AT HOME

When this couple moved into an old Kenwood

A HOUSE

BY CHRISTINE NEWMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY OMAN

The living room (opposite) belongs to Linda Heagy. She likes comfort and color to the max. In the second-floor hallway (left), her husband, Tom, displays contemporary art from the Roy Boyd Gallery (from right): *L'allée*, a four-part work by Mark Luyten; *(Ghost) Split in Two Blue Panels*, by Rodney Carswell; *A Moment After Sinking*, by Robert McCauley.

DIVIDED

mansion, there was a race for separate space

"THIS TIME I HAD A STRATEGY," SAYS LINDA HEAGY, a partner in an international executive search firm. She and her husband, Tom, a banker, had looked at a three-story Beaux-Arts house in Kenwood several months before, in October 1990. Linda had loved it from the start, but it had given Tom a big chill. "You couldn't live in that house," he told her. "It's like a mausoleum in there." In December, after a friend mentioned that the price of the house had been lowered, Linda made her move. She persuaded Tom to go on a second tour and took along a tape measure.

Tom collects contemporary art; Linda's tastes span several centuries. And as the Heagys bought more work, Tom's acquisitions were growing in size and outgrowing the Federal-style house they lived in around the corner. On their return trip, Linda measured the walls as they walked through and suggested ways to place the art. Tom began to visualize their collection in the space and realized that it could be shown to greater advantage there. He was starting to feel at home.

"And it's in walk-in condition," Linda said. "We don't have to do anything to it; we'll just move in."

"They all say that," counters Tom six years later, implicating all of womankind.

When the Heagys—she's 48; he's 51—agreed to buy the house, probably no one was more surprised than John Vinci, the architect who had recently completed plans for an extensive renovation of their old house. For him, it was back to the drawing board for improvements at the new address. For Linda and Tom, it was a commitment to restoring the glory of a house built in 1916 by Arthur Heun for Max and Sophie Adler, an early executive of Sears, Roebuck and his wife, and their four children. Max played the violin and collected Stradivariuses, and the Adlers often held concerts in their drawing room. Isaac Stern played there many times. The Adlers also gave the city half a million dollars in seed money to found the planetarium. The family's traditions of civility appealed to the Heagys, and in their years in the house, they have had two weddings, four concerts, and a number of charity events and parties.

But before the papers were signed, Tom made *his* move. "Since Linda really wanted to buy the house, I was in a strong position to negotiate wall space," he says. What evolved between these two husband-and-wife executives was a territorial his-and-hers arrangement. Tom had the biggest art, so he chose the largest spaces.

"The music room is mine," he explains. "All corridors and stairwells are mine. The library and my study are mine, and the butler's pantry is mine. The living room is hers; most of the bedrooms are hers."

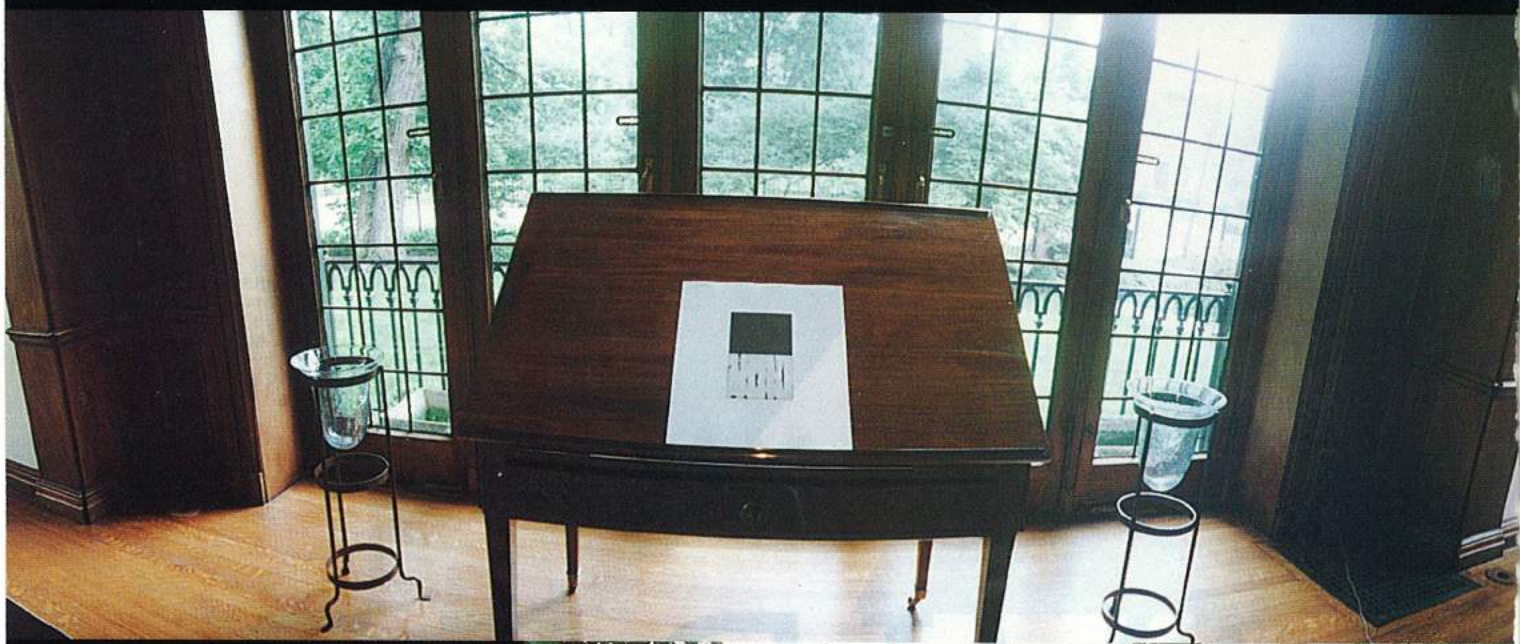
And the dining room?

