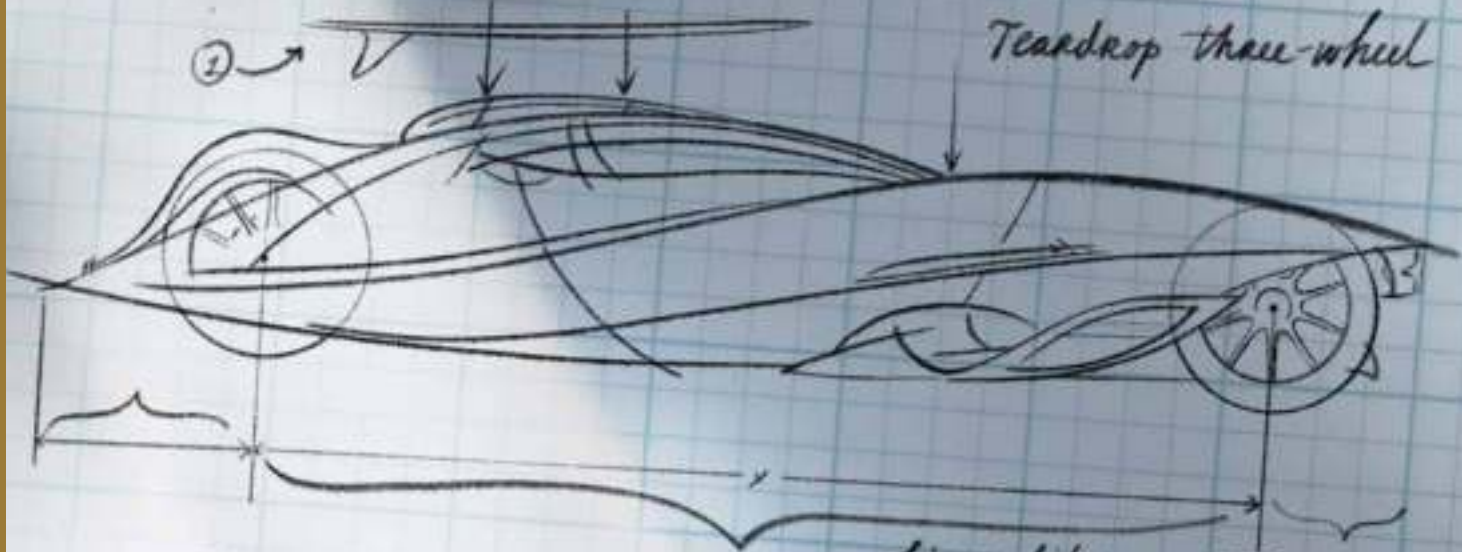


LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report

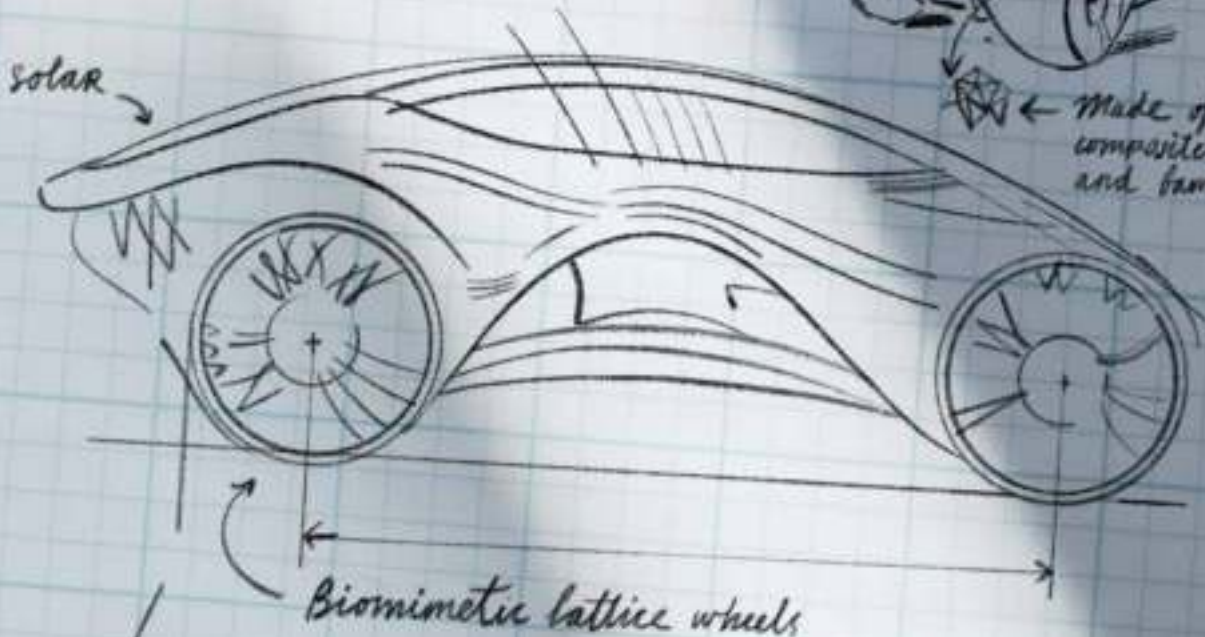


Lines like a 1927
Duesenberg Model X speedster

The Design &
Innovation Issue



Made of hemp-fiber
composites, bio-resins,
and bamboo elements



WESTERN

ESCHEWING TRADITIONAL DESERT MODERNISM, A LAS VEGAS

UNION

RESIDENCE COMBINES A RANGE OF STYLES WITH AN
OVERARCHING REFINEMENT FOR A DESIGN EXTRAVAGANZA.

