



STAR

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DESIGN

Historic Heights building gets new life as a home



Kerry Kirk Photography

Bold tile in the pantry launched the color scheme for the back of the home.



Kerry Kirk Photography

A tall corner wine room was included in the kitchen, near the dining area.



Kerry Kirk Photography

Belle, a bull mastiff mix, relaxes in the front hall.

Former commercial property now has residential appeal

By Diane Cowen
STAFF WRITER

When Rob Hellyer bought a commercial building in the Heights to operate his home remodeling business, he imagined that someday he might use it as a showroom for cabinets or some other product he could sell.

The more he worked in it, though, the more he saw how space could be carved out for bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen and a living room. He could create a homier entry and line up the windows properly, maybe even add a side entrance to a patio and summer kitchen.

Built in 1920, the structure started its life as a pharmacy and in later years was a dentist office, an accordion/music shop and a millwork shop, among other things.



Michael Hart

Hellyer bought it in 2008 as offices for his Premier Remodeling, and until the spring of 2020 – about the time the pandemic shutdown arrived – it provided office space and workshop/warehouse space for his business.

In March 2020, he moved his business to a structure he bought next door and began work to reinvent the space as a home for himself and his wife, Andrea, 46.

“It was several years of mental design, doing drawings and getting with the (Heights) historical commission to get it done. I just kept looking at it and thinking it could be a home,” said Hellyer, 65.

The primary bedroom – located where he used to park his truck on work days – and main living areas are on the first floor. The second floor has his home

Design continues on D6

Contractor Rob Hellyer turned a 100-year-old former pharmacy in the Heights into his home.

Inside Gucci's exclusive product drop at Houston Galleria

By Amber Elliott
STAFF WRITER

What's old is new at Gucci.

In celebration of the Italian luxury brand's centennial anniversary, nine North American cities were tapped to receive a surprise drop of exclusive merchandise dedicated to Gucci 100 last Friday. Fortunately for Houston shoppers, the Galleria made the cut.

Space City is in good company. New York, Miami, Beverly Hills, Costa Mesa, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco and Toronto are each hosting an ephemeral store-within-a-store pop-up experience.

The merchandise is an extension of creative director Alessandro Michele's unconventional and irreverent aesthetic. At first glance, there's a decidedly 1970s undercurrent. Bell-bottoms, gold-rimmed sunglasses and bamboo handle bags make a big, vintage impression. Some of the clothing is, in fact, reissue; like a pair of rose-embroidered sweaters in rust and pink.

But the true star of Gucci 100 is pop culture. Tongue-in-cheek references to the brand's influence in music and streetwear are woven throughout the collection. The number 22,705 adorns several items, referencing the number of current songs

that mention Gucci. A selection of lyrics from those songs make cameos on ready-to-wear items and accessories. “Music is mine, Gucci seats reclined” from Eric B. Rakim's “The R” is repeated across both men's and women's apparel. One floral trench coat features “This one's dedicated to all you Gucci bag, Gucci carriers out there. It's called you got good taste,” from The Cramps 1983 album “Smell of Female.”

Exaggerated, interlocking Gs on a tracksuit, with reflective trim, riff on the brand's influence in hip-hop culture.

Though truthfully, there are *Gucci continues on D6*



Gary Fountain / Contributor

The Galleria was the site of one of nine Gucci pop-up experiences dedicated to the brand's 100th anniversary.

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DESIGN

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office plus two bedroom suites, one of which has been claimed by his sweet cat Remington. In all, the home is nearly 3,800 square feet, with another 908 square feet of living space above a structure that holds a two-car garage, workshop, pool bathroom and extra laundry facilities.

While Rob Hellyer worked with his draftsman to draw out the building's reinvention, he and his wife leaned on Linda Eyles of Linda Eyles Design for finishes and furniture.

"It was remarkable to work on a project I personally have seen so many iterations of," Eyles said of the building's history. "I've been in on it since it had a dirt floor, quite literally."

First, they realigned the windows and entry, so the exterior wouldn't still look so much like a retail building or warehouse. They added panels beneath the windows for a more residential look.

