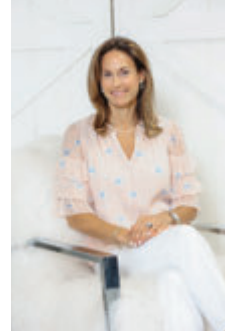


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JONATHAN GORDON

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Photos by Robert Norman





The romance style or aesthetic is not widely discussed in the design industry, so its definition and interpretation can be nebulous and highly interpretive. Jonathan Gordon, founder and owner of Design by the Jonathans, based in New Haven, CT, explores the style from both historical and modern perspectives. “The Romanticism Era is a defined artistic movement of the late 18th through the 19th century,” he explains. “It was nostalgia for the past.” The period emphasizes imagination and emotion, so any design that evokes emotions, especially feelings of love, can be considered romanticism.

The modern interpretation is less precise. “Many designers feel the





romance style is ‘femininity’ with an edge,” continues Jonathan. That may sound like an oxymoron, but if done correctly it can evoke feelings of love and wonder. Classically feminine design characteristics, such as curvature and soft color palettes, are often used to create emotion, no matter the style genre.

Jonathan’s client, a retired attorney who’s studying forensic science, did not ask for the romantic style when she hired The Jonathans to redesign her home. She did ask for the inclusion of things she truly loved, so the resulting spaces are arguably an exercise in romantic design. Her main request was the creation of a glorious space that would make people stop and stare. Jonathan started in the kitchen by giving his client absolutely everything she needed to make the room work seamlessly with her busy life. This included excess storage, custom cabinet inserts, double ovens and a side-by-side refrigerator freezer. Jonathan found a circular tile of varying shades of blue glass that reminded his client of Morocco, one of her favorite destinations. The tile was patterned specifically for this kitchen, and the results are mesmerizing—a showstopper that makes every visitor’s jaw drop. Jonathan highlighted the blue tile with light pastel blue cabinets. The fairly unusual color for a kitchen adds to the shocking allure the client wanted, but with the softness she loves.



Jonathan took the modern definition of romanticism and applied it to the powder room. He used neoclassical fixtures and a magnificent royal purple Thibaut wallpaper that harkens back to earlier design periods. The stylized nature scene of the wallpaper is a strong and bold backdrop to the “feminine” antique mirror. The brass metal accents and amethyst crystal hardware give the room its edge.