By RACHEL GALLAHER Photographed by DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN

Designed by local architect David Joseph Chen, this home in the Las Vegas desert takes elements of Art Deco style, like geometric shapes, symmetry, and vertical lines, and gives them a contemporary, minimalist bent.

In late 2019, when architect Daniel Joseph Chenin met the client for his future Tombolo project in the Nevada desert, the chance encounter was brief, with little more than an exchange of names and a quick handshake. The introduction took place at the office of a Las Vegas-based construction company, where Chenin was in an all-day, number-crunching team meeting for a local residential build.

"I was just burnt out," recalls Chenin, who was recently elevated into the prestigious College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, the organization's top tier, to which only 3 percent of members ascend. "At the end of the meeting, this woman comes in and she's stunning, just dressed to the nines, and she's with the owner of the company, touring the facility." They said their quick hellos, and each continued on with their day. "And then, the following year—it was January or February 2020—I got a phone call from her, saying she wanted to meet."

During her visit to the construction company, the client had seen images of some of Chenin's projects and was immediately drawn to his portfolio, which displayed a keen attention to detail. "From the beginning, I knew it was the right fit," she says. "I didn't shop around because I didn't need to—

his work spoke for itself. What sets Daniel apart is that he doesn't just design homes; he curates experiences. He listens in a way that makes you feel completely understood, and he executes every detail with precision."

The project, which was slated to sit atop a 2.25-acre expanse, with views of the Red Rock mountains and the Las Vegas Strip, held special meaning for the client. It would be not only her primary home but also the continuation of a dream she shared with her late husband, who

had passed away unexpectedly. "Her goal was to carry out what they had envisioned together," says Chenin.

At their first meeting, the client laid out her concept. "I wanted something that felt timeless—elegant but livable," she explains. "My previous home was very contemporary, very desert modern, and while it was beautiful, it just wasn't me. I missed the layers, the warmth, the character. From the start, I told Daniel I wanted something different for this home, something that blended Art Deco and Hollywood Regency influences with a classic European sensibility."

Initially, Chenin wasn't sure if he could pull off the mix of disparate styles in a refined way, but the opportunity to experiment was too big of a

challenge to pass up. "She was like, 'What I want isn't in your portfolio,'" recalls the architect, whose past projects lean contemporary. "This was intriguing, because what's more exciting to do than something you haven't done before?"

After the meeting, Chenin, a native Nevadan, was thinking about how to interpret his client's directive when he was struck by an image of the Hoover Dam, which sits less than 50 miles from the building site. An Art Deco landmark constructed during the height of

Below: In the library, a set of gold-leafed shelves is backed with honed Calacatta Porrazzo marble and a pop of Dore's Royal Red Flush paint. Opposite: A vintage chandelier crowns the living room, where a Vladimir Kagan Serpentine sofa and Eric Brand tables hold court.



the Hollywood Regency era, the monumental public-works project boasts architectural details such as geometric lines, sleek curves, and symmetrical forms. Inside the visitor center, original terrazzo floors remain, with recreations of the original inlays. "It was built in that time," Chenin says of the dam, which was completed in 1936. "And if you think about Hollywood Regency [style], it's really just Art Deco, right? If you look at Hoover Dam, it has those concrete forms and buttresses."

With that starting point, Chenin began to imagine a modern, clean-lined residence with interiors that lean into the client's aesthetic. "My style is very layered and eclectic," she says. "I love mixing old and new, modern and classic. I needed that balance—something grand and elegant but also comfortable and livable." The resulting 12,400-square-foot house (which also has a 3,200-square-foot subterranean garage) is simple in form—two large rectangles connected by a glassed-in atrium, with a large lounge and entertainment wing topping the east side, facing the Strip—but striking in appearance. Clad in bright-white travertine limestone, the structure stands in stark contrast to the soft browns and dark greens of the surrounding landscape, in a departure from the originally planned, darker finish. Hoover Dam-inspired columns run the perimeter; not merely ornamental, the fins were installed based on the sun's angles to add shade and help absorb heat.

One of the homeowner's main requests was a dramatic entrance inspired by previous European holidays. "I wanted that hotel-style sense of arrival, and boy, did Daniel deliver!" she says. Driving up from the paved public road onto a textured-cobblestone driveway—chosen to create a distinct change in physical and aural sensations—guests pull into a large columned auto court with an enormous oculus overhead. A jaunty red awning marks the home's entrance. "I never imagined I'd love it so much," she says. "It was unexpected, but now I can't picture the house without it. It's bold, it's sophisticated, and it perfectly frames the house against the landscape."

