

Triangle

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HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®





This family ditched a more formal dining room in favor of an amped up eat-in kitchen with a large island covered in a leathersed stone countertop and overhang for casual seating.



FLOOR TO CEILING

*From top to bottom, floor to ceiling,
this home designed by Heather Garrett
is magic... a few years in the making.*

By Anne Marie Ashley
Photography by John Bessler



The warm reds and blues of the antique rug mingle perfectly with the modern touch of gold pendant lights in this elegant yet welcoming entryway.

Designer Heather Garrett is no stranger to design challenges. So when her Internet entrepreneur clients called on her to redesign their newly purchased Tuscan style estate in Chapel Hill, she took on the project with gusto. “This young couple had a really relaxed approach to life, living with dogs and had a baby on the way,” Garrett says. “They purchased this fully furnished estate that was dripping with Tuscan style. Think heavy furniture, deep walls, and hanging tapestries. They wanted instead to be sunny, fresh, and chic, but in appropriate measure for the traditional architecture.”

The couple both graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill but had since settled in Durham. With a new baby on the way, a travel-heavy work schedule for the husband, and a recent windfall, they both agreed that moving back to Chapel Hill would provide the peace of mind and way of life they were seeking. The home sits on the fairway of the Chapel Hill Country Club, and planning for a growing family,

this idyllic property was a perfect choice.

The plans for the nursery were under way in their current home, so when they decided to move, the clock was ticking to bring these plans up to speed in the new home and prepare for baby.

“There was a chemistry there from the get-go with these people,” Garrett says. “And we grew together slowly on projects as we hit benchmarks that made it clear I really understood their needs. We have a great trust now.” Once the nursery was completed and their sweet baby boy was introduced into the world, they asked Garrett to get to work on the kitchen and living room so that they could spend time together as a family in those spaces.

With the parents working from home and a family that loved the outdoors, enjoying a very casual lifestyle, Garrett’s goal was to create a home that transitioned seamlessly from work to play. Over the next three to four years, she was able to create a haven for this family of four, working room by room to perfect their living lifestyle – and ending, appropriately, with another nursery for their second baby—a girl.



The traditional architecture of this gorgeous Chapel Hill estate was perfect for the family of four. And with designer Heather Garrett’s help, the inside became the perfect home to raise a family.





Venetian plaster walls installed by CAN Decorative Painting add to the rustic, cozy feel of the family room. Sofas covered in indoor/outdoor linen fabric removes the stress of upkeep that comes with young children and pets.



A whimsical hand-painted mural of jellyfish by New York-based Trove winds its way up the staircase in the foyer while a chandelier from Noir adds an equal counter dose of drama and sophistication. The mixed media piece by Zoe Bios grounds the space and adds a focal point.

“I think the practicalities of life are my biggest driver in creating good design for my clients,” Garrett explains. “I have two teenagers at home, and pets, and I am fascinated with how we’ve completely changed how we live in a certain room just over a period of a few years.” To that end, Garrett kept this philosophy in mind when planning the design for the master suite and master bath. The dark green walls, leather furniture, and formal sitting room were exchanged for a brighter, whiter look, a yoga space, and a play area in front of the fireplace to enjoy their children. The resulting bedroom was a true retreat with separate spaces for sleeping and relaxing. The master bath became spacious and bright with a French-chic vibe.

“We pulled the shutters off the windows, painted the room white, and filled it with pale textiles - vintage linen, wool, and velvet,” Garrett says. “As for the master bath, we removed the vanity and cabinetry, reformatted the placement, and installed a large mirror in front of the window so that light could enter, but privacy was preserved.”

As Garrett says, it’s safe to assume that you will never change your personality or patterns just to accommodate a newly decorated room in your home, so it’s best to plan it realistically, not ideally. In the case of her clients, formal living and dining rooms were nice in theory but impractical in lifestyle. They were replaced with a music room, complete with piano, and a moody, sophisticated entry and living space including a custom mural that whimsically winds its way up the staircase.



This formal living room-turned-music room is a space for the children to relax and practice music. Furniture by Lee Industries and Mr. Brown lends itself to the casual vibe alongside family photos and a free-hand “egg cup” sculpture installed by Heather Garrett. The Arteriors chandelier adds a shot of glam.

Heather Garrett may seem like a one-woman show, packing all the punch of a heavyweight designer in one tiny package, but she does have help from time to time. “Melonie St. John has sewn every custom piece I’ve ever made for fifteen years,” she credits. “She’s amazing and we have a secret language at this point. Her work is all over this project from pillows to window treatments.” Garrett also called on CAN Decorative Painting to touch nearly every surface in the home, because, as she says, “wall finishes and nuanced texture are such an important

part of a finished look.”

To round out the decor, Garrett shopped at Eliko Rugs, Oly Studio, and Lee Industries, as well as Julian Chichester, Made Goods, Eatman’s Carpet & Interiors, Trove, and of course, Target. “When in doubt, always arrange objects in odd numbers and heights; you can rarely go wrong that way!”

At the end of the day, Garrett was able to transform a dark and heavily Italian-influenced home into a refreshing dose of modern, casual living that made her client’s new house a true

The original dining room was transformed into another casual living room where the family could gather together. Grasscloth-covered walls by Phillip Jeffries and a leather-covered ottoman create a relaxed, homey feel while a painting by Utah artist Tyler Huntzinger of birds on a wire hangs beautifully over the Chesterfield sofa.





Dark green walls and leather furniture were replaced with bright whites and soothing greys in this master bedroom. A custom twig chandelier balances the glam, and blackout drapery creates a cave-like retreat for lazy weekend mornings.



This spa-like bathroom got a total overhaul with fully reconfigured cabinets, Phillip Jeffries beaded wallcoverings in gold, a floating mirror over the vanity that filters the outside light, and plenty of storage for towels and toiletries.



Garrett upholstered an entire wall in white button-tufted fabric to create a corner-to-corner, floor-to-ceiling headboard. Furniture by Oly Studio, Lee Industries, and Noir perfectly complement the custom rug from Eliko.



home. This enterprising family is on their way to the next adventure, this time moving to Boulder, Colorado. So you can look for this gorgeous gem to be on the market in the very near future. ♦

Top: A custom canopy drapes dreamily over baby girl's crib and the fuchsia rug from West Elm fills the room with a feminine vibe. A hanging swing takes the place of a rocker for a bit of fun, and her grandmother's antique vanity imparts a sense of heritage.
Left: Custom glazed striped walls painted by CAN Decorative Painting take this baby boy's room to big brother status.