



Nicole & Aaron's Paris-Inspired Loft House Tour

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Name: Nicole Lanteri, Interior Designer and owner of [On My Agenda](http://onmyagenda.com) [<http://onmyagenda.com>], and husband Aaron Trent.

Location: Arlington, Virginia

Size: 1200 square feet

Years lived in: 5 years; Owned

Lawyer turned interior decorator Nicole Lanteri knows a thing or two about making a house a home. A few years ago she stepped away from her career as a lawyer to pursue her passion for interior design, and (thankfully) hasn't looked back. Her own apartment is filled to the brim with home design, architectural, and fashion magazines for inspiration. Moodboards dot the walls of her office, which occupies the top level of the two-story loft that she shares with her husband Aaron.

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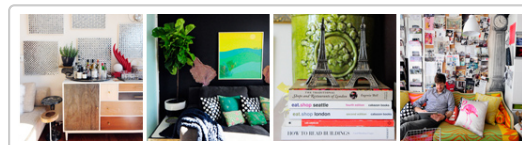
Enter House Tour

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Nicole and her husband moved from the bright lights of New York City to put roots down in this quiet residential neighborhood of Arlington, Virginia five years ago. Two things Nicole knew she wanted when looking for a place: an apartment (not a house) and lots of natural light. She sought an apartment on the top floor, which would allow for the most direct sunlight and would prevent her and Aaron from having to face any building construction that may be happening across the street.

To achieve the Parisian salon vibe Nicole loves, skillful planning and constant rearranging was involved. To maximize space, Nicole split their sectional couch between two separate rooms. And though she doesn't fancy herself a DIY-er in the traditional build-it-from-scratch sense, Nicole has a natural knack for re-purposing things. In her scheme, items that were once just decorative become much more functional. What was designed as a spineless bookcase, Nicole turned into neat linear storage for her many pairs of blue jeans. That picture frame rack from Ikea is now a shelf for holding toiletries.

The downstairs guest rooms winks at the traveler and invites you to read through books on Seattle, London, Los Angeles, and of course Paris. Bold patterns and various hues of green mix beautifully. Nicole's love for great vintage chairs is also notable. (Her husband Aaron holds the honor of being the official chair tester before each purchase.) One-of-a-kind floor sample items that she found at a steal from top showrooms are beautifully arranged to increase the impact of each space.



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Apartment Therapy Survey:

Our Style/Inspiration: Our main inspiration is how we actually use our space. We love to cook, hang out and entertain in our home, so we wanted to create a furniture layout that reflected that. I love the look and feel of Parisian apartments (I'm a sucker for any book about Parisian interiors) and the idea of a sort of Parisian salon — cooking, entertaining, reading in one space. So we created a Parisian-salon-style layout with an eclectic mix of antique pieces and more modern pieces. For our style, I wanted it to feel creative, unique and simply a place we love to be in every day. Traveling to cities also inspires my style — my favorites for design inspiration are Paris, Los Angeles, Portland, Lisbon and Chicago.

Favorite Element: We love that our small, open space allows us to enjoy the space together, but apart. We can still be in separate areas — me working in the office in the loft, Aaron downstairs reading — but can talk with each other and don't feel like we have to go to separate wings of the house to work or watch TV and not be with each other just because we want to do different things. The natural light in the space is amazing and a key part of why we purchased the home. Don't compromise on that if you know it's important to you — even on a cloudy day it feels bright in here! We also love that it's our forever home and never want to move — that's an amazing feeling.

Biggest Challenge: There are a few — finding a good space for Aaron's bike was a big one! It used to hang on the wall in our bedroom but that was too much for me so now it is just parked in the bedroom and he can easily use it — he was very nice to select one that color coordinated with our space. Changing the smoke detector battery on an 18' ceiling was an experience we hope not to have to repeat any time soon (if you have to do this be sure to replace it with a 10 year battery). Lighting the large open space over the dining area was hard too without any overhead lighting, but I found the right balance of light (without the expense of running overhead lighting) with wall lamps mounted pretty high on the wall and a mix of different lamps with different qualities of light/lightbulbs/shades. Lighting is so crucial and this was one of the first things I focused on. It sounds silly, but buying the right light bulbs and lampshades is actually really important and can change the look and feel of a space in an instant.