Inside, the layout is inspired by artist Josef Albers (he of "Homage to the Square") and his approach to form and color. A main circulation axis runs from one end of the house to the other, with grid-like rooms extending off either side. Communal spaces—the living room, dining room, kitchen, media lounge, library, and study—are on the ground floor, off the entrance hall. The upper level holds the bar and lounge, four guest rooms (including a six-bed bunk room, earmarked for the client's grandchildren), and a large outdoor entertaining space. The glassed atrium, or collar, as Chenin calls it, connects the main public volume to the primary suite and gym. A sweeping staircase in the central wing has an artisan-made steel railing designed to look like sheet music. It spirals upward three

"MY STYLE IS VERY LAYERED AND ECLECTIC. I LOVE MIXING OLD AND NEW, MODERN AND CLASSIC."

The grand staircase was custom-designed and fabricated to resemble sheet music. The stairs are lined in Stark carpet conceived by Daniel Joseph Chenin, and the walls are bedecked with a hand-painted Fremont wall covering.

"I WANTED A HOME THAT TRULY FELT LIKE AN EXPERIENCE."



WESTERN UNION



Left: In the kitchen, a 15-foot-long La Cornue range features a polished ivory onyx countertop and stainless-steel trim. Apparatus sconces hang in the green onyx-backed niches. *Above:* Behind the kitchen is a display room for the homeowner's porcelain

collection; here, the millwork is white ash, and the floors are polished parda-white stone. *Below:* Chenin took a darker tack in the media room, where the wood paneling is walnut. An open passageway displays Lucio Carvalho's Series 70 Tiff print on acrylic in the neighboring room.





stories in a hall finished with a floor-to-ceiling hand-painted Fromental wall covering and a mirrored back wall. A Baccarat chandelier, a special gift from the client's late husband, rounds out the space.

In the kitchen and dining area (which also holds a cozy seating spot perfect for morning coffee), a 13-foot-long La Cornue range in custom white takes center stage, flanked by onyx-backed storage portals. The space is a sophisticated study in materials, with appliances hidden behind bronze-doored cabinetry and white-oak flooring laid out in an oversize-herringbone pattern. Tucked behind the kitchen is a museum-like room with built-in, backlit floor-to-ceiling millwork where the homeowner displays her large collection of vintage porcelain servingware.

Attention to detail is evident at every turn, where elements such as gold-leaf- and cerused-oak-trimmed bookshelves, stone wainscoting, and accents in black marble, burl wood, and mahogany abound. This bespoke approach elegantly unifies Chenin's design, which is anchored by a commitment to room-to-room discovery. "I wanted a home that truly felt like an experience," says the owner, "where every room had its own personality but still connected to the overall vision."

The client has three grown children and eight grandchildren who often fill the house with mischief and laughter, but when she's alone, she didn't want things to feel too cavernous. The primary suite is an easy escape—and a soft place to land. The room's layered materiality starts with ultra-plush wool carpeting carved into a unique rose-petal pattern, and a curved metal-and-fabric screen backs the bed and nightstands, dampening noise and creating a comforting space. In the bathroom, where an intricate hand-blown chandelier by Barovier&Toso brings a hit

Above: A guest room's warm palette echoes the shades of the Nevada desert. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Even the gym, which takes on a residential aesthetic, has striking views. In the primary-suite bathroom, a stand-alone Waterworks tub is surrounded by Fromental wallpaper and white glass-paned cabinetry with brushed-brass trim. The homeowner's closet features a shelf, drawer, or niche for every purse, shoe, and piece of jewelry. In the main hallway, an acrylic work by artist Justin Nelson hangs over a chaise-upholstered Ferrell Maxman sofa—a favorite perch of the homeowner's dog, Georgia. The home's architecture is inspired by the Hoover Dam, and the roof is planned to reduce heat absorption.

of feminine glamour, the freestanding tub is set in front of a metal-beaded screen. "As you move through the room, it shimmers," Chenin says. "It's kind of like a desert thunderstorm."

Just off the bedroom is a walk-in closet with lacquered cabinetry and a custom central console with drawers, nooks, and niches for all of the homeowner's accessories. "I love my dressing area," she says. "It's like stepping into a luxury boutique every day. The way Daniel designed that space, with every detail so thoughtfully executed, makes getting ready in the morning feel like an experience."

And that was the goal from the outset. For daily, mundane tasks to feel special thanks to a home's design signals a great success. In this case, it was the result of a talented architect, a client with a sharp eye, and an unexpected meeting on a late-fall afternoon.

"From the very first renderings, I was blown away," the client says. "The design didn't evolve much because Daniel got it right from the start. He took everything I wanted—everything I didn't even know I wanted—and turned it into something beyond my expectations. This house is truly a dream come true. Every time I walk through it, I still can't believe it's mine." ●