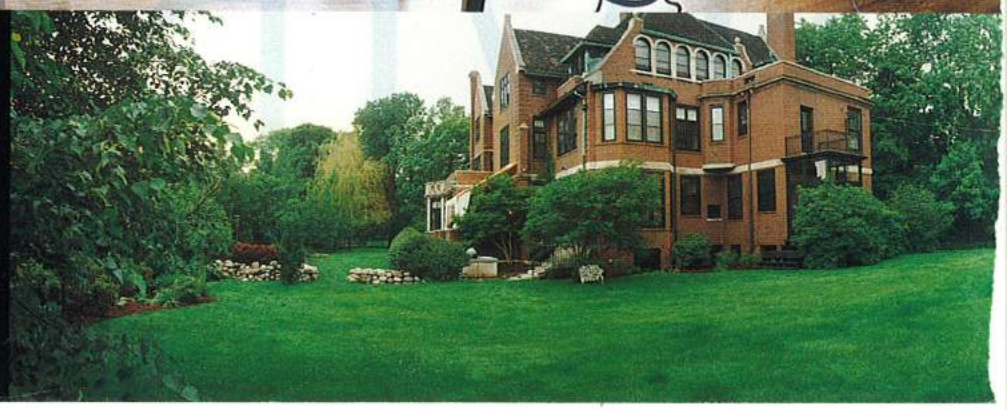
"A mix," says Linda.

"Codetermination," says Tom.

LADIES FIRST: WARMTH, COMFORT, AND COLOR WERE what mattered to Linda. The birch veneer paneling in the living room had been pickled a pale white, making the space seem stark and cavernous. "I wanted it to look as if honey were dripping down the walls," she says. The Heagys' real-estate agent recommended artist Kira Lathrop, who gave the cool, dry surfaces a tawny luster.

"When you walked into a room in this house, it told you what





When Tom joins us, the talk is all about art.

The music room (opposite) is Tom's, "but we're allowed to sit in here if we want," says Linda. The slant-topped table holds an etching by Günther Förg. Below is a Beaux-Arts view from the back yard. The Heagys saved as many of the original fixtures as they could (above).

it wanted to be," Linda says. "This room wanted to be Italian." The colors and furnishings she chose were just that, but they were inspired by an 1829 oil-on-panel painting by Jeanne-Marie-Josephine Hellemans, a lush English work in the style of 18th-century Flemish still lifes. When Linda first saw the painting in a gallery and told Tom about it, the work had already been sold; three years later, returned for resale by the buyer, it reappeared as a birthday present from Tom. "It's this wonderful combination of bud and newness," Linda says, "and the whole cycle of life, even to the too-ripe melon going to seed."

With interior designer John Maienza, Linda created a regal yet seductive setting with three sitting areas. Two soft, deep sofas are covered in velvet in shades of American Beauty rose and moss green. At Marshall Field's some years before, Linda had found a pair of chairs in muted-green brocade; the arms ended in dark-wood panther heads, stately above curved torsos and clawed feet.

"We can't have those in our house," Tom said when she took him to see them. "Those are ridiculous."

"I know, but I like them," Linda said.

Sitting in one, with palms cupped over the heads of the panthers, is an omnipotent experience—very queen of the Nile. At the opposite end of the room, Linda placed a marble-topped, claw-footed tea table from Scotland in front of a caramel-colored leather sofa.

