

# ELLE DECOR

APRIL 2023

A woman in a white dress stands in a dining room. The room features a large chandelier, a table with a white tablecloth, and a fireplace with a mantel. The text 'THE DESIGNERS AT HOME ISSUE' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

## THE DESIGNERS AT HOME ISSUE

Interiors Ace  
Michelle R. Smith  
Ushers in an  
Age of Elegance



# Big Easy

At home in New Orleans, interior designer Michelle R. Smith's decorating secret weapon is restraint.

BY CAMILLE OKHIO PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM JESS LAIRD / STYLED BY BEBE HOWORTH

# Elegance

A photograph of a living room. A woman with short grey hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and blue jeans, stands by a stone fireplace. A young boy sits in a tan armchair to the left. A large, brindle dog lies on a patterned rug in the foreground. The room features a large mirror above the fireplace, a side table with a globe, and a white door on the left.

Michelle K. Smith, dressed in *Aftersee*, her son, Bash, and their dog, Ingy, in the living room of their 1865 home in New Orleans's Garden District. Custom chair in a Pierre Frey fabric; custom sconces by MRS Studio; Persian Agra rug; artwork by John Rosis.

OPPOSITE: The front porch of the Greek Revival house. For details, see Resources.

after moving to New York. "My mother and I carried that bed frame for blocks," she recalls. The Baker chairs in the primary bedroom have been with her since she was in law school. An ornate Italian center table from the 1940s draws attention in the corner of the family room, just as it did in her Brooklyn townhouse.

Both she and Tomada favor a mix of old and new. "Growing up in Italy in a house filled with 16th-century furniture, I've always had a need to add modern accents," he says. "Michelle knows how to incorporate that classic European style with the comforts of modern living."

To that end, the couple acquired a few strategic new pieces for the house, the most dramatic of which is the living room's nine-foot-long sofa. And if its size isn't

impressive enough, the sofa's striped Loro Piana upholstery adds even more drama. But in Smith's magical hands it all works; even a boldly striped giant can live in harmony amid the subtle charm that old objects bring. "You can't have a whole room be new," Smith says. "You want things you won't see everywhere. You need things with character." ■



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Smith transformed a dark wood-paneled den into a light-filled kitchen that opens onto the back patio. Custom island; fittings by Dornbracht; Mario Bellini stools by Cassina; vintage pendants.

OPPOSITE, LEFT: Vitsoe wall shelving holds tableware in the dining room.

OPPOSITE, RIGHT: The powder room's walls are covered in a textured tile by Quemore Designs. Custom vanity in Nero Marquina marble with fixtures by Barber Wilsons.





A four-poster bed by Ironware International in the primary bedroom contrasts with skirted slipper chairs covered in a Rose Tarlow linen. Quilt by Garnet Hill; curtains, Kravet linen; vintage lamps, vintage May Company Wilshire ceiling pendant.

OPPOSITE: The corner tub by Albion Bath was custom painted in Farrow & Ball's Orange Coloured White. Fixtures by Barber Wilsons.