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# The first peek inside the Obamas' private White House: Stylish, but what's with that stereo?



The Treaty Room in the White House in Washington in August 2016. The Treaty Room is filled with memorabilia including one of President Barack Obama's two Grammy Awards, family photos, and a personalized football. (Michael Mundy / AP)

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Chicago Tribune

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**W**e all knew Michelle redecorated — now we know how it turned out. Architectural Digest released the first-ever photo tour of the Obamas' private quarters, designed by Michael S. Smith with heavy input from First Lady Michelle Obama yesterday, scratching an 8-year itch for folks who love to gawk at houses online.



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When President Obama, Michelle and daughters Malia and Sasha moved into the White House eight years ago, they commissioned Smith, known for posh, cultured rooms, to design their private quarters. Treading carefully around the formidable design ghosts of former First Ladies like Jacqueline Kennedy and Nancy Reagan (and legendary designers such as Sister Parish), Michelle Obama and Smith looked to inject a little modern style into rooms heavy on tradition.



The Treaty Room in the White House in Washington in August 2016. The Treaty Room is where President Obama often retreats late at night. (Michael Mundy / AP)

The photos reveal they did just that — though you have to look closely to catch those nuances. Art from a roster of contemporary heavyweights such as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns does the work, bringing the rooms a chic modernity that contrasts with furnishings that still skew, for the most part, to pedigreed antiques. A work by Robert Mangold against fabric-covered walls in the Family Dining Room hits the perfect note. "Sky Light," a 1973 painting by Alma Thomas, the first African-American woman to have her work featured in the White House, steals the show in the West Hall — if you're looking at art, that is.



The Old Family Dining room in the White House in Washington. Works by Robert Rauschenberg, right, and Alma Thomas, the first African American artist woman represented in the White House, left, make a modern splash. (Michael Mundy/ AP)

Audiophiles online immediately cued in on another detail in that photo:

President Obama's turntable set-up, arrayed on a circa-1875 English mahogany table, with a copy of Al Green's Greatest Hits on vinyl resting underneath. "Who's going to be the guy to email the president and let him know he shouldn't have the speakers and subwoofer sitting on the same table as his record player," wrote Reddit user fenderProcrastinator; others knocked his speakers, apparently lack of an amp and rock critics weighed in to identify the President's albums. "Yeah, he may have the nuclear codes (but) my setup totally owns that pitiful rig," tweeted cartoonist Ben Towle.

So much for house proud.

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