



JULIE SOEFER PHOTOS FOR THE CHRONICLE

**HOME GALLERY:** The homeowners of a One Park Place condominium designed by Chandos Dodson are major art collectors. The entry hall sets the tone.

# A jewel of a project

Chandos Dodson shows how to maximize an art collection — and your space

By Molly Glentzer | HOUSTON CHRONICLE

David and Karen Lail, who spend half of the year at their Montana ranch, wanted their Houston home at One Park Place — a 1,200-square-foot condo — to be a jewel box with world-class art.

They brought much of the art with them, including large-scale paintings and several prized Buddha sculptures, some of which — at 300 pounds each — could have been visual heavyweights.

Interior designer Chandos Dodson, who more recently has added art consulting and management to her company's services, was undaunted. She created a gem of sumptuous style.

"I love sculpture," she says. "It gives a hallway presence." This home's entry hall was really the only place for the big Buddhas to go, she adds, but displayed on custom pedestals, they became a fine

focal point.

Sculpture can be at home most anywhere, Dodson adds: "On bookshelves. Outdoors in an atrium or at the end of a pool. On a bedside table. It just depends on the scale of the piece. Everything's about proportion."

Paintings by Charles Schorre, Lance Letscher, Aaron Parazette, Henrique Oliveira and other A-list artists fairly glow on the chocolate walls (painted with Benjamin Moore's Stone Brown, a Dodson favorite).

"Dark walls make a huge difference. Things really pop more," Dodson says. Art is lost on a white wall unless you're going for that gallery feel and have a significant amount of works — especially photography, she adds.

"The type of frame you use also plays into it. If you really want to be focused on the image on a white wall, it's best to use a white frame because it tends to just disappear and gives it a little more solitude in terms of the graphicness of the images."

Surprisingly, dark walls didn't make the Lails' home feel confined. "When we painted it all dark, it actually got 'bigger,'" Dodson says. "When you paint the ceiling dark is when you start to feel like you live in a cave." The ceilings here are Benjamin Moore's China White.

David Lail loves Art Deco furnishings, too — and when Dodson set him loose at Carl Moore Antiques, he found the Makassar buffet that set the tone for the living room as well as a pair of 1920s Italian glass floor lamps that add drama to the dining room.

Because antique Deco chairs are not very comfortable, Dodson designed new ones, which allowed her



**CUSTOM-MADE:** Art Deco-inspired club chairs, a Frank Martin photograph and a Lucite and stone coffee table coexist beautifully in the living room. Custom "Scratch Out" rug from Carol Piper Rugs. Side table lamp from Area.



# Let's make a deal: This art fair or that?



**A LIVELY MIX:** A Kyle Bunting rug, custom black lacquer desks from Osborne and a Donghia chandelier take their cues from Aaron Parazette's painting Surf Dog.



**BRIGHT IDEA:** Elegant custom headboards save space and bring energy to the condo's two modest-sized bedrooms.

to tweak the dimensions. "This is their only seating area," she explains. The chairs were created — along with the maple dining table — by Wayne Bart of C&G Furniture in Houston, a to-the-trade craftsman. Their silk velvet upholstery by Clearance House looks like it could have starred in Old Hollywood.

But the Deco influences don't overpower here. "Deco mixes well with super-edgy, contemporary things. It kind of softens the whole feel because it's a little round," Dodson explains. She also likes the warm patina of Makassar or burl wood in a contemporary space — "rather than just that plain brown wood that you see at the W Hotel."

A custom Lucite and stone table lightens up the Lail's living room, floating on a custom white Tibetan silk-wool rug. "In this room, the rug had to be a specific size. The larger your rug, the larger the room feels," Dodson says.

She also gave the condo's two bedrooms "a little bit of weight" and maximized their tight spaces by designing headboards of linen velvet. "Because this is not their forever home, we didn't want to spend lots of money on beds that wouldn't work elsewhere. So we just built them in," she says. Grasscloth wall-coverings from Phillip Jeffries add another layer. "Texture always makes rooms softer and changes the acoustics a little bit," Dodson says.

She shopped with the Lails for about two months to start the project.

"We had a lot of fun," she says. "Then they left town for the summer. And when they got back, it was all done — flowers in the vases, beds made up."

Who wouldn't treasure a place like that?



**LOOK HERE:** A mercury glass lamp from Alan Knight & Associates helps show off the living room's prize Makassar buffet.

## HANGING TIPS

If you're investing in art, have it installed or hung professionally. "It's always going to hang straighter on i-hooks than it is on a wire; it's a more difficult process but you're better off in the long run because it's not going to move," says Dodson, who brings in a team of specialists to hang her clients' artwork. She recommends OOKS hangers. "That's what the Metropolitan Museum in New York uses; that's what we use. You buy them at Home Depot, but they really are the best. They have a slimline nail, and you can buy the hooks for different weights; so you're never going to get sag. And the nailheads are almost like pins."

Local arts boosters never tire of telling anyone who will listen that Houston is the country's third largest art market. Now the art-fair circuit is taking notice, with not one but two international contemporary art fairs scheduled to debut at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

First up: **The Houston Fine Art Fair**, which will feature post-World War II and contemporary artworks from 80 U.S., European and Latin American galleries, rolls into town Sept. 15-18. Organizers hope to draw 10,000 visitors, with as many as 2,000 coming from outside Houston.

Participating Houston galleries include Hiram Butler Gallery, Barbara Davis Gallery, McClain Gallery, Anya Tish Gallery, Meredith Long & Co., Darke Gallery and Colton & Farb.

A month later, **Texas Contemporary** hits the GRB Oct. 20-23 with a lineup of 50 contemporary galleries and a section showcasing special projects and works by Texas-based artists that focus on energy and sustainability. Houston participants include Inman Gallery, Texas Gallery and Wade Wilson Art.

Sicardi Gallery and Moody Gallery are giving both fairs a try, partnering with Houston non-profits and offering a slate of VIP events.

But the majority of booths at both fairs will be filled by out-of-town art dealers hoping to build relationships with Houston collectors. Galleries such as Alejandra von Hartz Gallery, Miami; Oscar Cruz Galeria, São Paulo, Brazil; and Mironova Gallery, Kiev, Ukraine, will present work at the September fair. ACME, Los Angeles; Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco; and Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, are among the confirmed October participants.

For tickets, event details and complete lists of participating galleries, visit [www.houstonfineartfair.com](http://www.houstonfineartfair.com) and [www.txcontemporary.com](http://www.txcontemporary.com).

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— DOUGLAS BRITT