



Designer Charles Pavarini III expertly combined layers of color and texture in this dining room space. Instead of chandeliers, he used two high table lamps to provide ambient lighting for the expansive table.

## FEAST FOR THE EYES

A TOP-NOTCH DESIGNER TAKES THE NOTION OF FINE DINING TO NEW HEIGHTS

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It takes a visionary to change a space from cavernous to cozy. That was clearly the case for Manhattan-based Charles Pavarini III when he set out to design the dining room in Holiday House to benefit the Greater New York City Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

Each room in the Manhattan designer show house had a holiday theme. In the dining room, the celebration would be Thanksgiving. "I was really inspired by the fact that the room would be about the feast of Thanksgiving," says the senior designer and president of Charles Pavarini III Design Associates Inc., an architecturally based interior design firm. "It's all about the fall colors."

The elaborate undertaking, which included custom draperies and upholstery, was completed in six weeks. Distinctive details greeted visitors at every turn, like the wall murals above the windows that were meant to evoke the feeling of fall. "The climbing tree trunks act as a continuation of the columns," Pavarini says.

The vast space did not come without its share of challenges, such as an enormous ceiling with extensive water damage. The original plaster moldings were repaired and treated to a pale palette that gave a sense of loftiness to the space, Pavarini says. A mix of metallics was applied to the ceiling medallions.

The designer wanted to incorporate enough seating for eighteen guests to fill the substantial space. "I wanted to reinforce the concept of coming together to give thanks," he says. But, it was no easy task to track down a table of that magnitude, so Pavarini chose a trestle table for the center with plywood extensions at either end. A lovely layered tablecloth hides the seams between the disparate surfaces.

A lively mix of seating proves that formal doesn't have to be fussy. The designer opted for six chairs on either side with custom benches in the center section. "They reinforced the access to the fireplace and gave a beautiful rhythm around the table," he says. Pavarini points out that choosing all chairs would make the table feel almost inaccessible, while the benches break things up a bit.

Pavarini mixes the room's fabrics in a masterful way. "I was totally committed to using three colors in the chairs to reinforce the holiday feel," he says. "It gave the entire dining room







a fresh, contemporary look in what was really a traditional room. It makes a room exciting when you have that mix.

"The distribution of color is a very powerful tool," he adds. Varied patterns include anything from paisley to stripes, while heavy eyelash fringe adds some eye candy. "Many people shy away from mixing fabric, but you can lock it in with color and scale."

Hanging a chandelier from the ceiling was not an option, but that didn't stop the design pro from turning a detriment into a real dazzler. "It made me think how a room is lit, especially a dining room," he says. "I came up with the idea for two high table lamps that did not encumber the space, and they provided beautiful lighting." The fixtures, which feature custom translucent lampshades with fringe trim, brought the room down to a very warm level without blocking the view, he says. Additional lighting sources include vintage sconces from David Duncan Antiques that look like sheaths of wheat and LED lighting in red, green, and blue that was on a color fade. "You felt the coloration of autumn through the very subtle lighting," the designer says.

Dark paneling gets a perk from contemporary paintings that flank the fireplace above George III consoles from Hyde Park Antiques. "The artwork lifted the look and did not make it so heavy and traditional in feeling," the designer says. "The paintings also supported the color palette."

Pavarini's theater background always makes a grand entrance in his designs. "My designs are more cerebral," says the designer, who views a room as more of a stage. For this project, he filled the massive fireplace with 50 pumpkins. Pavarini thought it would be fun for them to look like they'd come tumbling down the chimney.

The distinctive dinnerware also augmented the autumn theme. For the striking centerpiece, the designer chose a glass cylinder with autumn branches surrounded by bud vases filled with fall foliage. Murano glass pumpkins and gourds add to the festive yet formal fall theme. Pavarini was given permission to host a dinner in the spectacular space, which served as a successful fundraiser.

The designer deftly demonstrates that fun and formal can go hand in hand. "Even if it is a serious room, I think the way we live today is not all formal all the time," he says. "There should be moments of whimsy and a relaxed feeling about the room."