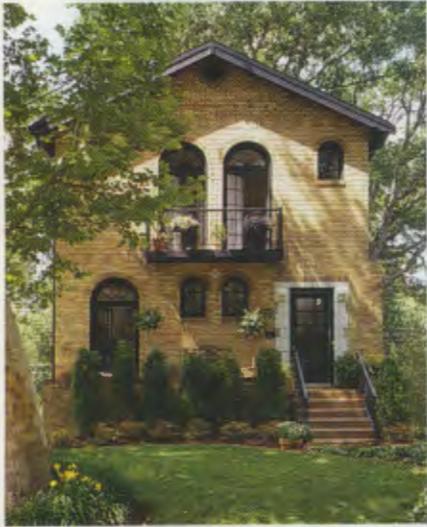




Although updated before Zoë moved in, the galley kitchen lacked counter space and had too many cabinets to suit her desire for an open, airy look. Tearing down cupboards, she made way for a portrait painted by her sister, artist Belinda Lee. Granite countertops and sink and stainless steel appliances, including a Bosch dishwasher, lend up-to-date shimmer to traditional painted cabinets and camel-hued walls. Mixer, KitchenAid.

EAT
— AT —
ZOË'S



RESTAURATEUR **ZOË ROBINSON**
CONVERTS A TINY ABODE INTO AN
ECLECTIC, ARTISTIC RETREAT THAT
SHE AFFECTIONATELY CALLS
"MY OWN LITTLE PALACE"

TOP LEFT: An architecturally interesting façade attracted Zoë to this 1920s, Italian-style residence that's short on square footage, but long on charm. ABOVE: A granite-topped iron table fashions a "faux foyer" in the living room, just inside the front door. Why the pile of red fezzes displayed next to greenery-filled urns and a Peggy Fetter painting? "I've always been intrigued by any kind of lodge hat," says Zoë, pictured with sons Spencer (in red) and Eli (in stripes), ABOVE RIGHT.





A rustic farmhouse cabinet provides a rough-hewn contrast to the dining room's gilded finishes and formal fabrics. Zoë excels at incorporating the unexpected—framed British cartoons add a touch of humor to the mix.

“THE WALLS ARE WHITE SO I CAN INSERT
GEMS OF COLOR—
HERE A RUBY, THERE AN EMERALD.”



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ERENDIPITY WAS AT THE WHEEL WHEN ZOË ROBINSON

first discovered a residential gem in St. Louis, Missouri. "I'm always scoping out real estate," she says with a grin. "I was driving around and saw this cute house with arched windows, French doors, and balconies. I noticed workmen inside and knocked on the door. A developer was rehabbing it for sale, so I called him

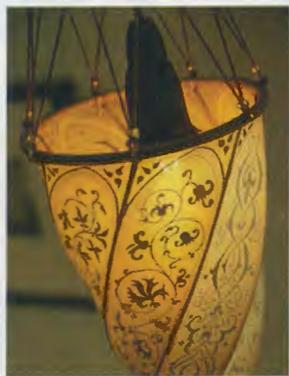
that night and had a contract the next morning."

A month later, she and sons Spencer and Eli moved in. Over the past five years, Zoë has judiciously feathered her 1,700-square-foot nest with prized antiques, cherished paintings, outsider art, and offbeat furnishings purchased at local stores, including Rothschild's Antiques, owned by good friend and designer David Richardson.

"I didn't really have a decorating plan," Zoë notes. "I wanted a warm, eclectic look. I like so many different styles, but not a lot of clutter. The rose-colored settee and white chairs (ABOVE) were the first things I bought from David and for the house—they were the roots of my decorating. Although the upholstery's tattered, I love it. I'll never part with that fabric."

Custom-built from timeworn, recycled wood, the dining table, ABOVE, anchors a distinctive seating arrangement. The gilded, damask-upholstered chairs started in the living room. "I dragged them in when I was entertaining and really liked how they looked, so I left them there." Black silk seats give white vintage chairs an elegant lift. Zoë bought the \$50 mirror, set near the doors to the deck, for its silver-leafed, red-painted frame. RIGHT: Zoë's prosciutto-wrapped cantaloupe slices with basil are just right for a summer buffet.





