

# PASTORALLY *posh*

If, like us, you've been curious about how the owner of Westport's hyper-chic design store, Dovecote, lives, now's your chance to find out. And if you're like us, you won't be disappointed. Like her store, Sarah Kaplan's historic home reflects a life exotic, quixotic, eclectic, whimsical, and ultimately – well-read and well-lived.

The original house was built in 1725, and in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, Cameron Clark was responsible for an addition. Today, one enters through the original strap hinge door but with a gleaming new polished nickel padlock added. And at the door, colonialism ends and an inspired mélange of styles and periods begins. The original fireplace has a new, spare mantel, and white birch logs are stacked vertically, like sculptural collage. In front of the fireplace is a bronze daybed.

To the right an intimate study, painted a Farrow & Ball light gray, holds a Neoclassical ram's head étagère and a Chinoiserie settee, purchased in France, and upholstered in a leopard faux fur by Parisian fabric house Lelievre (now out of print). The "leopard" was a staple in Kaplan's childhood home and makes its appearance in a number of rooms. Kaplan replaced the fireplace surround with a classic French plaster mantel and hung bold abstract art above. Two Syrie Maugham chairs, also upholstered in faux leopard, are further adorned by fun, flouncy passanterie.

Her husband's sitting room, in a deeper, more masculine gray, has the exotic look of a modern-day Grand Tour. A deep gray velvet sofa sports animal print pillows and the Donghia ottoman is clad in the Suzani pattern, accented in fuchsia and burnt yellow. Etageres hold such curiosities as fans of purple coral, blue foo dogs, a vintage stuffed pheasant and...yes, a Victorian stuffed rabbit. There are big chocolate lamps on thick Lucite bases and portraits of beloved dogs – now in doggie heaven – over the fireplace. The powder room, with its stepped ceiling, is done perfectly in a David Hicks geometric.

The original master is now one of several high-glam guest rooms. The headboard is upholstered in natural linen while the bed is draped with a faux fur throw. A vintage cabinet is filled with books and obelisks (one of many collections). Two small bergeres, upholstered in the leopard, sit by the fireplace, where Fred Stein black-and-white photos reside on the mantel. Kuan Yin blesses the glamorous mis en scene.

In the hallway, an early work of Kaplan's friend, German artist Anne Siems, is from the time when Siems did not have the money for canvas and used shopping bags instead. A transparent dress floats in front of butterflies and made up Latinate words.

A fabulous Romo chrysanthemum Mylar wallpaper is the sexy backdrop for Kaplan's home office. Nickel bookshelves are stacked high with every coffee table book you've ever wanted to thumb through and read. Reading would be done in a fun plexiglass chair upholstered in dove velvet. Kaplan's desk is antique Italian.

You enter the master bedroom through a hallway done in a Boussac leopard wallpaper (“an homage to my mother,” explains Kaplan.). The master was designed around the Stark “antelope” rug, which is forgiving of dogs. Grasscloth is the backdrop for Chinese ancestor paintings and a large porcelain Buddha on top of a mirrored Parson’s console, stacked with more desirable books and a collection of tortoise boxes. A painted and gilded ottoman in hot pink velvet has also become a book repository.

Orange, Stark, chain-link wallpaper defines another study where a vintage leather sofa from France is flanked by two faux bamboo floor lamps. What appears to be a double closet cleverly conceals a computer desk and shelving. The vintage light fixture is from France.

If the giddy mixture of high-fashion (Kaplan’s previous life was as a buyer for Neiman’s and Barney’s) and boldly eclectic hasn’t set your heart racing yet, the completely-decadent Purse Room will. Stark’s antelope rug and a bold geometric paper set the stage for a carefully-ordered array of Hermes bags and artfully stacked Hermes boxes. A glass front cabinet is filled with yet more sculptural orange boxes. Pair this with a heavily fringed leopard ottoman and vintage brass and glass table loaded with accoutrements and you could put a fashionista into cardiac arrest.

Another guest bedroom has lovely old fabric, purchased in France, and exactly enough for the two windows as you see them done. The tasseled oriental light fixture is also from France. The large framed tapestry was one of a pair, which Kaplan’s mother gave to her and her sister.

Downstairs, the dining room is high drama with gorgeous Gracie wallpaper panels. Jacques Garcia chairs from Baker are upholstered in the leopard faux fur but it is the culminated pedestal (from Palm Beach) topped with the massive white horse head from Paris that steals the show.

A sunroom (not nearly a fabulous enough word for this magical room) is a heart stopper. Glossy bead board walls, a vintage crystal chandelier, two vintage English loveseats in a great geometric, mirrored lamps, raffia-covered chairs, and a polished nickel étagère filled with Buddhas, busts of Napoleon, temple jars and books – all perfectly juxtaposed to take our breath away.

Last, but certainly not least, is the large paneled library, where one bookshelf holds nothing but tomes with orange dust covers. Diminutive leather club chairs from France are paired with clean-lined neutral sofas and a trefoil ottoman in leopard. A brass Chinese Chippendale dining table here takes on new life as a library table, placed in a sunny bay, topped with books and sculptural objects.