

Myatt Landscaping & Construction brought in mature trees from Maryland to provide instant privacy to the backyard. Pickett and Stewart helped design the L-shaped pool, which features a modern checkerboard tile accent.



HIDDEN *GEM*

ONE COUPLE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THEIR
UNUSED BASEMENT AND TRANSFORMED
IT INTO THEIR OWN PRIVATE OASIS.

Interior Design by **Judy Pickett & Christie Stewart** | Styling by **Kathryn Lott**
Text by **Blake Miller** | Photography by **Jane Beiles**



It took about two years before Jim and Carol Noble knew exactly what they wanted. After purchasing their Cary home in 2012 from its original homeowners, who had done very little to the 10,000-square-foot home, the Nobles decided to live in the house before making any hasty design decisions. “We said, let’s see how we feel, and let things evolve organically so that we can see how we want to use each space,” says Carol.

It wasn’t until Jim’s chance meeting with builder Jon Rufty of Rufty Homes at lunch one day that the couple decided the time had come to start redesigning their bare-bones basement space into the entertaining and lounging area they both envisioned. “Jim met Jon at lunch, they started talking, and soon

we were discussing the whole redesign of the basement,” says Carol referring to the unfinished ground floor space, which flowed out to the minimally-designed backyard. “We had a vision for that, too,” says Carol. “We’d pulled pages from magazines. Saved inspiration images.” One of those photos was of a secluded beach in the Caribbean. “It was white sand and turquoise blue water and very private and we were like, ‘That is what we want!’ We don’t travel a lot so we wanted our backyard to be an oasis, a secluded space where we can relax all day or entertain large groups of friends and family without it ever feeling cramped.”

Rufty recommended the Nobles bring on designers Judy Pickett and Christie Stewart from Design Lines, Ltd. to collabo-



rate on not only the interior design of the bottom floor but also the backyard. Together with Myatt Landscaping & Construction, the team created an ultra-secluded oasis in the backyard, complete with towering trees brought in from Maryland for ultimate privacy, a travertine patio, and an L-shaped pool featuring a checkerboard tile detail and Caribbean blue-colored stone on the bottom to mimic the ocean. “They took a backyard with four trees and a basic cement pad and transformed it into this breathtaking oasis,” says Carol.

The basement, which was partially finished, was designed to complement the backyard. “We entertain all the time and we have a large family so we needed there to be enough space indoors and out to accommodate everyone,” says Carol.

LEFT: The Nobles wanted a private backyard retreat that could accommodate their family of four as well as large family gatherings. The patio was designed as an alfresco terrace overlooking the pool, which Design Lines helped design. The patio furniture is by Janus et Cie.

RIGHT: The Nobles’ Cary home was designed by architect Carter Skinner and builder Ange Signature Homes, who designed the main level while Jon Ruffy of Ruffy Homes completed the basement renovation.



ABOVE: Laura Grandlienard of ROCKin'teriors collaborated with Ruffy, Pickett, and Stewart to design the downstairs bar, the centerpiece to the renovated basement. Leather bar stools are by R. Jones.

RIGHT: Jim's home office needed to be comfortable and a touch masculine so Pickett and Stewart kept the same neutral color palette but layered in pieces such as the desk by Century Furniture and geometric hair-on-hide rug by Kravet.

Pickett and Stewart could see the Nobles' vision and went to work designing a comfortable space to relax daily for the homeowners, but also an ideal place to host friends and family. "A lot of the basement was unused space and it was not laid out very well," says Pickett. The renovation resulted in the creation of a lounge area with a television and a "sectional, which we just love to lay around on as a family," says Carol. The designers also added a bar area, dining space, game table area, wine room, and a bedroom and bathroom.

But once the downstairs was completed, it became wildly apparent to the Nobles that their upstairs living area was in desperate need of updating as well. "We had this amazing downstairs space and then you'd walk upstairs and you'd think, 'Ugh, this paint color is awful' or 'this furniture is so dark,'" says Carol of the heavy color palette that dominated the main living areas. "We immediately knew that we need Judy and Christie to transform our main living spaces the same way they had in the lower level."

"They wanted the upstairs to be as beautiful as the downstairs," says Stewart. "They wanted a fresh, lighter look that reflected them. They're energetic and loving and very welcoming." With those cues in mind, the designers reworked the existing dark and dated spaces into brighter, more soothing and livable rooms. The dining room received one of the biggest transformations. "There was really heavy drapery in there that blocked a lot of the light,"







explains Stewart. Custom dining chairs and a dining table with a mirrored top, both by Guy Chaddock, coupled with the mirror on the opposing wall, help reflect light in the space. Artwork by artist Tiril Benton from Sozo Gallery adds a pop of color to the otherwise neutral room.

Elsewhere in the master bedroom, the designers took a one-time dark space and altered it to become a serene, calming retreat for the Nobles. “It was all heavy wood tones and all brown in the master bedroom,” says Pickett. “Restful colors enhance the scale and lines of the furnishings.” Italian percale linen bedding by Legacy Home combined with an upholstered end-of-bed-bench by Alfonso Marina

and Kravet loveseat in cool tones are soothing and relaxing. The four-posted bed by Century Furniture is the ideal juxtaposition. “We needed the scale of a poster bed, the drama of off-black, and the glam of metal fittings against the lighter tones,” says Pickett.

The rest of the home was approached similarly by wiping away the dark, overdone tones and patterns and replacing them with a lighter, brighter and more timeless color palette and sophisticated décor. “Now when you walk upstairs it’s not so jarring,” says Carol. “It really flows seamlessly from the downstairs to the main living space. And we absolutely love all of it.” ♦



LEFT: The designers gave the dining room a complete makeover by stripping the dark draperies and furniture and replacing it with lighter pieces such as the dining chairs by Guy Chaddock and artwork by Tiril Benton.



TOP RIGHT: Jim hosts friends for regular card nights and uses this game area frequently. The table is by Hickory White, chairs by Hickory Chair, and draperies by Kravet.



BOTTOM RIGHT: Pickett and Stewart kept the furniture modern and clean with the addition of the Lillian August bedside tables, four-poster bed by Century Furniture, and armless chair by EJ Victor.