

Triangle

APRIL/MAY 2022

# HOME

DESIGN & DECOR

GREAT  
ESCAPES



PLUS:  
STAYCATION  
BACKYARD OASIS

# WELLNESS RETREAT



The homeowners enlisted landscape architect Gregg Blead along with custom pool designer Blue Haven Raleigh to install the backyard living space and pool.

HEATHER GARRETT AND THE  
RALEIGH ARCHITECTURE  
COMPANY DESIGN A  
STUNNING WELLNESS  
RETREAT RIGHT IN ONE  
COUPLE'S BACKYARD.

TEXT BY **BLAKE MILLER**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOHN BESSLER**





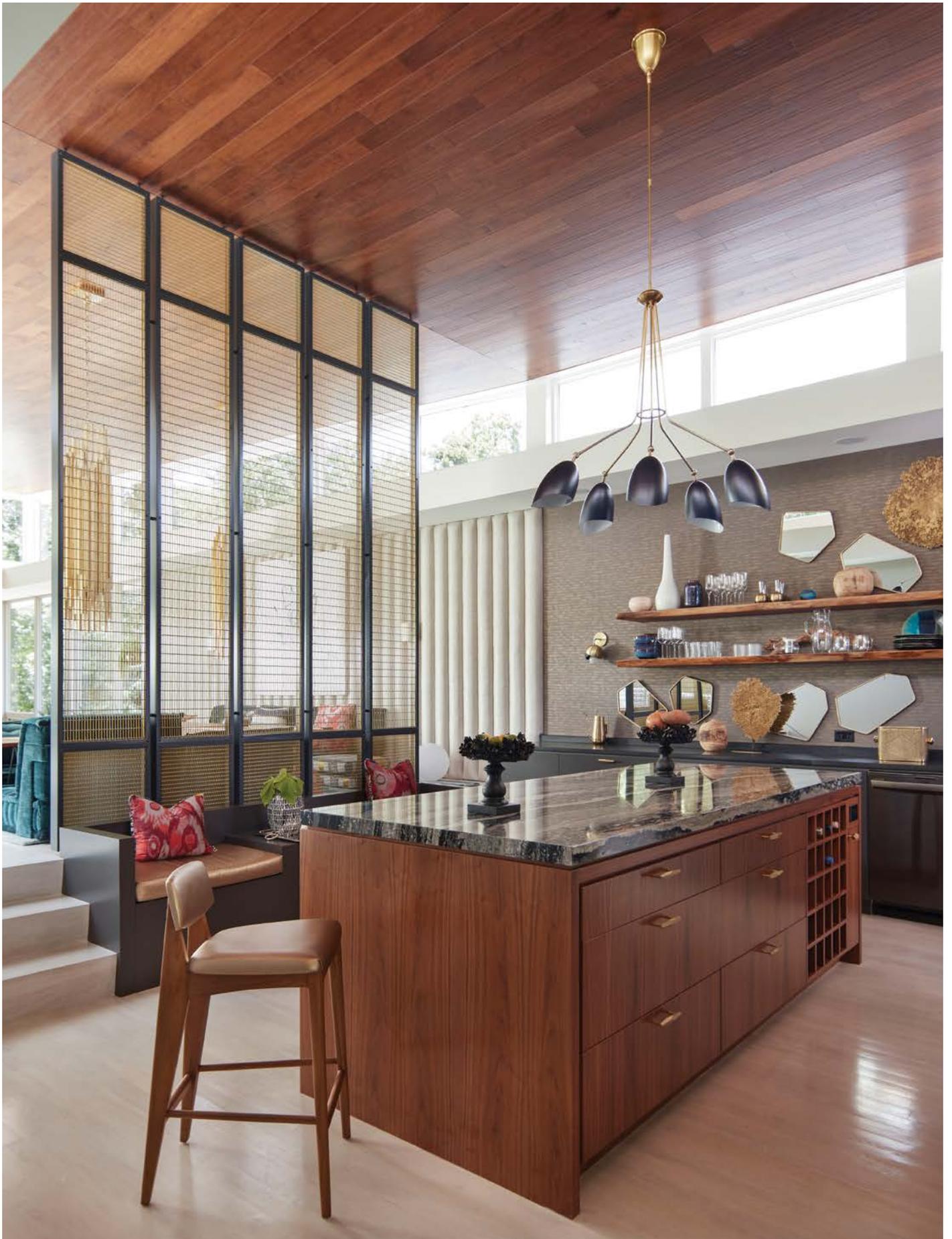


**LEFT:** The dining room design focused on accommodating gatherings from intimate to grand in size comfortably. In lieu of one oversized dining table, Garrett installed two separate tables that split apart to allow for more guests and inspire conversation. The adjacent padded upholstered wall softens the rich walnut paneling throughout the space while the brass mesh screen serves as a subtle partition between the dining area and the more utilitarian space of the kitchen.

