

Charlotte's Dream Home

BY BLAKE MILLER AND LAUREN BLAKE

THESE SEVEN
STUNNING SPACES BY
LOCAL ARCHITECTS
AND DESIGNERS ARE
SET TO INSPIRE.



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What would happen if you took seven of Charlotte's best designers and architects' most well-designed and interesting rooms and put them in one home? You'd have a home boasting exquisitely-designed spaces featuring all of the elements we often daydream about one day having in our own houses. From a vibrant kitchen and chic outdoor living space to a serene master bedroom and playful nursery, combined, these rooms are examples of why Charlotte has fast become one of the country's top places for home design.

PHOTO BY NGOC MINH NGO

the kitchen

LINDSEY CORAL HARPER, INTERIOR DESIGNER, LINDSEY CORAL HARPER INTERIORS



The request was simple: a white kitchen with concrete countertops. But for interior designer Lindsey Coral Harper, the newly remodeled kitchen in her clients' circa-1940s home in Myers Park needed a punch of color. "This kitchen is pretty large and there was a lot of white and a bit of gray," explains Harper. "I found the yellow was a punchy but happy complement. It's also a very happy color combination." To offset the bold yellow, Harper introduced a built-in banquette added in lieu of traditional seating to soften the space, swathed in a fun grey, white, and yellow fabric. "In every job I want the project to reflect my client; however, I think it's hard not to bring my personal style into it," says Harper. "I love color and I like to layer and to mix and match patterns. There is a lot of color and layers and patterns in this room."

WHAT INSPIRED THE DESIGN OF THE KITCHEN?

"The client wanted white cabinets and a Carrera tiled backsplash, so the white and gray were the groundwork. I knew she wanted a seating area so that's where the banquette came in. The rest evolved from there."

WHAT OBSTACLES DID YOU ENCOUNTER WHEN DESIGNING THIS KITCHEN?

"I sort of insisted on painting the floor. It took a few months for the client to come around to it. The original wooden floors were so sad in this otherwise bright room. So I flew down with my one of my best friends, Jay Lohmann—he's also my decorative painter. ... He had to put several solid coats on the floor and then he drew the pattern by hand. Then he painted the pattern and then sealed it. It's a lot of tedious work. Because we were running out of time, the client, Jay, and I were up until the wee hours of the night filling in the paint on the kitchen floor! So we all got a hand in it! [The client] is a trooper and we laughed our tails off painting all night!"

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE DESIGN CONCEPTS TO INSTALL IN A KITCHEN SPACE?

"I think the kitchen is often the heart of the home and it's nice when you have a space to hang out. I prefer to create casual kitchens that you want to spend a lot of time in."

the living room

LANE BROWN, INTERIOR DESIGNER, PHOEBE HOWARD



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Interior designer Lane Brown was confronted with a problem: her clients, who had just moved here from Connecticut, wanted her to design a comfortable entertaining space as well as home office in their home's tightest room. The long and narrow library featuring a wall full of custom built-in bookshelves was so small that Brown knew that traditional oversize pieces would not work. "It was tricky," she says of finding the appropriate furniture to complement the room's intimate feeling rather than smother it. Instead, Brown, who works alongside famed interior designer Phoebe Howard, opted to fill the intimate space with smaller pieces—a settee that doubles as a loveseat and two chairs that complete the seating area without blocking the view to the pool terrace—that make the room feel bigger. In the end, the homeowners fell in love with the room, which they use to entertain but also as a place to work while at home.

THIS ROOM HAS A BOLD COLOR SCHEME. WHY RED?

"The rest of the downstairs is all very monochromatic: greys and ivories. So with that room I wanted there to be a flow. We stuck with the neutrality of using greys and ivories [with a pop of red on the bookshelves]. The red bookshelves] are another reason I wanted to go with neutral paint colors so they would have a greater impact."

HOW DID YOU INCORPORATE TEXTURE INTO THIS ROOM?

"The area rug is a Tibetan silk geometric so it's a very soft texture. The chairs are upholstered in a low-pile velvet that acts like a mohair and there's a basket weave print on the settee. The coffee table has a reflective mirror and there is also a polished nickel floor lamp so there are some reflective qualities in the room. Bright, shiny metals like those two lamps add another texture to the room."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE ROOM?

"The cohesiveness of the bookshelves. I used really big pottery jars and large coffee table books to style the bookshelves. I love the symmetrical aspect of that. There are so many built ins and I like the simplicity of it by using larger objects. It could look very cluttered if you used too many small objects to style it. That's where so many people tend to go wrong. It's important to use bigger objects instead of little things [when styling things like bookshelves] because that's what tends to make bookshelves look junky."

WHAT DID THE HOMEOWNERS LOVE MOST ABOUT THE ROOM?

"She really wanted things to be light in the room so she was thrilled with the amount of seating I was able to get in the space without it feeling cramped."