She appreciated the give-and-take that she had with Maienza, who now has offices in Chicago and Santa Barbara, although sometimes the relationship was more push-pull. For the living-room curtains and two chairs, he chose a tapestry-print fabric in pale green, peach, and plum, with a Grecian urn as the dominant element. "'What color is that?'" Linda asked him. "'Is it peach? I mean, peach won't go in this room. And I hate that Grecian vase.' Finally, he just said, 'Linda, would you shut up; it's going to be fine.' And he was right."

"When we were done with the project, I really missed having Linda's humor in my business day," says Maienza, "even if it was via an extended voice-mail message."

In a corner, adding texture and a juicy narrative, is an 18th-century Italian screen painstakingly stitched in petit point. Its four panels portray a maiden personifying the four seasons. "Here's Summer," says Linda. "She's in full bloom." Strangely, the men on all the panels look like satyrs.

Linda saw a painted sisal rug in a magazine, and, thinking it would lend unity and a touch of informality to the room, she called to check on the price. It was thousands for a three-by-six-foot rug, which got a big laugh from Tom since their living room is 18 by 24. Maienza had four sisal rugs sewn together, and Lathrop came through again, duplicating a flower from an Aubusson tapestry in pale pinks and greens, stenciling the design across the rug, and hand-painting each image.

Complementing the deeper tones of the furniture are four paintings of tulips, their blooms streaked with ruby red. Watercolors on vellum, they were done in 17th-century Holland at the height of tulip mania. "People would have an artist come over to do a portrait of their prize tulips," Linda says. "Just like people have their dogs or children painted." Nearby is a series of landscapes painted in 1910 and 1911 by Linda's great-grandfather, an artist and cartoonist who illustrated the first edition of *Black Beauty*.

She opens two writing boxes—one from the 1750s, the other from the 1800s—to reveal their small compartments and elabo-

Linda wanted the dining room to be Russian.

rate craftsmanship. "I have a box fetish," Linda says, sounding decidedly Freudian. "I like boxes because they invite you to look in them and handle them and touch them. And with all these nice antiques, I have this beautiful thing, which cost me $29." It's a coffee table that she bought from Sears, Roebuck when she was in college—years before she moved into the house built for one of the men who had managed the company.

"THIS IS TOM'S ROOM, BUT WE'RE ALLOWED TO SIT in here if we want," Linda says as she enters the original drawing room, where the Adlers held their concerts and the Heagys now hold theirs. With its walnut paneling, white walls, and 12-foot ceilings, the space is grand but spare. The furnishings are minimal, and velvet has been banished. At one end, a gray-suede sofa and two chairs, a Josef Hoffmann design, are squared off around an angular black coffee table made by architect Richard Gibbons. Zigzagging across the 34-foot expanse to a grand piano is a geometrically patterned rug by Stark in black and cream. (The piano is Linda's; Tom plays the flute.) Built-in cabinets that the Adlers had custom made to

hold sheet music remain, with their double doors cleverly ridged inside to support shallow pull-out shelves.

Tom calls this the music room, but as soon as he joins us, the talk is about art. All the works here—monotypes, a photograph, and paintings—are by Günther Förg, a German artist living in Switzerland. The Heagys discovered him in the late eighties at an exhibition of the Renaissance Society, a contemporary-art association based at the University of Chicago. They now have about 50 works by Förg, the largest private collection in the United States.

Although Förg's works have been called minimalist, Tom thinks that is a deceptive oversimplification; what appeals to him is the dynamic tension the artist provokes, his versatility, his personal touch. On one wall in the music room, two of his ten-foot-high paintings hang side by side, studies in saturated color—a plane of green with bars of orange, red with blue. Both works have what initially seem to be classically formal structures, Tom says, but the bars of color have been shifted enough to be jarring, off balance. The impressionistic brushwork intensifies the sensation, at times appearing forcefully horizontal in an otherwise vertical painting.

As Tom talks, Linda listens, and she looks—well, rapturous. In this house, art talk seems to have an intimate, exhilarating meaning for husband and wife.

"Can I do the Barcelona Pavilion?" Linda asks, referring to a large Förg photograph at the end of the room.

"Yes, you always do it," Tom says.

And she's off in an elegant rush about the history of the pavilion that Mies van der Rohe created for the 1929 international exposition in Barcelona, its destruction, reconstruction, and now, in Förg's photograph, yet another level of replication.

Displaying the art required a number of adjustments. Even with 12-foot ceilings, wainscoting had to be removed in the music room to accommodate Förg's works. But in the interest of preservation, the Heagys are storing it for future owners. To display the art properly throughout the house, Tom and Linda added 200 light fixtures, which produced a lot of heat; so they installed central air conditioning. "We have so much electricity here that every time I call Commonwealth Edison," Tom says, "I have to convince them that we're a house and not a commercial establishment."

