

Triangle

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2019

# HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®

*Kitchen  
& Bath*

**PLUS:**  
MOUNTAIN  
GETAWAYS

WHAT'S  
COOKING:  
DESIGNERS'  
GO-TO TRENDS





Vintage Audubon bird prints passed down through the homeowner's family find a home over the Hickory Chair sofa.





# FAMILY TIES

INTERIOR DESIGNER  
MA ALLEN KEEPS IT ALL  
IN THE FAMILY WHEN  
DESIGNING THE PERFECT  
HOME IN RALEIGH FOR  
HER IN-LAWS.





Cole & Son wallpaper in the dining room is at once familiar and sophisticated but also serves as one of the few newly designed pieces in the room. The rest is repurposed from the homeowner's collection, from the table and chairs to the oyster plates on the petite sideboard sourced by MA Allen.

*Opposite:* A welcoming foyer guides visitors inside the home with custom glazed panel walls designed by MA Allen and painted by Can Decorative Painting. A painting passed down from the homeowner's father greets guests, hung above a collection of the homeowner's vases. The travertine tile floor is inlaid with white oak wood flooring—a design executed by MA Allen to ease the transition into the adjacent room.





**W**hen you're passionate about what you do for a living, you want to share it with the world—including and especially your family. So when MA Allen of MA Allen Interiors had a chance to share her talents with

her in-laws, Chris and Charlie Wagner, she happily engaged. Even better, from designing a completely custom home and pool to completing the interiors, Allen took part from start to finish.

“My mother-in-law, Chris, was looking for a lot that would accommodate a pool,” Allen explains. “Margaret Richards, the other designer on this project, suggested a lot on Churchill Road,







and we went to take a look.” It turned out to be an ideal location, and once purchased, they tore down the existing home and started from scratch. “This is a second marriage,” Wagner says, “and building a house was something we wanted to do together. We knew we wanted a pool, so we upsized. The extra space lends itself to play dates with grandchildren, plenty of room around the dining room table, and all the fun that a pool has to offer.”

Over the next eighteen months, the team worked closely to create a home and aesthetic that fit perfectly with the Wagners’ lifestyle. “Chris’ style is very traditional—my husband grew up in a saltbox house—and with that came many early American antiques,” Allen says. “I wanted to curate her collection and add new items to the mix, which is very much a part of my design philosophy. I find the tension between the two very exciting.” The result was a space that was rooted in family tradition but full of fresh and fun twists on classic style.

“Chris is an avid gardener and loves earth tones and flowers, so the design of the home reflected that passion in the colors and patterns,” Allen says. “You don’t have to look much further than what is right in front of you when looking for inspiration for a client’s home.” Allen goes on to say that the best advice she can give is to analyze every aspect of your life and then break it down. Determine the best place for everything you use and how to store it—from pet food to the pile of papers kids bring home from school, from a Vitamix blender to a collection of porcelain figurines. “Good design should reveal itself in ease of living.”



*Opposite:* A pair of sconces from Circa Lighting brings a flattering glow to the powder room. A chinoiserie wallpaper from GP & J Baker takes the sophistication up a notch, a perfect pairing with the custom vanity from MA Allen Interiors. The gold faucet is by Brizo, and the mirror is by Made Goods. *Top:* The Morris & Co. woodland animal print fabric in this reading nook makes it a perfect getaway for the grandchildren or a relaxing spot to take in the views. Circa Lighting sconces add just the right amount of light when needed, and custom cushion fabric and pillows from MA Allen Interiors tie everything together.

*Bottom:* In the guest bedroom, MA Allen found a home for her client’s oyster plates above the bed. The headboard from Century Furniture is covered in Schumacher fabric and sits pretty next to the antique side table and chair—part of the homeowner’s collected pieces.



In the living room, Allen created a truly family-centric space. “For this home, we used Chris’ collections as our main inventory of accessories,” she says. “We created a portrait wall opposite the built-in bookshelves, which are filled with old books, black-and-white family portraits, and heirlooms.” A passed-down collection of French glass finials were interspersed throughout as well. A similar approach was used in the dining room with a collection of oyster plates that found new beauty displayed on the wall.

“My top influence in style is my mother. She had great taste,” Wagner says. “She appreciated the details: good looking trim, nicely proportioned lamp shades, well-hung pictures, and tasteful, edited accessories. Charlie, on the other hand, is more metropolitan—after all, he lived in New York for fourteen years and is an excellent photographer. His photography is an important part of what makes our new house our home.” The gallery was designed to be not just a pass through, but a space to display her husband’s photography from his travels. Allen





wanted this presentation of photography to be next level, so she proposed having his images printed on glass for a more reflective and dynamic medium. To further stylize the Wagners' photography, Allen split an image of an elephant into a triptych panel.

"The best part of this whole project is the fact that I get to revisit it often—from casual family gatherings and holidays to just a Tuesday evening swim with the kids," Allen says.

When it comes to choosing a favorite part of the design project, the pair has a hard time choosing just one room. "As far

*Left and Right:* The light and bright kitchen is clean in all white and made interesting by an antique runner for a change of pace. A built-in china cabinet is a special spot for treasured items. Lighting from Circa Lighting adds drama while Newport Brass fixtures bring another element of style.



“GOOD DESIGN  
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OF LIVING.”

- MA ALLEN







as my favorite room, I love the upstairs window seat,” Allen says. “Chris challenged us to make that space more than just a window at the top of the stairs. Paneled fronts and sconce lighting, a roman shade, and soft goods really created a beautiful and inviting space. *But* I also love the kitchen, where my kids spend countless hours honing their baking skills. And, of course, the foyer will always be a favorite. It perfectly sets the tone for the rest of the house with intricate travertine, an oak floor pattern, and classic paneled walls with a strié glaze finish.”

“Well, I really love the living room. I feel the closeness of family and newness of our life today,” Wagner adds. “The colors in the fabrics are so pleasing, looking outside in the back as the seasons change. The kitchen is amazing, too. And I love the dining room. And the master bedroom. It’s very hard to decide!”◆

*Opposite Top:* The sitting area in the master bedroom is cozy and sophisticated with chairs and ottoman from Hickory Chair, custom Cowtan & Tout drapes, and Stanton rug.

*Opposite Bottom:* An antique Chinese screen that belonged to the homeowner’s mother is the centerpiece of this bedroom. The bed from Bernhardt Furniture is a beauty, and bright Circa Lighting lamps pack a punch of color.

*Above:* Tiles from Triangle Tile & Stone create a soothing retreat in the master bathroom. Newport Brass faucets from Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery make a statement, and custom countertop detail design by MA Allen brings a luxe feel to the ultimate master bath.