**B**ROOKS BELL HAS ALWAYS DREAMED OF HAVING her home featured in a magazine. “As a child, I would read *Architectural Digest*,” she says, “and I always thought that that would be the epitome of success, to have my personal home published in a magazine.” Bell was aware that while she has an artistic mind, she needed a design scheme to help pull together a cohesive interior. “I was young, twenty-nine, and artistic, and I knew I had to leave it up to a professional, but it was a horrible disaster working with that designer,” she laughs. “And then we used another designer and it was the same.”

Feeling burned by her previous experiences, Bell and her husband Jesse Lipson felt stalled, and they were gun-shy about working with yet another designer. It wasn't until the couple visited a friend's house and became smitten with their interiors, designed by Heather Garrett, that they felt they'd found a perfect match. “Heather was the true designer we'd been looking for,” says Bell.

The couple initially enlisted Garrett to work on two of the rooms in their iconic midcentury-modern home, located in the Budleigh neighborhood and designed by renowned architect Fred Carter Williams. They were so impressed with Garrett's work that they ultimately hired her to finish the entire home a few years later. “Everything was on time and on budget and just beautiful,” says Bell. “Heather designed the entire house, top to bottom. We went away on vacation for a week and she installed it. It was the most joyous moment of





The foyer features a bold custom watercolor mural by Black Crow Studios. "This is a great example of worlds colliding," says Garrett of the juxtaposition of the contemporary artwork with the vintage credenza with sculptural gold accents.

**OPPOSITE:** The kitchen functions more as an entertaining space than a utilitarian area, so Garrett designed the structure with an adjacent butler's pantry, which houses everyday items and appliances. The oversized Cambria quartzite island with walnut cabinetry is ideal for food displays and wine pouring.

**BELOW:** The guest spa bathroom is outfitted with sleek shagreen wall tile from Byrd Tile, while the plumbing fixtures by Brizo were sourced from the H2O showroom. The wallpaper is by NewWall.

**OPPOSITE:** The designer wanted the sunken living room to feel as 1960s as possible, but with a contemporary edge. To achieve this, Garrett and The Raleigh Architecture Company custom-designed the walnut sectional with brass mesh detail, which set the tone for the space. The Platner chair coupled with the hanging basket seat and plants feel midcentury modern, while the nesting tables provide a modern touch.





my life to walk into this fully installed home! Six months later we were in *Traditional Home*.”

Several years later, in 2014, the home next door went on the market. “We’d always had our eye on that lot because we wanted more privacy for our home,” says Bell. While they nearly missed out on purchasing the home three times, eventually they bought it. But instead of expanding their primary residence, the couple wanted to create a wellness space; a place where they could completely and fully immerse themselves in self-care. “We were both CEOs of our own companies

and working extremely hard, but feeling like we were aging quickly,” says Bell. “We acknowledged that the best thing we could do was improve and prioritize our health.”

In 2018, the couple again hired Garrett, alongside The Raleigh Architecture Company, to bring their vision of a wellness retreat to fruition. The space they envisioned included a full-floor spa, a movement studio and gym, a spa and meditation lounge, a chef’s kitchen, and entertaining space. In addition, they wanted a large plot of the land between the two homes to be a lush organic garden. “Originally, the interior aesthetic Brooks wanted was

The freestanding Malm fireplace and exposed brick wall in a beige hue is a nod to the midcentury-modern inspiration for the interior design. The artwork is by Jason Craighead. **OPPOSITE:** The entire downstairs of the structure is devoted to the spa, complete with sauna, steam room, and shower. "It's like you're at the Umstead Hotel's spa," says Garrett of the upscale Cary hotel. Sheer draperies help filter the natural sunlight, resulting in a soothing subtle glow that's ideal for Bell's daily meditation. The credenza is by Noir.





more of a 1950s Palm Springs midcentury-modern vibe,” explains Garret. “But after they went to Japan, things really changed. They wanted more of a 1950s Palm Springs-meets-twenty-first-century-New York-by-way-of-Kyoto vibe. We knew that that meant a lot of brass, vibrant color, some vintage pieces, and certainly some classic 1960s shapes in terms of furniture, like a Platner chair or the vintage credenza in the foyer that’s from that period and place. We wanted to punctuate the whole home with some pieces that made sense to her description.” Adds Bell, “We wanted to stand out from the rest of the South and have more of a West Coast feel to the space, but we didn’t want it cold and minimalist.”