Architect John Vinci removed walls and hallways to make the kitchen (opposite, top) more accessible. The colors in the living room were inspired by the painting above the fireplace (opposite, bottom). The dining-room chandelier is a Russian-style reproduction (left).

NOT TO BE DISTRACTED FROM his favorite subject for long, Tom heads out to the entryway, where he points out an abstract painting by former Chicago artist Daniel Smajo-Ramirez, the first artist he collected, and another work by Rodney Carswell. Just inside the doorway is a Burmese offering table made of ironwood that Linda found at the Golden Triangle, a popular River North source for unusual furnishings. The Heagys display new and old Delft here, a collection they assembled on trips to Amsterdam when they both worked for the same Dutch bank (Tom is now the chief financial officer of its North American operation).

Structurally, the entryway is a combination of the real and the fake—faux was au courant when the house was built. Although the floor is cement, it was cut into a square grid to resemble stone. The columns are plaster; the walls and trim are real and faux marble, with some of the

work recently executed by Lathrop.

Now Tom wants to show me the fingerprints and striations in a Förg bronze mounted on a wall in the hallway. Then it's straight ahead to the butler's pantry to see the work that, in some ways, brought the Heagys to this house.

"This will confirm what everyone who hates contemporary art thinks," says Tom, and since he is a member of the board of trustees at the Museum of Contemporary Art, he should know. "That is a finger painting." Another vertical Förg, it towers from ceiling to floor, with ribbons of brown and bronze running the length of a wide sheet of paper. On either side at the top, there are tack holes made when the artist hung it up before he went to work.

It was soon after this painting arrived from a gallery in New York that the need to move was set in motion. With ten-foot ceilings in the Heagys' old house, it would have fit flush against the molding. "Not aesthetically pleasing," says Tom. "And we weren't sure we wanted to hang it sideways," says Linda with a laugh.

The painting is reminiscent of bark or wood. "Which is why we put it in this room," says Tom. The butler's pantry is lined with original built-in oak drawers and cabinets, enough to hold all the objects of desire required for a well-appointed house. This is the end of the house that John Vinci rebuilt.

"IF YOU HAD TO GET FROM THE dining room to the sink, it was a major expedition," Linda says of the original layout, in which hallways and swinging doors connected a warren of dark rooms. Vinci took down walls, eliminated halls, and moved a doorway to make the space open, light, and accessible to the rest of the house. Where there was once a maze, there are now three rooms: the butler's pantry, the kitchen, and a breakfast area. The Heagys saved as much of the original wall tile in the kitchen as they could—with cause. It's a shimmeringly translucent pale aqua.

By shifting the doorway between the butler's pantry and the conservatory, Vinci created a flow of light from the outside to the interior. Linda and Tom usually have breakfast in the conservatory when the sun is coming up. In case it doesn't, Lathrop painted the ceiling sky blue with faint wisps of clouds. White wicker furniture cushioned with pillows covered in flowered fabrics—violets, roses, and peonies—fills the room. "This *(continued on page 81)*

RESOURCES

●**W. Graham Arader III,** 29 East 72nd Street, New York, N.Y.; (212) 628-3668. Artwork. ●**Berglund Maintenance Company** (Jack Tribbia), 8410 S. South Chicago Avenue; 374-1000. The brickwork. ●**Roy Boyd Gallery** (Ann and Roy Boyd), 739 North Wells Street; 642-1606. Artwork. ●**Garden Hues** (George Hughes), 1753 North Cleveland Avenue; 255-8106. The English garden landscape designer. ●**Kira Lathrop,** 1201 East Madison Park; 538-6821. Faux and specialized painting and wood treatment. ●**Luhring Augustine Gallery** (Roland Augustine), 130 Prince Street, New York, N.Y.; (212) 219-9600. Artwork. ●**Maienza, Ltd.** (John Maienza), P.O. Box 11116, Chicago 60611; 337-7075. The interior designer. ●**Mortenson Roofing Company,** 12056 South Union Avenue; 468-2900. The roofing. ●**Parenteau Studios,** 230 West Huron Street; 337-8015. The couches and curtains. ●**Peacock Decorators,** 835 Washington Street, Elmhurst; (708) 832-8482. The painting. ●**Pizzo & Associates, Ltd.** (Jack Pizzo), 325 Ashland Avenue, River Forest; (708) 209-1600. Landscape design. ●**Shilo Group General Contractors** (Ed Esser), P.O. Box 306, Fox Lake 60020; (847) 491-6340. ●**John Vinci, Vinci/Hamp Architects,** 1147 West Ohio Street; 733-7744. The architect for the renovation. ●**Dan Yarbrough,** General Delivery, San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico 87566; (505) 852-2228. Original landscape design. ■