

WEB-EXCLUSIVE HOME TOUR

Tour a Panama City Home Where Museum-Grade Design Meets Livability

For a discerning collector with a large family, decorator Jennifer Chused relied on impactful pieces and rich materials to stand up to the megawatt art

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"I make it my policy never to chase the market, to buy trophies or artists for the wrong reasons; it has been a long and evolving process," says Panama-native Johnny Roux of building his contemporary *art* collection, which he describes as "my passion." The same can be said for how he approached the design of his primary home in Panama City, which he shares with his wife, Patricia Martinelli. First, the space had to be large enough—for not just an expansive art collection but also the couple's five children. Featuring an open plan for the central entertaining areas, it has high ceilings and ample bedrooms for the whole family and their guests. As he does with his art, Roux approached the interiors with the discerning eye of a curator, wanting them to have a sense of balance, simplicity, plenty of natural light, and a welcoming vibe. A fan of *midcentury* design, he further wanted his multimedia art collection—comprising painting, photography, video, and sculpture—to live seamlessly with the house and its occupants. "The decor could not overshadow the collection," he says. "I wanted it to highlight every piece."

Roux, founder of Casa Santa Ana, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing contemporary art through exhibitions and innovative participatory programming, met his soon-to-be decorator, Jennifer Chused, of *Chused & Co*, in a design store in *Manhattan*. He and his wife were looking for furniture for their new home, and they struck up a conversation about the property's unique challenges, becoming fast friends. Later, Chused visited Panama on vacation and went by the construction site to see the progress. After offering Roux and Martinelli her professional input, she left as their official interior designer and was eager to look at photographs of Roux's art collection, which would ultimately inform the overall vision. "I told Johnny I wanted to choose pieces that were important in their own right, paying close attention to design, materials, and workmanship," comments Chused. **"Pieces like the Brazilian midcentury chairs by Jorge Zalszupin anchored spaces, and I then built up layers around them."**

Designing an entire home around an existing art collection is a challenge for even the best designers, but Chused and Roux were perfect collaborators. "I think when the art is not necessarily your taste, it can be distracting to work on the interiors," says Chused. "But in Johnny's case, the collection is so inspiring it was a joy to complete the vision." The complexity and depth of the pieces ultimately informed the design choices—both minute and major. "I wanted to work with rich materials: linen, silk velvets, parchment, and marble, and I stayed with a somewhat neutral palette for large items," Chused says, adding that she was not afraid to include saturated colors, like acid yellow and a deep blue-green. "I need to layer enough color and pattern in to give the interiors depth against the art on the walls."

Link to full article: <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/panama-city-jennifer-chused>