FAR LEFT and ABOVE: Crafted in Italy, this Fortuny lamp, found at a local design shop, conveys an Asian attitude, says Zoë, who calls the lamp "amazing." The conical, tasseled lampshade attaches via silk ties to the sculptural base, which echoes the verti-

cal lines of the French doors and counterbalances the sofa's horizontal lines. **LEFT:** Black-and-ivory striped hooks bring fanciful form and function to a kitchen wall. Aligned near the back door, they handily hold jackets, backpacks, and pool-bound bags.



LEFT: "I'm so lucky to have an artist in the family," says Zoë, pointing to portraits hanging over the sofa, painted by her sister Belinda Lee. Sunbeams stream through arched windows, illuminating the living room's rich palette of gold, camel, and ebony, sparked with spicy red accents. The French doors connect to a front balcony. RIGHT: Ruby velvet cushions lend a formal edge to Gothic-style wicker chairs. A "crazy-looking" 1920s tramp art desk, crafted from wood crates, tucks into a corner near the fireplace (at right).



WITH A PREFERENCE FOR **CLEAN, PARED-DOWN**

interiors, Zoë outfits her home with a well-edited array of mix-and-match furnishings and accessories. Minimal in number, the pieces pack a powerful visual punch when given room to shine. The curve of a gilded table leg, the statuesque silhouette of a lamp, the graceful contours of a sofa, and even the rustic weave of a wicker chair back are easily observed and enjoyed.

"I like to see and appreciate things," Zoë says. "I choose only pieces that fit with the house. There are some things I love, including those with a contemporary feel, but I don't buy them because they don't suit this style."

David, who helped solve Zoë's decorating puzzles, describes her style as a modern take on shabby chic, adding, "She has a great eye. Mixing the old and new, she's a little on the fearless side and likes to have fun with it."

The living room, the most-used room in house, illustrates Zoë's affinity for refined lines and neutral palettes punched up with woven textures and splashes of color. African mud cloth, a textile woven from flax and dyed with wet earth, covers an ottoman, arranged near a fabric-paneled Asian screen and a 1900s foldable English garden chair. A gilded and handpainted Venetian coffee table, one of her favorite pieces, gives a flash of glamour to a room that's cosmopolitan in countenance and comfortable in nature.

"We don't have a family room, so I wanted to create a place where we could hang out," Zoë says. "The canvas slipcovers on the sofas can be washed; the coir rug is durable. With the already beaten-up finishes on the antiques, it doesn't matter if the kids set a glass on the furniture. It's so nice—a true *living room*."

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW

LEFT: Owner of Zoë's Pan Asia, a lively nightclub, and I Fratellini, a cozy trattoria, Zoë loves to cook and wanted a restaurant-style Viking range and chef-friendly countertops and cabinetry. Slide-out drawers accommodate her request for open storage and make it easy to retrieve pots, pans, and cutlery. Near the sink, a glass diner sign evokes blue-plate-special nostalgia; furnished with a weathered farmhouse table, bistro chairs, and a keyhole trellis, a backyard deck converts to an al fresco dining area; a glass compote holds blood oranges.



DON'T ALWAYS DO THINGS LIKE I SHOULD,"

Zoë admits. "When I redid the kitchen, I just hired a carpenter to come in and build some cabinets and asked a marble guy who had done some work at one of my restaurants to install the granite counters and sink."

Whether she's serving lunch to the kids at the granite-topped breakfast bar across from the range or whipping up a feast of gourmet treats, Zoë's got plenty of elbowroom. Although too narrow for entertaining, the kitchen links to a backyard deck, ideal for overflow diners. When a small party is on tap, guests pull up chairs at the dining room table and enjoy conversation with the chef.

"The shotgun kitchen is tiny but works well, just like the rest of my house," she says. "It's only three rooms down and three rooms up, but I love it all. It's romantic, darling, soothing—my own little palace."





ABOVE: "You can get outside from all over the place!" Doors open from Zoë's bedroom to a second-story balcony. Going for a scheme that was "pretty and feminine without being cutesy," she arranged a custom-designed iron bed, a tattered rug, and "a blanket chest that looks like someone tried to strip it and gave up" with a white table and wicker chairs she spray-painted black. RIGHT: Hand-colored 1900 botanical prints, a shell-button pillow on a chair cushion, and a bed pillow covered in a kimono remnant bring natural images and rich textures to Zoë's bedroom. 🌸

