

Charlotte

DECEMBER 2018

# HOMIE

DESIGN & DECOR®



## GREAT GATHERINGS

A "FAMILY" AFFAIR  
TWINE & TWIG STYLE

**PLUS:**

DINE BY DESIGN  
WITH BARRIE BENSON

DESIGN-INSPIRED GIFTING



The kitchen is Deena Knight's favorite room in the home with a clean, white palette warmed with gold hardware and wood and rattan accents. A statement sink faucet from Newport Brass pairs perfectly with a pendant from Visual Comfort.



# THE SIMPLER LIFE

WHEN ONE CHARLOTTE COUPLE FELT THE TUG  
TOWARD A LIFE LESS ADORNED, THEY FOLLOWED.

Written by Anne Marie Ashley | Photography by Dustin Peck



**D**eena Knight and her husband, a retired NBA player, had built their dream home in Charlotte. They went all out – 10,000 square feet of house on more than three acres of land filled with all the bells and whistles, choosing luxury wherever possible. When it was all said and done, they sat back and enjoyed – until they didn’t anymore.

“I began to feel a longing for simplicity,” Knight says. “Everything in that house was *too* precious; I found myself more uptight about it than delighted by it.” Realizing they had more home than they could live in, Knight and her family decided to put the home on the market and begin looking for something a little more practical. “I thought, for sure, a home like ours would take up to a year to sell,” she recalls. “But it was much quicker than that, and we were suddenly faced with having to choose a new home fast.” When they walked into a home in Providence Plantation, Knight was anything but impressed. Built in the 1980s, it needed some serious updating and renovation. But pressed for time and encouraged by her





*Opposite:* Deena Knight stands in her light and airy dining room. A rustic Restoration Hardware dining table is dressed up with a Schonbek chandelier. Guest chairs from World Market add a bit of rustic elegance.

*Above:* A stacked stone entrance to the Knight home perfectly complements the stacked stone fireplace in the living room, which is immediately visible upon entering.





*Above:* Knight repurposed a vintage headboard in the master bedroom and covered it with Magnolia dark blue chalk paint. Artwork from local artist Leslie Poteet Busker hovers just above the nightstand and pillows discovered on a quick trip to Home Goods proved the perfect accent to the space.  
*Opposite:* Like the kitchen, Knight chose a crisp all-white aesthetic for her master bathroom warmed with gold fixtures from Newport Brass.



husband to work her magic, she agreed they could make a home here. “The backyard really made it worth the purchase; it was so gorgeous. And with my husband believing I could make it beautiful, I was ultimately happy with our decision,” Knight says.

Over the next six to eight months, Knight worked closely with Corbin Homes to renovate and redesign the outdated home. “This house is such a reaction to our old home,” Knight says. “Where everything in the old home was very lavish, I wanted this home to be livable and modern.” Admitting she took several cues from Chip

and Joanna Gaines and their hit HGTV show *Fixer Upper*, Knight created a modern farmhouse feel with transitional appeal. In place of imported stones like in her previous home, she opted for simple and sophisticated choices like subway tile. Instead of crystal and glass, warm wood and brass. “My style, in general, has always been high/low. I think mixing affordable pieces with splurges, in fashion and interior design, is the best approach,” Knight says. “I tell my clients the same: not everything needs to be high end. I splurged on my Newport Brass faucet in my kitchen but was really pleased with





Restoration Hardware stools hide beneath the console table for an all-in-one look in the living room.



The stacked stone fireplace in the formal living room adds a bit of drama to the entrance of the home and bit of cozy to the light-filled space. Restoration Hardware stools hide beneath the console table for an all-in-one look.

the inexpensive subway tile I chose for a backsplash.” In the end, as you see, it all marries beautifully.

“Ultimately, design is an art, not a science,” Knight says. “If it makes you feel warm or makes you smile, it’s doing its job. You can’t use rules and standards to get a design right; you just have to love it.” When working with her clients (she’s started her own business post-home renovation), Knight gives them three pieces of advice: If you love it, build around it. Every room needs a “Beyoncé” element. In Knight’s case, she almost always chooses lighting to create it. And once you find something you like, stop looking, don’t over think it. It’s clear in her own home, Knight has practiced what she preached and created a space that’s modern, warm, and above all, simple.

Her kitchen is her favorite room in the home, where she used wood, brass, and rattan as an anchor to the bright white finishes. When she can, Knight uses local artisans to bring authenticity to the home. For example, a handmade coffee table in the living room

from Rosewood Co. and art from local artist Leslie Poteet Busker. “I like to leave room for curating,” Knight says. “You’re not always going to find the perfect piece immediately, so don’t feel the need to decorate every inch of your home. Leave some spaces blank so you can add things that mean something to you. Design with neutrals so that you can edit with color.” As someone who’s moved a lot with her traveling husband, Knight has learned these key things and discovered something about herself that’s probably true for most homeowners.

“Whenever we get into a new home, I tend to design and complete the kids’ rooms first, so that they will feel at ease quickly,” she says. “But, I wish I was that kind to myself. I only *just* decided on a look for our master bedroom. It’s easy to get caught up in making our gathering spaces feel photo ready, but we need to take better care of our personal spaces, too.” A simple request from a woman who has discovered the joys of a less adorned life. ♦