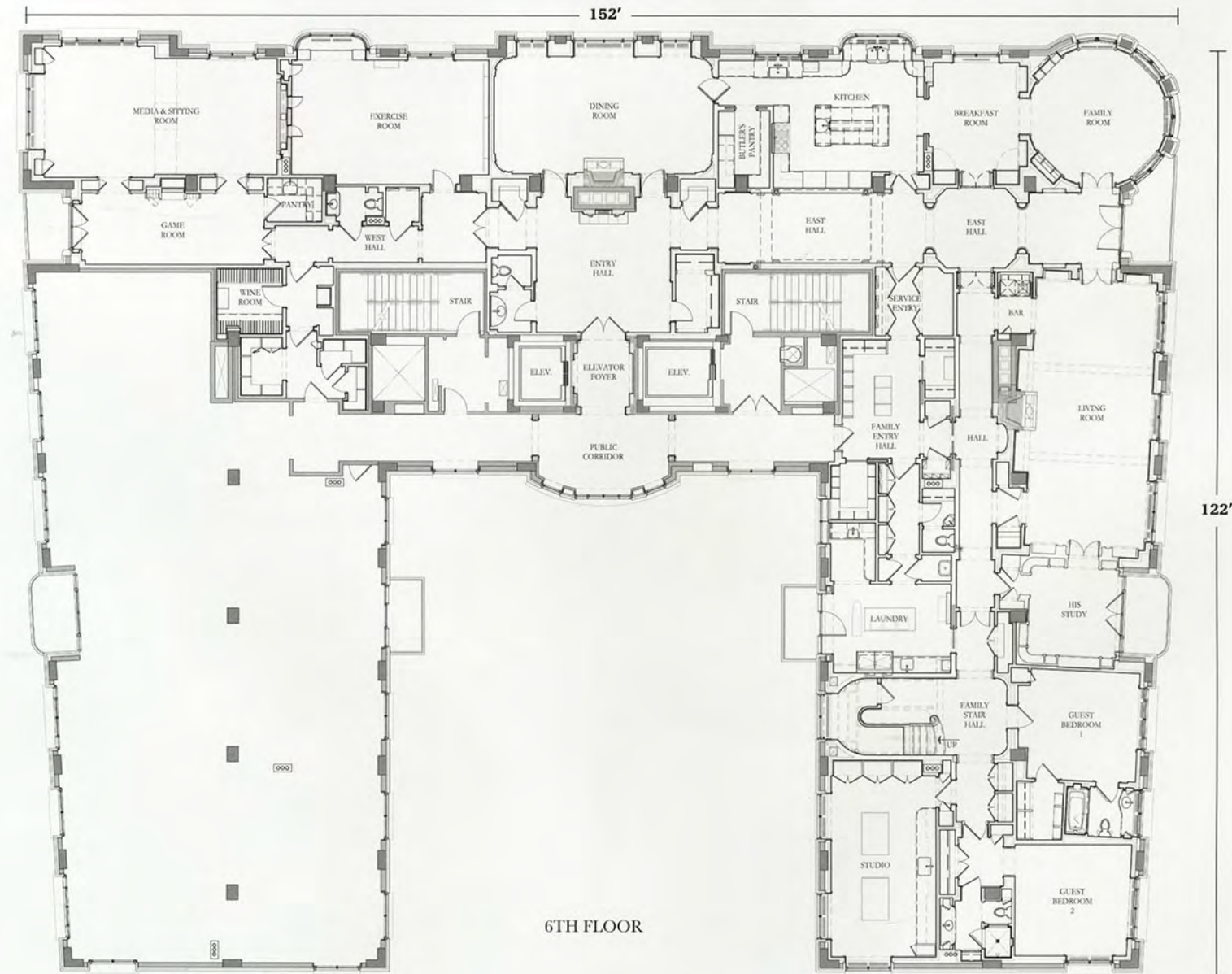
A view through the living room culminates in double doors that open to reveal the private library. There is not a trendy furnishing, fitting, or possession in sight—everything is of superlative quality and has a significant meaning or provenance.



LEFT The home was designed around a series of long halls. Pictured here is the east hall.

BELOW Eric J. Smith's architectural rendering of the lower level helps illustrate how the space flows.

OPPOSITE An oversized center island anchors the handsome kitchen. Though built to accommodate a large family that entertains often, it remains cozy and intimate due in large part to the soft periwinkle blue tile that reflects the lake view.





authentic reflection of the distinguished and worldly family who resides within.

Adding to the comfort and convenience is being in a full-service building with a collection of unrivaled amenities: a rooftop landscaped garden of flowers, trees, gazebos, and trellises; heated parking terraces; lovely French windows leading to handmade iron balconies with stellar views of the lake; state-of-the-art prewired technology; and round-the-clock doormen/security. Easton feels that our society is moving toward this type of urban living. "This is an extraordinary trend and one that is logical—as it is difficult to have so many different people working on your home staff and to intelligently manage all services within terms of maintenance," he says. "We have more friends staying in the city with young children and designing great family spaces," adds the wife. "Older friends and empty nesters are also returning to the city." Look out, New York—Chicago may not be second for long.

OPPOSITE The formal language of the dining room is custom refinement, featuring timeless pieces such as the fine Louis XVI dining table in mahogany veneer, surrounded by classic cabriole Louis XVI-style dining chairs in an antique gray shade. Above hangs a nineteenth-century painted wood chandelier, and to the right is a Louis XIV period fireplace mantel made in delicately grained and polished Bourgogne stone. Hand-painted Chinese wallpaper with a bamboo motif covers the walls.

ABOVE LEFT A long view down the hallway that runs north, parallel to the living room and library of the home's lower level. Wide-plank cerused white oak floors lend a warm and welcoming air to the substantial space. A brass Georgian-style lantern hangs above.

LEFT The smart guest suite is a study in tranquil textures and shades. The bed is dressed in cream Frette linens, a similar shade to the walls upholstered in woven wicker fabric. A leather-topped antique desk sits near the window.