What Friends Say: "Let's have another drink!" Our dinner parties and get-togethers end up going way later than anticipated, which I love. When our family and friends visit, they love how cozy our guest room feels and never want to leave.

Biggest Embarrassment: I love rearranging furniture just to test how different layouts and plans will work. Moving



furniture is sort of a form of therapy for me, and our space is a little bit of a design lab for my client projects. Organizing closets and cabinets is also very therapeutic. Aaron never knows if he'll come home to find me mid-reorg and literally all of the contents of the kitchen cabinets on the kitchen island.

Oh, and constant dust bunnies on the floors and fingerprints on the appliances are a downside to living in a loft space with all wood floors and bright light. But I just tell myself perfection is overrated and at some point stainless steel appliances will go out of style (I actually don't think that will happen any time soon, but it makes me feel better).

Proudest DIY: The desk and cabinet that I painted with Annie Sloan Chalk Paint in Antoinette and gray oil based paint for the knobs. I loved the piece and was psyched that the Chalk Paint was as easy to do as marketed and I could do it right in my home with no paint odor or mess — no more attempting to spray paint in the apartment (not a good idea)! If I could Chalk Paint everything I would!

Biggest Indulgence: My pink leather Eames Management desk chair. Even from DWR's eBay site (best discount site!) it was still a splurge. I'm happy sitting in it every day though, so it was totally worth it — how could you not be happy working in a hot pink leather chair every day?

Best Advice: Design from a plan, not just by picking out pieces here and there. Unfortunately, it doesn't usually work to buy pieces just because you love them or they are a great deal — they also have to be the right dimensions and right fit for your space and how you actually live. Find balance in your design of a space — high/low items, bold/soft pieces, warm/cold colors — and your space will come together a lot more easily and feel complete sooner than later. And, most importantly, work towards making your space feel effortless instead of perfect.

Dream Sources: Paul Smith No. 9 in London — an incredibly curated collection of amazing furniture and art that you can buy

Denova in the Hampden area of Baltimore, Maryland — best mid-century modern store with a touch of 1920s glamour and Paris in the 1950s

Les Puces de Saint-Ouen Market in Paris — I was like a kid in a candy store here.

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Resources of Note:

PAINT COLORS

- Bathroom: Benjamin Moore Black Aura Bath and Spa
- Kitchen: Benjamin Moore French Beret

GUEST BEDROOM

- Dresser and desk: Antique thrift store
- Frames: Ikea; West Elm, vintage
- Curtains: Ikea
- Side chairs: Blue Dot collection at Target
- Ottoman: CB2
- Green lamp: Goodwood in D.C

- Sofa: Room and Board
- Chest: Grandparents'
- Sliding doors: Sliding Door Company
- Lamp: Ikea
- Artificial Bamboo Plant: World Market
- Fiddle Leaf Fig Fern Plant: American Plant
- Green and yellow painting: Home Anthology in Catonsville, MD
- Pillows: West Elm and CB2; blanket: West Elm
- Green rug: Anthropologie; Black and White rug: CB2
- Green chair: Crate and Barrel