Earlier, you entered the angled front door and walked into a space that had the corner of two walls right in the center. Eyles had them cut into that corner to create an angled foyer. On one side is the stairs to the second floor and on the other side is a hall with concrete floors that gradually take you to the main living area.

First you pass by an internal primary bedroom. The challenge here is to have enough light from hall windows, since the bedroom itself has no windows.

It's a simple but beautiful space, with a pair of large pendants hanging over nightstands on each side of the upholstered bed. With his and hers closets, Rob has more than enough space for his things and Andrea has a closet most women dream of, with a jewelry counter and plenty of shelves for displaying shoes and handbags.

In their bathroom, a long counter painted peacock blue has a pair of sinks with gold-framed mirrors and brass

plumbing fixtures and hardware. A panel of cabinets on the side are modeled after a Japanese tansu chest, wooden storage containers built in the shape of stairs.

The main living area is a huge expanse, and it holds a kitchen with a long, wide island, a tall refrigerated wine cabinet, living and dining area.

"A major design challenge was to tame that space because it's huge," Eyles said. "Shiplap on one wall helped us do that and gave us a connection to the original structure. It was a mirror for the kitchen area across the room, where there are tall cabinets going up the wall."

The wall backing up to the primary bedroom has a faux reclaimed beam for a mantel above the fireplace that's surrounded by dark blue-black Clé brick tile, that repeats directly across the room as the back-splash behind the range.

The kitchen brings a broad stroke of color in the room, with both the island and cabinets painted blue. Quartzite counters with a leathered finish and in shades of gray-taupe blend with the concrete floor, and three large pendants with clear glass shades hang over the island.

Pairs of faux beams are placed carefully across the ceiling so that canned lights can be situated exactly where they're needed.

The powder bathroom and a pantry/laundry room are both loaded with personality.

Andrea worked with Eyles picking things out, and wasn't interested in risky choices until they found colorful tile with blue, gray and green and they decided to go big with it across an entire wall in the pantry. The washer and dryer are tucked into a corner so they're not easily seen from the rest of the house.

"To their credit, they went for it. There's a lot of pattern," Eyles said of the vivid tile. "Once we picked that out, the rest of the colors fell in from there."

The powder bath may be small, but it's a nod to what was once here. Shiplap salvaged from the subfloor lines the back



Kerry Kirk Photography

The open concept includes the living and dining areas and a kitchen with a large island.



Michael Hart

Side cabinets in the primary bathroom were inspired by Japanese "tansu" stair-step cabinets.

wall and blends with butterfly wallpaper with a dark background.

When the home was still an idea bouncing around in their heads, the Hellyers imagined

having big indoor-outdoor parties in the main living area, but the coronavirus pandemic has changed all of that. For now, the house is quieter, with Remington and the couple's three res-

cue dogs – Belle, Ruby and Mini – enjoying it, having carved out their own sleeping space in the primary bedroom suite.

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Gucci handbags continue to set the standard in fashion and pop culture.

GUCCI

From page D1

very few corners of any closet untouched by the world of Gucci. A silk bowling shirt and signature items suggests there is, in fact, a Gucci look for every occasion.

Good luck getting your hands on the limited-edition goods, however. One Galleria store associate revealed that top-tier local customers got first dibs on preordering products. A few handbags have already sold out, such as a red tote bag in wool and felt. Camera bags have also flown off the shelves – before they were even stocked.

In better news, the most expensive thing in the store, a top-handle bag in black crocodile, is still up for grabs. It retails for a cool, collector's item-level sticker price of \$43,000. Other purses come with bonus accessories stashed inside; the Gucci 100 medium bamboo bag has a thick crossbody strap and has a leather hand mirror tucked into a compartment.

Last Friday marked the first surprise drop from Michele's centennial collection, called Aria, though it won't be the last. During fashion week, Gucci "hacked" Balenciaga's spring/summer runway ala a "deep fake of a fashion show." Those pieces reportedly hit stores in November. With any luck, Houston will hold its position at the top of the list to score them first.

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Photos by Gary Fountain / Contributor

Many of the Gucci pop-up experience items are limited-edition designs.



The items celebrate Gucci's centennial anniversary.



A top-handle bag in black crocodile retails for \$43,000.