

FUNKY

FRESH

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DESIGNER MICHELLE MURPHY GIVES US A PEEK INTO HER CREATIVE MIND BY WAY OF HER PERSONAL ONE-OF-A-KIND HOME.

In this living room corner, art that Murphy purchased from Baker Furniture hangs over a bench from Arteriors.





ABOVE: Pendants from Visual Comfort draw the eye into the bright and airy kitchen. For added texture and interest in the all-white space, Murphy added chevron panels to the end of her island. Oak floors from Raleigh Reclaimed complement a softer look.

WHEN DESIGNER Michelle Murphy saw the quaint old home with a white picket fence just down the street from her client's home in Chapel Hill, she fell in love with it—which was odd, because it was not her typical modern style. It was built in 1974 and the adorable fence made it feel charming and nostalgic. Still, she and her husband, Dennis, begged to get inside before it was set to hit the market, and when they did, it had even more of the opposite style Murphy was drawn to.

“I mean, this home had eight-foot ceilings, chopped up rooms, and, like ... kangaroo wallpaper in the kitchen,” she recalls, laughing. “The kitchen was so tiny that it could barely fit a forty-inch table. But I just loved the bones so much, and the location, and I knew right away that it was the house for us. The second it hit the market, we made a full-price offer and landed the home.”



**THIS PAGE AND
OPPOSITE BOTTOM:**
Murphy envisioned a
smoke-filled room with
masculine energy for the
family room loft, which
comes to life with a smoky
hand-painted mural by
Caroline Lizarraga. A black
shiplap wall mixed with
moody furnishings from
Four Hands rounds it out.





Michelle Murphy stands in front of her floral graffiti wallpaper from Porter Teleo and artwork made from a collage of wedding photos.

Seeing potential where others can't may be one of Murphy's superpowers, and her designs only solidify her specialty. They drew up plans for a total renovation of the home, but started first with the kitchen and primary bedroom and bathroom. And although they added a dormer on the front that was not in the plans, the home has captured everything in her original blueprints, exactly as Murphy could envision.

The kitchen with kangaroo wallpaper transformed into Murphy's new butler's pantry, and when they discovered a five-by-four-foot walled-in empty space during the renovations, her son's bathroom grew bigger. The second renovation, which took place last year, nearly doubled the footprint of the home and included tearing down to studs and starting over, complete with "sneaky walkthroughs to add interest and curious nooks and crannies throughout," according to Murphy.

"In order to match me and my husband's style, we had to layer," says the designer. "The bones are modern farmhouse, but inside of that we wanted clean lines and a modern feel for



In the dining room, Murphy hid the door to the kitchen with wallpaper from Vahallan. A metal dining table from Dovetail Furniture adds an industrial feel and a chandelier from Oly Studio brings the funk.



my husband, and, for me, a little coastal, a little rock 'n roll, a little boho, and a little glam. I try to layer many different styles to create an overall look.”

And that aesthetic is evident in most rooms; the guest bathroom has an Asian-style wallpaper combined with a green-hued vanity, a black-and-white patterned floor, and “wacko art,” as Murphy puts it. It’s finished off with polished chrome fixtures to add the glam piece. In the formal living room, a leather chandelier mingles with floral graffiti wallpaper. “It’s all done in an elegant way, so that nothing seems too over-the-top,” promises Murphy. “It’s balancing funky elements with more neutral or tonal elements, and playing with texture to get depth out of a neutral palette; but that balance is what keeps it feeling cohesive.”

Murphy continues, saying that in her husband’s “manland” she had the chance to go ridiculous—



ABOVE: In this little corner, Murphy chose Kravet fabrics for softness and color, and paired them with a mirror from Palecek.

BELOW: In the primary bedroom, Murphy chose Beyond wallpaper by Phillip Jeffries to add interest behind the bed. Nightstands in navy from Villa & House stand by, and a rug from Eatman’s Carpets & Interiors grounds the room. Chairs from Four Hands offer a respite on the side.



Murphy's favorite room is her office, with another hand-painted mural by Caroline Lizarraga that "makes the space," she says. The hot pink ottoman is a centerpiece from Baker Furniture, as is the sofa and table. A chandelier from Visual Comfort adds some fun, while art by Jennifer Lashbrook complements.







The main living room is open and airy, with Porter Teleo wallpaper on the staircase wall and a white leather coffee table from Square Feathers that centers the room. Gray chairs from Arteriors offer extra soft seating. Plants throughout are from GTHRd by HD.

The primary bedroom closet is Murphy's personal heaven, where the ceiling is just as lively as the clothes on the hangers. Wallpaper from Christian Lacroix and a chandelier from Currey & Company set the tone.





ABOVE: The designer ordered a custom black-and-white Philadelphia toile wallpaper by Flavor Paper for her powder room and paired it with a hot pink vanity for a fun dose of color.

BELOW: Murphy made the laundry room just as fun as the rest of the home with wallcoverings from Emma Shipley for Kravet and fixtures by Arteriors.



ridiculous as in lopping off the head of a deer statue, lacquering it in white, and making a planter out of it. “Sometimes when I tell my team what I want them to do, they definitely give me an uneasy look,” says Murphy. “But then they see the finished product and they’re like, ‘Oh yeah, actually that is one of our favorite elements!’”

Her vision may lack luster in language, but in execution, it’s vivid and flawless. Murphy saw her husband’s “manland” as a smoky bar with a modern feel. Translated, it looks like reclaimed wood on the ceiling, black walls, and a modified deer planter to create the effect.

“For little things, I may occasionally second guess myself, but for bigger things, I just think, ‘It’s so badass, why would it be bad?’” admits Murphy. “You have to do new things all the time, or else design can get stagnant and boring.”

After twenty-five years in the business, Murphy has earned the right to be badass, especially when it comes to her own home. And her home is anything but boring or stagnant.

“I saw in a magazine feature that Mike D from the Beastie Boys had this Brooklyn toile in his home that featured landmarks and icons from his hometown in Brooklyn, and I just fell in love,” she says. “I searched everywhere for the manufacturers of that paper to order a Philly toile that would pay homage to my college town. I was able to custom order a Philly version in a black-and-white pattern, and it’s one of my favorite elements in the home.”

Artist Caroline Lizarraga flew in from San Francisco and painted the murals that currently reside in Murphy’s office and family loft. “I am the worst at waiting. I have no patience. But I waited for Caroline. It was exactly what I needed in those spaces,” says Murphy.

Perhaps it’s the mix of patience, vision, creativity, and a healthy dose of badass-ness that results in the overall intrigue of Murphy’s home. One thing is for certain, however: it oozes style that only Murphy can create. ♦