



OUT OF AFRICA: Interior decorator Robyn Menter in her Park Cities home.

ROBYN'S NEST

SOUTH AFRICAN-TRANSPLANT ROBYN MENTER TAKES SAFARI CHIC BEYOND THE WILD KINGDOM OF CLICHÉ

She may have entered the realm of high-end interiors via a back door, but designer Robyn Menter certainly knows how to take over a room. Born and raised in South Africa, Menter studied English and psychology at a Johannesburg university. But while redecorating her home as a young mother in the South African metropolis, she ran into a troublesome drapery and called in renowned interior designer Meryl Hare to help. Hare wound up enticing her client into the business, and Menter spent the next six years apprenticing with the designer and her husband, architect John Hare, both of whom now oversee a thriving design firm in Australia.

Fast-forward to 1981, when Menter, her husband, Dr. Martin Posner, and their two children relocated to the Park Cities. Now solo,

Menter quickly cultivated a high-end clientele that remains extremely loyal to her today. Indeed, she has worked on certain residences through endless remodels and the corresponding life changes of those who populate her sophisticated spaces.

"One always tries to create longevity in design," Menter says of her long-lasting appeal. "I don't have one particular style, but I wouldn't say I do any work that is very traditional. I prefer simple design with a focus on quality and craftsmanship."

The relentlessly creative pro prides herself on the fact that no two of her projects ever look alike, but admits to gravitating to contemporary furnishings with strong, simple lines, which she then



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marries to a minimal palette heavy on neutral shades. To make a room pop, she relies on an alluring array of accessories and artwork.

Fine art, in fact, is a passion for Menter and her husband. A tireless supporter of the local art scene, the designer regularly counsels clients on how to spend their dollars wisely, often guiding them to invest in the works of up-and-coming Texas-based artists.

Local art aside, Menter's is a decidedly global vision of design, a fact she credits to her South African childhood and her frequent travels as an adult. The designer has journeyed to all points of the globe, including Japan, Russia and Europe. This winter, she plans to travel with the Metropolitan Museum of Art to Bangkok and Cambodia; as with previous museum-sponsored trips, an art historian will accompany the group, adding immeasurable insight to the experience.

While she may covet a family beach house in Cabo San Lucas, Menter admits to feeling quite at home in her Park Cities abode. Slightly surprising for a designer, she readily contends that one of her favorite places is her home's TV room. Menter explains that the space is more than just a spot to kick back and watch the prime-time lineup. Instead the room provides a sanctuary, one which she has outfitted with a trio of Charles Eames black leather and walnut chairs, a pair of coordinating ottomans and rows and rows of books, including an impressive design library. Hanging above it all is a massive, eight-foot-wide painting by venerable pop artist Roy Lichtenstein.

"I just get a very warm feeling of satisfaction being surrounded with familiar objects that have meaning," the designer says. "A home to me has to have books, nice artwork and good lighting. And fresh flowers, too, which is the single thing I miss most about life in South Africa." ■

ROBYN'S MUST-HAVES

(1) Art is a passion for Menter; she found this series from American minimalist artist Robert Mangold at Pace Gallery, NYC. (2) Antique African bracelets make a unique display on a custom-made table. (3) "I have a Dogon African ladder from Mali in my home, but I've also used them in clients' homes." (4) Next to a beaded necklace from the Zulu tribe in South Africa sits another of Menter's favorite things: a bouquet from florist Urban Flower/Grange Hall, 214.443.0600. (5) Menter places some of her favorite reads between artist Juan Muñoz's bookends, from Marion Goodman Gallery, NYC. "The artist died right before his installation at the Tate Modern in London went up." (6) Artist Stacey Neff's 'Noose Egg,' a glass sculpture with rope, from Linda Durham Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico. (7) The designer's African childhood is a constant inspiration. African ankle bracelet, from the Joel Cooner Gallery, 214.747.3603.



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