

CHARLOTTE URBAN

HOME

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CELEBRATING INSPIRATIONAL DESIGN AND PERSONAL STYLE







A MODERN COMEBACK

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IT'S GLAM, MODERN, SEXY AND EXTREMELY LIVABLE. BUT WHEN MOLLYE BELL, PERSONAL STYLIST AND SENIOR MANAGING PARTNER FOR J. HILBURN, FIRST SAW THE GEORGIAN RANCH HOUSE ON SHARON ROAD, IT WAS JUST ANOTHER FIXER-UPPER.

THANKFULLY SHE KNEW THE PERFECT DESIGN TEAM TO give the home its unique style. Working with husband Tim, architect Garrett Nelson, builder Ben Collins of the Salins Group, interior designer Stephanie Semmes and several local artists, Mollye's team made the magic happen.

A native of Dallas, Texas, Mollye's other homes, including her most recent in Colorado, had been traditional. With this home, she and Tim were ready to go more modern, a vision they shared with Garrett and Ben.

The home needed a second story, but the couple didn't want the house to appear any larger. Architect Garrett came up with a roof design to meet the need. "He was great to work with because he truly listened to what we wanted and was able to save the original integrity of the home, which was really important to us," says Mollye.

Renovation began with the home being completely gutted and a new second story (1,000-square feet) added. Garrett and Ben worked to maximize the home's existing clean lines, redefining the space for the family's lifestyle. The family lives in the kitchen, so it was enlarged, an eight-foot island was added and the workings of the kitchen, coffee maker and other appliances, were compartmentalized behind a hidden wall to keep the look clean and streamlined.

Garrett incorporated a large kitchen island the couple had used in previous homes into his own design. "This is the third house in which we've used the kitchen design with the huge island," says Mollye. "When the kids were younger, I loved the design because the kids could sit at the island and do their homework or draw while I was cooking dinner. Now it is the perfect place to entertain, have meetings for my J. Hilburn team, or for my kids to work on various school projects."

Other architectural elements were added to redefine the large spaces and give a modern flair. The inspiration for the home's large open arches, Mid-Century modern railing on the stairs, sleek limestone framing for the fireplace and interior design direction came from Hollywood.

"Ben was watching the original *Mommy Dearest* movie and thought the home in the movie reminded him of our home, so we started moving towards that Hollywood regency style," says Mollye.

"The feel of the low-slung ranch was old-school classic," explains Ben. "With its 10-foot ceilings and huge picture window, it was speaking Hollywood regency to me."

The remodel took a year from start to finish, and while no corners were cut, the team found ways to complete the renovation smartly and well within budget.



“Ben understands my passion for design and helps me figure out how to get what I want,” says Mollye. One example is the downstairs playroom with the Murphy bed concealed behind white paneled doors. When Mollye wanted iron windows, Ben suggested painting them pewter to get a similar effect. The kitchen’s original design called for trusses; Ben had the idea for the wood ceiling. When Mollye couldn’t find the exact woodwork she wanted for the unique banister railing, Ben designed it himself.

“All the people we work with get invested in the project,” says Ben. “They find creative ways to add value and that benefits the homeowner in the end.”

Mollye brought designer Stephanie Semmes into the project once it became time to start talking about the interior. “Stephanie is a great designer because she takes the time to get to know her clients and decorates for the client,” says Mollye. “Rather than demanding you take on her style, she helps you improve your own. She is also great at finding new vendors and sources to make your home unique. I also love that she is able to mix price points. If she finds something that works, she doesn’t get caught up with where it came from.”

Stephanie took Ben’s Hollywood regency inspiration and made the style livable for the family. “Stephanie really helped pull the Hollywood regency feel to a more casual livable style that melded my husband’s





desire for the modern with mine for the traditional,” says Mollye.

“Hollywood regency style had its heyday in the 1930s and is making a modern comeback,” says Stephanie. “The style is about the juxtaposition of super clean, minimalistic lines mixed with luxe fabrics and showy details that add drama. It is very hot on the West Coast right now and we’re just starting to see it move onto the East Coast and into Charlotte as homeowners turn away from the ultra traditional to cleaner, more contemporary living.”

To keep the Hollywood regency look authentic, Stephanie found

pieces that added drama and pop, pulling many from vendors on the West Coast, including the dramatic light fixture from Oly. The designer used color, texture and art to balance the modern drama with warmth and personality, helping Mollye and her family feel at home with this new style.

“I get to know my client’s personality and weave parts of their story into the home’s décor,” says Stephanie. She explains that the antlers in the master bedroom are a nod to the family’s home in Colorado. The cowboy painting in the bedroom connects Mollye with her Texas roots.



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Because Mollye loves supporting the work of local artists, she and Stephanie commissioned several local pieces that reference the family’s history. “It makes the artwork meaningful to me to know the artists personally, especially since my daughter Alley (whose own artwork graces the stairwell) loves art,” says Mollye.

Charlotte artist Zan Byrd created the artwork in the keeping room from family photos taken in Colorado. The large painting in the living room is by Fran Kolmeyer (Alley’s art teacher) to remind the family of their two years living at The Ford Plantation in Savannah,

Georgia. Windy O’Connor created all the artwork in her daughter’s room. Fellow Charlotte Country Day parent, Margot Whitley’s work hangs in the family room off the kitchen.

Even the dining room has historical significance. Mollye and Tim have lived in Charlotte several times in the past as they moved for his career. The table was handcrafted for the family by Old Wood Company in Asheville and represents their new start in their Charlotte home.

“Incorporating history into a home is so important,” says Stephanie.





Architectural elements were added to redefine the large spaces and give a modern flair.

“It connects us to who we are – heart and soul,” says Stephanie. “The more I know about my clients the better I can work with them to create an environment that is meaningful and feels like home. Mollye is a unique, creative individual and this home is very much her,” says Stephanie.

“I love the clean lines of the house with pops of bright color. Color has always made me happy!” says Mollye. “The house is definitely comfortable to truly live in. There is not a single piece of furniture in the house that the dogs and kids can’t lounge on.” ❖