

An Icon Reimagined

Interior designer Grace Jones transformed Cincinnati's iconic McAlpin's department store into a 21st-century downtown haven



storied past—an art deco icon—and sought to blend the couple's contemporary and transitional styles. "They wanted to keep the dignity and authenticity of the building but create a contemporary urban space that felt like home," Jones says.

Upon entering the loft, a custom wooden door is embellished with 1920s-era engravings. Custom crown molding, a sparkling chandelier, and ethereal artwork (commissioned and inspired by a favorite French wine label) echo the glamour of a bygone time.

The entryway opens into a sprawling, 40-foot-long living and kitchen space, anchored by a grand custom wine cabinet for the home's dedicated wine collectors. To its left, a top-shelf bourbon bar stays stocked for entertaining.

Primary colors in the artwork and accessories pop against the black marble fireplace

wall, which boasts not one, but two, flat-screen televisions. "They're both huge sports fanatics," Jones explains. Atop the room is what Jones calls a "streamline-moderne" fan, an enormous accent that is both fun and functional.

Sitting guard for the room is a gold leaf Great Dane statue, the couple's cheeky compromise when a real fur baby wasn't practical for urban living. Underpinning the vibrant room are hand-scraped, quarter-sawn oak planks in a soft, woodsy gray shade.

At its completion, the 3,300-square-foot loft achieved both the form and functional goals of its new residents. "They wanted the whole downtown living experience, and they got that," Jones concludes.

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"People sometimes ask me what style I design in, but I don't have a style," says Grace Jones, owner of Dwellings on Madison. "I design for clients. I bring their desires to life."

Jones notes that for many clients, their specific tastes and desires might be hard to articulate at first. They might instead begin with a sentiment, such as they've waited until kids moved out to create a formal living space. Or perhaps they finally found the time to design their ideal entertaining room.

"It can be very hard for a client to tell you what they want, even something as simple as a color, but it's much easier for them to describe how they want the room to feel. That's how we bring their dream environment to life," Jones says.

With over four decades' worth of connections in the design industry and the ability to source materials from all over world—from fabrics and wallpapers to artwork, furniture, and antiques—Jones harbors a limitless arsenal of tools to bring clients' visions to reality.

Makings of The McAlpin

When Jones and her clients first entered the former McAlpin's department store loft on Fourth Street, they were both challenged and inspired by the blank canvas in front of them. "It was a huge, raw concrete box. There was no plumbing, no heating, no cooling," Jones recalls. "There were literally still changing racks and hangers on the floor."

They started by acknowledging the space's



LEFT, FROM THE TOP: Designer Grace Jones. The loft's grand foyer reveres the building's art deco past and hints at the glamour inside. ABOVE, FROM THE TOP: A custom wine cabinet anchors the open space and displays the couple's extensive collection of premium wine. The living space balances colorful artwork with sleek finishes, such as the marble fireplace wall and streamline-moderne fan. Photos by Greg Grupenhof of Grupenhof Photography.