DINING ROOM

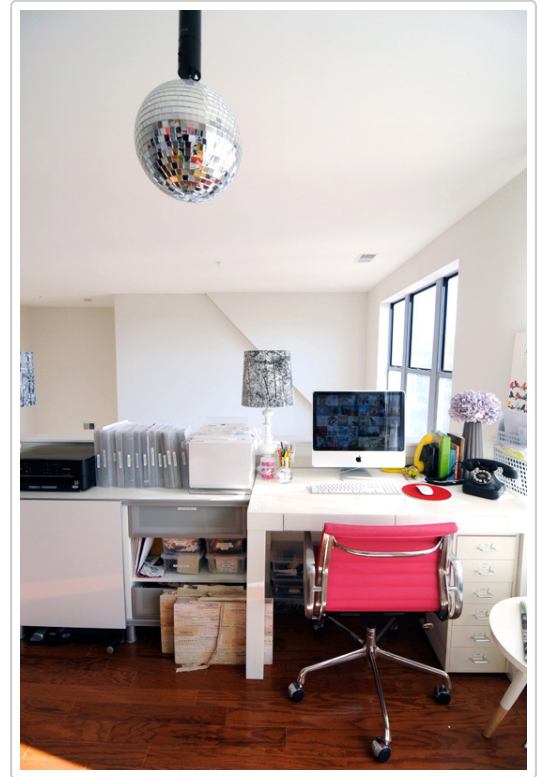
- Brass Side chair: Georgetown flea market
- White lamp: Georgetown flea
- Music sheet painting: Mitchell Gold Bob Williams on 14th Street
- Wall sconces: Ikea
- Light fixture: Ikea
- Cabinets: Crate and Barrel
- Sectional: CB2
- Barstools: CB2
- Dining table: Antique store in NYC
- Two dining chairs: Crate and Barrel; others: Craigslist find
- Stools: Second Chance in Baltimore
- Buffet: Floor sample at West Elm
- Red lamp: Denova in Baltimore
- Trays: Georgetown Flea Market; Showroom 1412
- Square Metallic Wall art: Show pieces from West Elm
- Small wood tables: CB2
- Marble table: Antique store in Philadelphia
- Bar: Georgetown Flea Market
- Brass Lamps: Marshalls

LIVING ROOM

- Couch: CB2
- Blanket: Design Within Reach
- Marble Side Table: Eastern Market
- Art panels: Ikea
- Navy leather chair: Crate and Barrel by Mitchell Gold Bob Williams
- Gold bear and deer heads: Homegoods

KITCHEN

- Sculpture above sink: Urban Outfitters
- Vases for utensils: West Elm



- Canisters: Ikea
- Runner: ABC carpets in NYC

BEDROOM

- Faux Bois Wallpaper: Warehouse sale in Raleigh, NC
- Bed: Room and Board
- Dressers: West Elm
- Mirrors: Pottery Barn Teen
- Shell: Pottery Barn
- Curtains: Ikea
- Vase: Ikea; stem: West elm
- White Baroque Mirror: Georgetown Flea Market
- Spine bookcase: West Elm

OFFICE

- Besta storage system: Ikea
- Magazine racks: Ikea
- Rolling storage: Georgetown Flea
- Lamp: Ikea
- Desks: West Elm Parsons
- Sequin bird: Holiday Collection from West Elm
- Herman Miller desk chair: Pottery Barn
- Lamps: Urban Outfitters
- Eames management chair: Design Within Reach outlet on Ebay
- Telephone: Pottery Barn (Nicole uses it for business)
- Couch: Circa antique store in Charlottesville, VA. Reupholstered with Marimekko fabric from Crate and Barrel outlet in Old town, Alexandria Virginia.
- Crate and Barrel outlet in Old town, Alexandria Virginia.
- Porcelain cat: Georgetown Flea Market
- Coffee Table: Eastern Market
- Vintage Suitcase: Aaron's
- Vintage Eames Management Side Chair: Mode Moderne in Philadelphia
- Inspiration board: Cork boards from Container Store
- Chalkboard: Ikea
- Postcard rack: Pottery Barn
- Hanging Pendant Lamps: Shades from West Elm and Cords from Ikea
- Pillows: John Lewis in London (LOVE pillow), West Elm (Flamingo pillow), CB2 (dot pillows), Anthropologie (yellow pillows)
- Rug: Anthropologie
- Curtains: Ikea

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Thanks, Nicole and Aaron!

(Images: Nicole Crowder)

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Nicole Crowder

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