

Triangle

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HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®

GREAT
GATHERINGS

PLUS:
DESIGNER
GIFT GUIDE

CURATING
YOUR TABLE



In place of high-back counter stools that would interfere with the view into the family room, Tharpe chose backless stools by Hickory Chair to streamline the spaces while still providing additional seating.



ART OF INFLUENCE

SOMETIMES THE BIGGEST TASK FOR
A DESIGNER IS SIMPLY SHOWING HER
CLIENTS DESIGN POSSIBILITIES—AND MAYBE
A LITTLE COAXING IS NECESSARY, TOO.

With a white base to work with in the family room, Tharpe layered in touches of blue through pieces such as the throw pillows by Lee Jofa and the slipper chairs with fretwork detail by Hickory Chair, which are covered in a striped Kelly Wearstler for Groundworks fabric. **OPPOSITE:** Finding the right table for the breakfast dining area was initially a challenge for Tharpe. The designer, however, found a whitish-gray rectangular table by Theodore Alexander that fit perfectly in the space. She then accented with a custom banquette by Hickory Chair and Visual Comfort lighting.





Kristin Tharpe knew she was going to have to do a little convincing. Her clients had hired her to design the interiors of their beach home in Morehead City, and it was during that project that they fell in love with the designer's timeless, classic aesthetic. "They really allowed me to design a home that was thoughtful and sophisticated, but also fun, which is great for a beach house," she says.

But when those clients enlisted her to design their primary residence in Chapel Hill, Tharpe surprisingly

encountered some resistance. "I think when it comes to designing your primary residence, there's a different feeling about how outside the box you really want to go," Tharpe says. "I think the homeowners were really cautious about creating an interior that was a departure from their norm." That norm was a more traditional and formal aesthetic with dark woods, heavy paneling and crown molding, and a color palette of browns, reds, and mustard yellows.

With the kitchen renovation, Tharpe weighed in on finishes and suggested a color palette that was more neutral and transitional, all of which the homeowners loved. But when Tharpe



began working on a few of the other primary rooms of the home, including the dining room, family room, and library, she found her clients were resistant to change.

They did, however, allow Tharpe some creative license in the dining room. “There was originally a chair rail there, and it just felt like too much,” Tharpe says. So she had it removed. “There just wasn’t a lot going on in that room.” Her clients also wanted to use the same Carolina blue-silk wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries that had hung in their previous residence, but Tharpe knew it wasn’t the right look. “In this case, I felt like the blue wasn’t exactly what I saw fitting with the rest of the space long-term.” So instead, she presented the homeowners with other equally beautiful—but less expensive—options for the dining room walls, and they settled on a blue-gray grasscloth that really grounded the space. “Once they both saw it, they fell in love with the whole look of the room,” Tharpe says. “It just took a bit of persuading.”

The designer was faced with a similar scenario when she did the bare minimum to the library, giving it a makeover with a lighter, neutral color palette and upgrading the upholstery on some of her clients’ existing furniture. “You have to know when to push your clients and when to recognize they’re ready for change,” she says. “They weren’t ready then.” It wasn’t until







OPPOSITE: Tharpe encouraged her clients to choose something bold in the library, as it's the first room you see upon entering the home. The wallcovering with gold rivet detailing by Phillip Jeffries sets the tone for the home's overall aesthetic.

TOP: Tharpe covered the powder room in a wallpaper by Schumacher in a more modern, geometric pattern. To balance that, a custom-made vanity by W. Johnson Construction is a touch more traditional, as are the Visual Comfort sconces.

BOTTOM: To add to the vignette at the bottom of the stairs, Tharpe pulled one of the slipper chairs with fretwork details by Hickory Chair in a Kelly Wearstler for Groundworks fabric from the family room.

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—KRISTIN THARPE



2019 that Tharpe’s clients were finally ready for the change she had been encouraging. It was then that she suggested the elegant navy Phillip Jeffries wallcovering with gold rivets to create a dramatic yet still formal space that welcomes guests as they enter the home. Her clients loved it. “It’s those moments where you take some of those risks and see those rewards that solidify why you do what you do,” Tharpe says. “We could’ve gone with a safe option, but it would not have had that impact.”

And while the family room posed its challenges with all of its angles and lack of wall space for draperies and artwork, Tharpe was able to create a more transitional space from the original, more traditional home. “It was really about refining the space and making it relevant for the design direction, and also in terms of the style of the home,” she explains. But Tharpe did

The homeowners had a penchant for blue, so Tharpe kept the cool hue running throughout the home, including the guest bedroom. Lamps by Alexa Hampton for Visual Comfort and a bolster and heirloom bench, both swathed in a Schumacher print, add small doses of blue without going overboard. **OPPOSITE:** Tharpe loves to repurpose pieces, especially ones with fantastic lines such as this modified wingback chair in the corner of the guest bedroom. Originally covered in a mustard-yellow chenille, Tharpe had the pair recovered in a durable navy Sunbrella fabric, which instantly brought the pieces back to life.





have to do some coaxing in this space, too. “The slipper chairs with the fretwork bottom by Hickory Chair really made the space. But it took some persuading!” she laughs.

While Tharpe says that watching the Chapel Hill home come to life was one of her most rewarding home designs, like any interior design project, it came with its own set of

challenges, which she gracefully overcame. “I think it’s really about putting yourself in the homeowners’ shoes and seeing things from their perspective,” she says. “They have to be ready to make that change in their lives and in their home. You can only push so much. But in this case, I think I pushed on all the right things.” ♦