PHOTOS BY DUSTIN PECK

the dining room

LAURA ARCHIBALD, DESIGNER, LAURA ARCHIBALD INTERIOR DESIGN



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When it came to designing this elegant dining room, Laura Archibald used bold patterns matched with soft texture and lighting to create an overall effect that's both dramatic and warm. "Dimmers are a must!" says Archibald. "I also love candlelight at night, so when entertaining be sure to use votives on your dining room table." The end result: A room that shines both during daylight and candle lit evening hours.

WHAT'S ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF A DINING ROOM DESIGN?

"I place great importance on lighting. It serves as both a decorative element and a functional element. In this room we have a custom Empire style chandelier made by Dilworth Antique Lighting,

sconces on two walls, and mercury glass lamps on the sideboard."

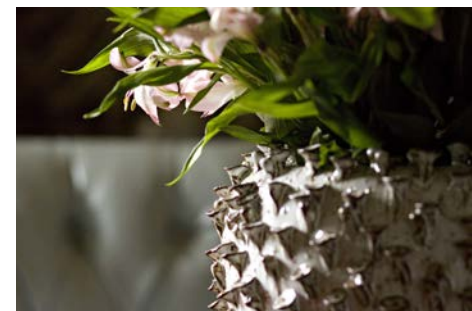
WHAT TYPE OF CHAIR DO YOU TYPICALLY RECOMMEND FOR A DINING ROOM?

"I use all different types of chairs, but I tend to like upholstered dining chairs or painted chairs with a dark table to mix it up. It adds softness and interest in a room. Here, we used a blue vinyl on the seats and in-backs of the tufted chairs, and then we used a silk fabric on the outbacks."

WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE ONE ESSENTIAL EVERY DINING ROOM NEEDS?

"All rooms are different so I don't think there is

one essential element—other than a dining table and chairs of course, but I do think that great accessories make a room. The mirror in this room has a wow factor when you walk in. There is a pair of old books covered in cream paper on the sideboard and a decorative box with gemstones on top."



the master bedroom

BARRIE BENSON, INTERIOR DESIGNER, BARRIE BENSON INTERIORS

As soon as Barrie Benson saw her client's outdated 1950s ranch, she knew it needed one thing: color. While the rest of the home received a colorful makeover via renovations and the installation of an entirely new aesthetic, the homeowner wanted her bedroom to be a place for rest and relaxing, a space in which bold colors might not work so well. "I always design a room or home with the personality of the client in mind," says Benson. "The homeowner is very chic, well-travelled, and busy. Women with all of these attributes need a place to rest and restore." The answer was a grayish purple color palette complemented by layers of varying textures that give a somewhat neutral base some interest. "It's a very peaceful and serene color," says Benson. "It is a neutral bedroom without being colorless."

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS COLOR PALETTE WORKS WELL IN THIS PARTICULAR SPACE?

"The room is small but we wanted airy and serene. I borrowed a trick from [interior designer] Jeffrey Bilhuber: Benjamin Moore Edgecombe Gray in flat on the ceiling creates a shadow and makes the ceiling feel higher. This house is a 1950's ranch and the ceilings are just under 9 foot."

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC PIECES IN THIS ROOM THAT REALLY SET THE TONE?

"The layers and textures are what set the tone. The quilted satin duvet is overly glamorous but the Moroccan shag rug brings it back down to earth. The homeowner dresses this way. Glamorous but down to earth."

WERE THERE ANY OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME WHEN DESIGNING THIS ROOM?

"Not too many, it just came together very quickly. I think the biggest obstacle was a little puppy named Roscoe that house trained on the Moroccan rug."

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT THE ROOM?

"The happy client that sleeps in it!"



PHOTO BY CHRIS EDWARDS

the nursery

BETH KEIM, INTERIOR DESIGNER AND OWNER OF LUCY AND COMPANY DESIGN FIRM



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PHOTOS BY MERENZIE FRANCE

Beth Keim's client loved this birch tree wall paper, so that was where the playful designer decided to begin. "When you have a client who is not afraid of pattern and color, creating a room filled with whimsy is a dream job," says Keim, who used modern shapes and gloss finishes to accent the fun wallpaper and fabrics. Her plan? To create a room that could work for a boy or girl and would continue to be fun for them as they grew. "Nurseries to kid's room should be an easy transition and having fun with it will make it a space any little kid will love to spend time in!"

WHAT INSPIRED THE FUNKY AND ECLECTIC VIBE OF THE ROOM?

"Working with a client's personality is of the utmost importance as well, and this adventurous client was game for just about anything as long as it was striking. The "E.U.N" sign has been on my radar for a while and I have wanted to find

just the right person and space to use it in. For me it made the room! Filtering in like, yet mismatched fabrics and colors all seemed to work, even the orange rug with the red fixture."

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO CREATE A GENDER NEUTRAL NURSERY THAT STILL EXUDES A SENSE OF CHARACTER?

"A gender neutral nursery is often requested, this color palate could go either way. Its fun vibe does set a tone for the space, but more importantly its main element, the tree wall paper, can easily be updated to a big boy or girl room later."