Architecturally, the structure and interior details were classic midcentury modern, with walnut paneled ceilings and walnut cabinetry in the kitchen coupled with clean, simple, modern lines. True to the time period, a traditional sunken living room was

designed as the ultimate entertaining space, with a large custom sectional designed by Garret and The Raleigh Architecture Company. Punctuating the sectional are bold turquoise plush cushions and Ikat pillows. “It was important that this space felt as 1960s as it could but with a contemporary edge,” says the designer.

Functionally, the space also needed to seamlessly accommodate large gatherings. As CEOs, philanthropists, and donors, the couple hosts intimate dinner parties as well as large fundraisers, and the space needed to allow for groups large and small to gather. In lieu of one oversized dining table, Garret designed the dining room with two large tables that pull apart so “they can move them around and arrange them any way they like,” she explains. As far as aesthetic, Garret approached the dining area, which bleeds into the sunken living room, with the same mid-century-modern Palm Springs vibe, plus a dose of Japanese style.



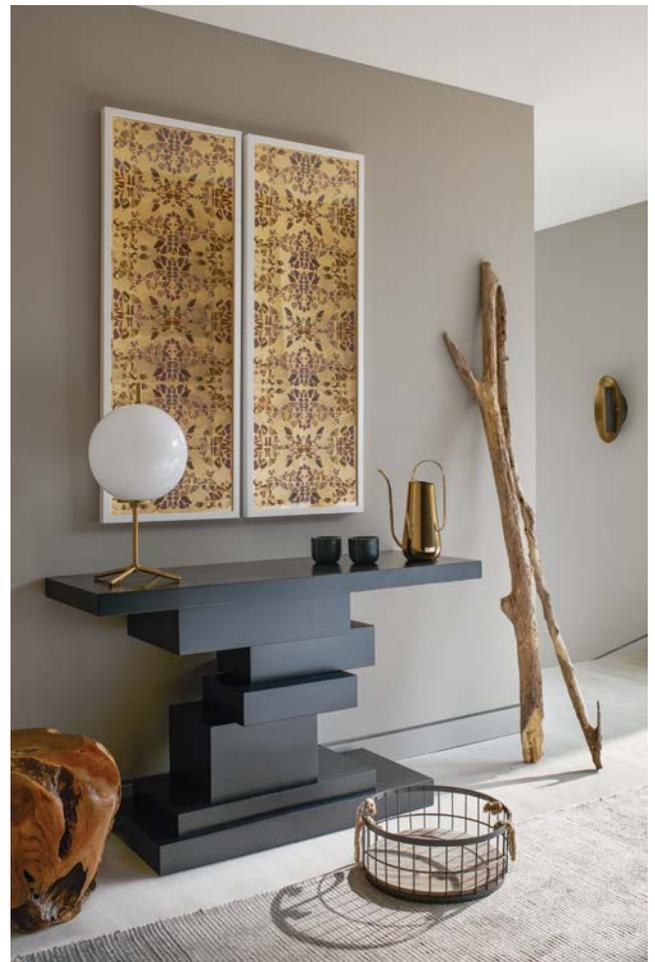
**ABOVE:** The couple and Garrett commissioned Greensboro-based mural artist Jeks—known for his hyperrealistic, oversized artwork—to paint the custom Bruce Lee mural in the home gym.

**RIGHT:** A breezeway connects the primary residence with the wellness center, so Garrett wanted to set a Zen tone from the moment you walk in. She achieved this by adding a basket in which to place your shoes and hanging soothing artwork by Natural Curiosities.

The upholstered wall is in the channel-style of upholstery that was prevalent in the 1950s while the brass plated pendants give that Palm Springs-glam punch to the room.

While the public areas are colorful, bold, and vibrant, the couple also wanted a space that was Zen through and through. The downstairs spa lounge is where Garrett took advantage of the natural light, which floods the room. Sheer drapes filter the sunlight, giving the room a delicate, soothing glow. In keeping with the midcentury-modern aesthetic, a Malm fireplace and brick wall detail, which runs to the upstairs level as well, was added into the neutral color palette. “I wanted to bring that peacefulness and energy from the East and the fun party theme from 1960s California, but elevate it,” says Bell. “I wanted it to feel like you could sink into a sofa and be comfortable and warm.”

Ultimately, the home has become the couple’s daily retreat, with Bell heading there each morning to meditate, light incense, and drink hot tea while Lipson takes a steam shower to relax. “Heather so easily interpreted what we wanted the space to look and feel like and brought it together,” says Bell. “That’s why she’s so talented. She gave us a space that achieves everything we wanted and needed it to be.” ♦



In keeping with the midcentury-modern Palm Springs vibe, Garrett designed the guest bathroom with brass hardware by Delta coupled with a starburst mirror by Arteriors.

