



MORE IS MORE

CURATED MAXIMALISM
TAKES CENTER STAGE
AT INTERIOR DESIGNER
ISABEL LADD'S FAIRWAY HOME

STORY BY **TANZI MERRITT**
 PHOTOS BY **KATIE CHARLOTTE**
 (EXCEPT WHERE NOTED)

To step inside interior designer Isabel Ladd's home in the Fairway neighborhood is like stepping into a jewel box filled with gems of all colors. Ladd's style, which she calls "curated maximalism," incorporates a mix of bold colors, detailed patterns and textures, and lush fabrics to create a home that is elegant and striking but at the same time cozy and welcoming for her busy family of four.

Ladd, owner of Isabel Ladd Interiors, purchased the 7,500-square-foot home 11 years ago. The house was built in 1938 and was "...in rough shape," as she says, when she bought it. After a thorough renovation and a small kitchen expansion, the house is the perfect place for Ladd and her partner, Taylor, to raise their sons, 12-year-old Oliver and 10-year-old Theo.

"When I first did this kitchen, I had white cabinets with trendy gold hardware, white walls, and a Carrera marble countertop," Ladd explained. "After a few years, I knew that it was not bringing me joy, so I added this brown and white geometric wallpaper to the walls and the ceiling."

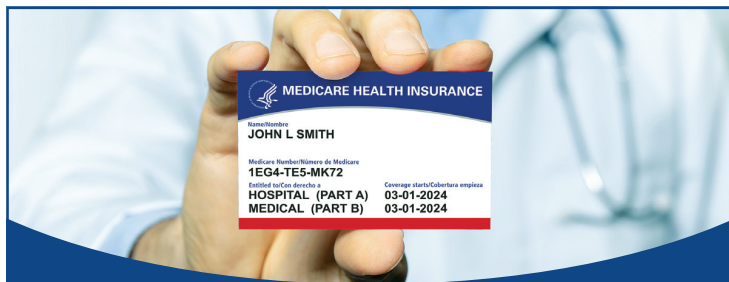
Ladd, who loves to make changes to her decor, recently partnered with GE to explore their fashion-forward Café series of appliances and knew it was the perfect reason to update her kitchen, starting with a unique green stove.

"GE made just 50 of these green stoves as a test to see if people will gravitate towards colorful appliances. What I love about [the color] is that it's just the stove, so it doesn't look kitschy or dated because it's not all the appliances," said Ladd.



PHOTO BY EMILY GIANCARLO

Isabel Ladd and her family at their Fairway home, which she described as a "laboratory" for her interior design practice.



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In addition to the stove, Ladd also installed a new matte black refrigerator from the same line.

Besides the traditional stainless steel, Ladd explained that the Café appliances come in a variety of finishes, such as matte black, matte white and platinum glass, with hardware that can be changed easily for a different look. Customers can choose from flat black, gold, copper, and bronze hardware finishes, among others.

Another major change Ladd made to the kitchen was installing a new island with a reeded wood base from the Lexington-based Cabinets on Main and a granite countertop and sink from Artistic Granite & Marble located in Nicholasville.

Said Ladd, “Had this been a white piece of countertop here, it would just be like a beacon of bright light. This pattern, called Fusion, has a lot of violets and greens, and I just love the movement. It is very dynamic.”

When designing the island, Ladd chose to make a sink from the same granite and had drain lines carved into the countertop.

“I was influenced by my latest trip to Brazil, where I was really paying attention to kitchens. Not only are the drain lines functional, it’s a pretty aesthetic to have this cool texture on the counter-top,” said Ladd, a Brazilian native who moved with her horse-industry family to Kentucky at age three.

Changing the color of the cabinets and adding a complementary floral window covering completed the transformation that fits right in with the home’s bold aesthetic.

Ladd’s maximalist style is on display from the moment you walk in the door.

Blending unexpected patterns, colors and styles has become a signature element of Ladd’s approach to design. “Mix and don’t match,” is a mantra that she follows.

PHOTOS BY KATIE CHARLOTTE





“People spend more money on their house than anything else. I really feel like it’s important to spend the time and thought on decorating it to make you happy.”

“I wanted the entry to be an ‘oh wow!’ moment,” said Ladd. “I wallpapered the foyer, including the ceiling. But because of the stairs, there was no clear start and stop point, so I had it carry through to the upstairs walls and ceiling. There’s a lot of continuity to it and the brown and white geometric pattern allows me to layer so much art over it without any kind of competition.”

Ladd’s master bedroom is also a place where her love of pattern and color is on display, with olive walls and pink ceiling, floral fabrics, and a sofa upholstered in her favorite tiger velvet — a signature fabric that she shows to all her clients.

“The majority of people like a bedroom that is tranquil, with soft blues and greens — and that is wonderful,” she said. “I, however, like a bedroom that energizes me, makes me feel like a queen, and wakes me up, and that’s what this bedroom does for me.”



While Ladd loves a rich and ornate look, she is committed to making sure her home is truly lived in.

“Styling shouldn’t make you feel like you can’t live in your house,” said Ladd. “I don’t decorate my home for durability or concern myself with kid-proofing or using performance fabrics. I design it based on what I love. If something happens, we deal with it then.”

She points to a downstairs powder room as an example.

“There are actually flecks of copper in this wallpaper, and as water has hit it, it has developed a green patina. I don’t stress about that. I like it. It’s a reflection of a lived-in space,” she said.



“Mix and don’t match,” is Ladd’s design mantra which she shares with her clients as she helps create their dream spaces. She provided a few more of her favorite design tips.

“Don’t feel like you have to pigeon-hole yourself into trends or get in your head about design rules,” she said. “I think that the only thing that really matters is if you love it. And if you do, use it. Find a way to make it work.”

“People spend more money on their house than anything else. I really feel like it’s important to spend the time and thought on decorating it to make you happy,” she continued.

One of her guiding design principles is that design doesn’t have to be done and permanent.

“It can evolve as you evolve,” she said. “You don’t have to demo everything and start from the ground

up and make a huge financial and time commitment to make a change. There are easy ways to upgrade and create a home that you love.”

Ladd sees her own home as a work in progress and a place to test ideas. She ended, “I like to surround myself with things that inspire me, and not just what inspires me right now but what may inspire my future self. My house is my laboratory.” ■

While her home definitely falls under the category of high style, Ladd is adamant it also feels comfortable and lived in. “Styling shouldn’t make you feel like you can’t live in your house,” she said.

PHOTOS BY KATIE CHARLOTTE