WHAT DO YOU SEE FOR THIS ROOM AS THE BABY GROWS UP?

"It's youthful, yet at the same time can transition to an older kid space or even a fun adult guest room."

the playroom

JACY PAINTER KELLY, DESIGNER, JACY PAINTER KELLY INTERIORS



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When Jacy Painter Kelly's clients first approached her for help in designing their two kids' playroom, they were initially only looking for help in choosing paint colors. But what began as a simple color consultation morphed into a complete transformation of the playroom that the homeowners' children, ages 12 and 4, could spend time working on arts and crafts and playing games as well as work on homework and school projects. The biggest challenge: the age gap between their daughter, who is 12, and their son, who is 4. "The age difference proved to be the biggest obstacle [in the design process]," says Kelly of finding an aesthetic that was both gender neutral and age appropriate for both kids. The result: an entertaining room—designed on a budget—that fits both kids' needs now and that will grow with them as they do. "I knew it needed to function for both children in the family," says Kelly, "and

I didn't want anyone to outgrow either of them anytime soon."

WHAT DID THE ROOM LOOK LIKE BEFORE?

"The house is only a couple years old so it had basic builder taupe walls and ceilings with base lighting. The sofa, lounge chair, and ottoman were in the room already, but it was otherwise bare."

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ROOM'S AESTHETIC?

"We went for fun and functional! There are some modern twists, like the Ikea storage systems, but I also used some industrial elements by adding the galvanized buckets for small toy storage and the open cage industrial lights. I went for some whimsy and fun with the rainbow zebra art by local artist Britton Buist, and tied it together with

the rug and pillows. The chalk wall makes a bold statement while keeping lines clean and fresh."

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS ROOM WORKS WELL FOR THIS FAMILY?

"It's not too feminine or too masculine. It is an ageless space that works for both a young child and a pre-teen. His toys have a home and she has a hang-out space."



PHOTO BY AMANDA JAMES PHOTOGRAPHY

the outdoor living space

KEN PURSLEY, ARCHITECT, PURSLEY DIXON ARCHITECTURE



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Charlotte architect Ken Pursley used plantings and the natural space to design a backyard living area that is both sophisticated and tranquil. The result? An outdoor area that is perfect for play for children and relaxation for adults. “We made the bluestone deep enough so that children can run around the pool without getting grass on their feet,” says Pursley. “It can’t all be about aesthetics!”


HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO CREATE A SENSE OF PRIVACY WITHIN THE OUTDOOR LIVING SPACE?

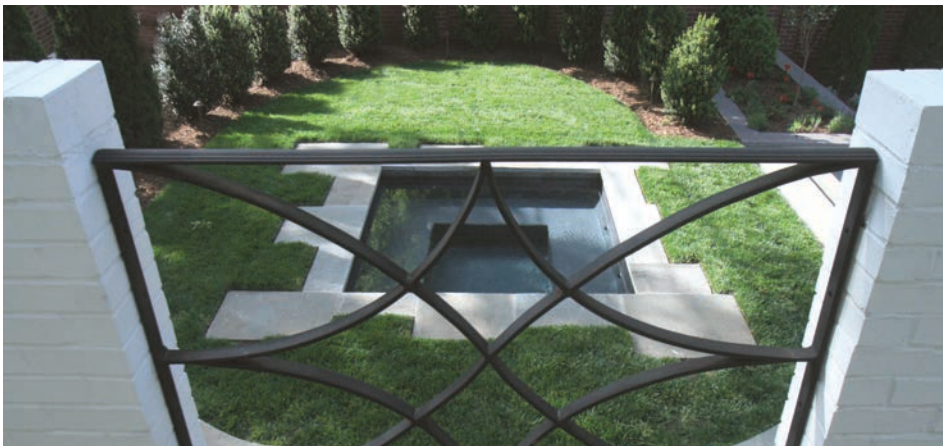
“We worked with landscape architect Bruce Clodfelter to create green ‘walls’ to block out the neighboring properties. We wanted the feeling to be simple, yet natural.”

WHAT DESIGN TECHNIQUES WORK BEST FOR CREATING AN OUTDOOR LIVING AREA THAT EXUDES A RETREAT-LIKE FEEL SUCH AS THIS ONE?

“Let the space be the most important thing. The pool house, walls, fences, and plantings are all used to define an outdoor ‘room’. If the backyard space is not clearly defined, the ‘room’ becomes choppy and amorphous. When possible, I also like to create multiple chambers in a design so there is always a sense of anticipation and surprise.”

WHY DOES THE MINIMAL SLATE PAVEMENT SURROUNDING THE POOL WORK WELL AESTHETICALLY?

By keeping grass around the pool, it makes the composition softer and the pool reads more like a pond. Particularly for a small yard like this one, the more living surfaces you can provide, the better. 



COURTESY OF PURSLEY DIXON ARCHITECTURE