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Interior designer Teri Thomas divided the family room into two distinct seating areas—one for reading by the fireplace and the other for casual lounging and television watching. The custom sofa was designed by Teri Thomas Interiors, made by Charles Stewart Company, and swathed in a soft Donghia chenille. Custom designed by Thomas, the fireplace surround features metal fabricated by Ironworks, Inc. and marble sourced from AGM Imports. The artwork is by artist Brenda Rehrig, purchased from Hidell Brooks Gallery.



MODERN MIX

DESIGNER TERI THOMAS STYLES HER CLOSE FRIENDS' HOME WITH VINTAGE, ANTIQUE, AND ECLECTIC ARTWORK AND FURNITURE.

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Thomas paired the vintage Edward Wormley for Dunbar marble-and-wood octagonal coffee table from Darnell & Company with a pair of low-lying swivel chairs by Dmitriy & Co. Both are covered in a Romo fabric. The drapery fabric is by Holland & Sherry, and the artwork is vintage.





LEFT: Every available wall displays the Darnells' impressive collection of vintage art. In the upstairs hallway hangs a large black-and-white piece by New Orleans artists Tony & Tracey Mose from Darnell & Company. An antique African chair sits alongside a vintage pot.

STUART AND KRISTIN DARNELL KNOW THE SOUTH'S design world inside and out. Their to-the-trade showroom, Darnell & Company, is a mecca for vintage finds and artwork, a space chock-full of carefully curated furniture, art, accessories, and more from around the world. As such, the Darnells have access to the best in interior design. So, in 2019, when it was time for the couple to choose an interior designer for their new townhome, one would think they would be overwhelmed at the thought of whom to pick. "Ironically, though, it was an easy choice," Stuart Darnell

laughs. Designer Teri Thomas was at the top of the list. "I've known Teri for more than forty years. We wanted someone that had a similar aesthetic, and Teri is such a good designer. Her aesthetic aligns with ours. We had a lot of antiques and artwork, and we knew Teri could marry all of that together."

For Thomas, the project was an exceptional opportunity to work with the collection of antiques, vintage pieces, and artwork the couple had amassed over the years. "To be able to work with the types of things they've collected and their

The living room was designed to primarily highlight the large vintage painting from Darnell & Company, so Thomas added pieces like the sofa, which was purchased in Paris and is covered in an earth-tone Ed Tuttle for Jim Thompson fabric. Piano players, the Darnells purchased the Art Deco-period piano to reside in this room. A custom round wool shag rug sits underneath.





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—TERI THOMAS

curated sense of style, it was an honor for them to have asked me to help them,” she says. “I do think that we have a simpatico sense of style. I certainly do all types of interior design work, but what I like personally and what they like are very similar.”

Having downsized from their home of twenty-four years, the Darnells had to pare down and decide which pieces would fill their new home. Thomas was tasked with editing the furniture, artwork, and accessories, a job she was delighted to have considering what she was pulling from. “They allowed me, which was so fun, to pick and choose, keeping in mind we wanted to use the very best they had, which was not hard to do,” Thomas says. “That’s why this was such a wonderful collaboration. Every single thing they had to work with was unique and individual. It felt like the right thing sort of stands up and raises its hand, and you know it had to be in their home.” Such was the case with the large vintage painting Thomas added to the piano room. “They showed me that piece in their showroom, and I was like, ‘OK, we’re done. It’s going in,’” the designer laughs.





The painting informed the earth-tone color palette for the intimate space, where the Darnells play and listen to the piano and entertain friends. “That painting is the first thing you see when you walk in the door of the home,” Thomas says. “It completely drove the color palette, the style of furnishings, the accessories; it drove the whole room’s design. Sometimes things just say, ‘Here’s where I need to be,’ and everything feeds off it.” While a traditional furniture layout would be the obvious choice for the small, rectangular room, Thomas opted for a nontraditional, off-center floor plan, which encourages conversation and feels less fixed and more fluid.

ABOVE: The kitchen originally had no island, so Thomas added the black quartzite waterfall counter and coupled it with lacquered gray cabinetry by Bill Truitt Wood Works. The glass-and-iron light fixture is by Hammerton.

OPPOSITE: The vintage artwork, coupled with the Jim Thompson wallcovering on the ceiling, sets a moody tone in the dining room. Thomas outfitted the space with a custom concrete-topped dining table made by Reaching Quiet with bases from Julian Chichester. The lighting is by Ochre, the rug is by Stark, and the dining chairs are by Cliff Young.



The rest of the home is designed much like an art gallery, with walls showcasing the Darnells' vintage artwork and sculptures. Thomas' knack for seamlessly coupling old with new is on display throughout, as well, with traditional European antiques beside modern artwork and vintage rugs infusing a pop of color in otherwise neutral rooms. "My job, as I saw it, was to fill in with rugs and furniture and upholstery and all the things that pull the whole cohesive look together," the designer says. Despite their eye for design,

the couple knew that they needed Thomas to help bring their vision of an eclectic mix of old and new, traditional and modern, to fruition. "Teri had the ability to see through all that we loved—the artwork, antiques, midcentury pieces, fabrics, wonderful furniture—and create this design that Kristin and I just love," Darnell says.

Though completed, the home is still a work in progress, as the Darnells continue to collect and their style evolves. "We travel a lot, so we acquire a lot of things that we love,"



Darnell says. “We’ll find a new piece and call Teri up and ask her where to put it in our house, still. At the end of the day, the finished project feels and looks like us, but it was Teri, too.” For Thomas, the project was a unique opportunity to work with close friends. “They wanted it to be fabulous, so I brought the best I could bring,” she says. “I didn’t want to let them down. I wanted them to look at their home and love everything they see in it. And I think we really captured that.” ♦

LEFT: Thomas enlisted the help of Bill Truitt Wood Works to fabricate the custom cabinetry in the primary bathroom. In keeping with the modern, streamlined aesthetic, Thomas added Carrara marble throughout and accented with sconces by The Urban Electric Co. All plumbing fixtures are from The Majestic Bath.

RIGHT: Thomas wanted to take advantage of the height of the primary bedroom, so she included the four-poster iron bed by Baker. The artwork needed to remain the focus, so she left the furniture and accessories more neutral, adding antique chests from France and Italy from Darnell & Company, the rug from Stark, and the custom chaise swathed in a Mokum fabric from Charles Stewart Company. The draperies are by Jim Thompson, and the bed linens are from Isabella.