



Stylin' Baby

An OB/GYN had her eye on design when it came to outfitting her own child's nursery

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In April of 2021, OB/GYN Ashlee O'Shell moved into her current home in Birmingham. That June, she and her husband were expecting the birth of their now 1-year-old son, Archer. A nursery was needed, and quickly. Having already had the help of interior designer Anna Versaci, of Beverly Hills-based Anna Versaci Design, on her previous residence, O'Shell called on her longtime friend to create a room for her son that didn't have a typical newborn look and would reflect her love of bold interiors.

Versaci opted for a rich and layered look that feels both luxurious and cozy. "It's still childlike, without being childish," Versaci explains. "There are curiosities in there for a child that are interesting to look at, but it's not over-the-top baby."

The room's evolution began when O'Shell discovered Phillip Jeffries' Desert Dunes wallcovering in Midnight Onyx on Instagram. "Everything was based on that," O'Shell says.

With its hand-painted, textured feel, the metallic wallcovering beautifully set the tone for Versaci's moody design. It was also a practical choice. "It's vinyl, which is great. I put vinyl wallpaper in my son's room when he was little, too,"

Versaci says. "He plays basketball in his room. You can't destroy these walls; it's a great invention for kids!"

An animal print Stark rug was chosen for its "more is more" feel, while metallic Pindler drapery hangs dramatically over the window, thanks to its heavier weight. A stunning RJ Thomas rocker plays an essential role, as does its rust-colored Rozmallin velvet upholstery — a hue Versaci says perfectly complements the palette of the papier-mâché animal heads from Royal Oak's Rail & Anchor. An unexpected find, Versaci says the head-turning décor "tied everything together."

"I like to leave things where not everything is perfectly planned," Versaci says. "Those heads were just happenstance."

Another one of her coincidental discoveries was a vintage Mid-century iron gilt tree she stumbled upon at Judy Frankel Antiques in Troy. "We knew we wanted something in that corner that was a statement," Versaci says. "You can change the ornaments, or you can leave it bare. It's just another opportunity for design."

"I love how unique (the tree) is," O'Shell adds. "We almost had to return it because we

didn't think it could fit into the doorway, but we loved it so much that we said we had to make it work."

Versaci added forward-facing bookshelves as a practical home for baby's favorite reads, but also for their ability to showcase ever-changing cover art. "I love how there are so many different features in the room that are unique and that have a lot of playfulness," O'Shell says. "I just love how Anna is really creative and finds very special pieces. I wanted something that was going to be unique to our space, to Archer, and she really made that happen."

With its deep hues, contrasting textures, layered appeal, and imaginative charm, the nursery is unlike any other nursery the designer and O'Shell have seen, and it's a space Archer is sure to cherish as he grows. "I think when you take things like a nursery and go in a different direction than what's expected, it can end up being really fun," Versaci says. "And when you have a client who trusts you and is playful and takes risks, that's when you absolutely get the best results." ♦

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IMAGINATIVE CHARM

Both pages, clockwise from far left: The homeowners and designer opted for a rich, layered look. Designer Anna Versaci reviews final details. The space is both luxurious and cozy.

