

[COVER FEATURE]

STYLE **REVIVAL**

FROM A MODERN MANSE TO AN URBAN LOFT, THESE CHARLOTTE HOMES
HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO STUNNING SPACES.

BY BLAKE MILLER



THE MODERN MANSE

Photography By Mekenzie France



It was a project designer Beth Keim looked forward to. Her client, Jill Pleune, had reached out to her longtime friend to help design the interior of her new 5,500-square-foot French Country style SouthPark home. Knowing that Pleune, co-owner of Sloan boutique in Dilworth, was not only stylish but also willing to take design risks, Keim wanted to create a home that reflected her client's personality and signature white style. The only catch: Pleune's signature style is white while Keim is known for her colorfully-designed projects. It was a challenge the designer was excited to take on. "While paint is generally the last piece of the decorating pie, in this case I sent my painters over immediately. I knew no matter what furniture, fabrics, and accessories I chose, white would be the way to go. Painting was the easy part."

With a base palette in place, Keim needed no further design guidance from Pleune. "Jill reflects her love of unique and interesting fashion styles in her everyday look," explains Keim. "Having known Jill for years, I was eager to help her create a space to reflect her personality. My job was to take her fashion sense and translate that into her home. The design and the items I intended to find required much more thought, as Jill is one who loves to be an original."

Having worked with Pleune in the past on rooms in her previous home, Keim opted to start with the focal point of the 5-bedroom house, an especially long living room, and work her way out. Though the room is partially separated by a threshold, Keim wanted to make sure the two spaces, which are both used for entertaining and relaxing as a family, were seamless in design and flow.

First, though, Keim had to get creative in hiding an existing eyesore from the home, which was built in 1987. There were badly cracked stucco walls—



Designer Beth Keim created a seamless flow in the long living room in Jill Pleune's SouthPark home by dividing the room into two separate areas with back to back sofas.





Keim used black graphic wall paper and reupholstered dining chairs to incorporate Pleune's furniture in an updated way.

leftover from the previous owners. The solution: instead of redoing the stucco or adding more sheet rock, Keim chose to cover up the design flaw with floor-to-ceiling faux boxwoods, which cover the entire wall on both sides. "It's a little out of the ordinary, I know, but the intent was to give Jill the feel of an outdoor space indoors," explains Keim. "The boxwoods became our wow factor and have been the most talked about element in the room."

To keep things seamless, Keim divided the room in half with two sofas back to back creating two separate conversation areas. The remaining walls were painted white with gloss white trim while large white sofas are complemented by a white chaise and white shag carpet. "What I believe keeps this space from looking too sterile are the splash of color from the two chairs, both covered in a vibrant Trina Turk fabric," she says.

In keeping with Pleune's stylish personality, Keim wanted the room's accessories and furniture to be a collection of old and new. To complete the space, Keim accessorized with vintage finds—many from Slate Interiors—including two oversize regency-style vintage lamps in white while two different rug styles further define the individual spaces of the long living room. Gold accents add a touch of warmth to the monochromatic feel of the room while a mixture of wood tones adds a slight depth to the white base and identical fabrics incorporated into both spaces adds continuity.

In the foyer, Keim wanted to set the tone for the style and feel of the house. With the living room complete, she continued the paint color into the large foyer and painted the banister and stairs a high-gloss black to create an elegant juxtaposition against the white walls. Two vintage

cane chairs were repainted and recovered while Pleune's existing brass floor lamp was given new life with a custom lampshade with layered and frayed white burlap stripes designed by Keim. The dramatic entry pours over into the adjacent dining room where the designer installed "an amazing black graphic wall paper with the organic feel of the peacock overlay design," she says. "Dining rooms are the places to have a little fun. My goal in this dining room was to incorporate Jill's furniture in an updated way." A new chandelier, reupholstered dining chairs, a natural fiber rug, and art complete the stylish space.

The resulting look is a fashion-forward home, which her client can easily entertain and relax in with family. "Happily, I hit the nail on the head with Jill," says Keim. "The reveal was a big success. This large space started a look and feel for her new home."



Rather than cover cracked stucco walls with sheet rock, Keim used floor-to-ceiling faux boxwoods to bring an outdoors feeling into the room.

THE CHARMING HOUSE

Photography By Dustin Peck

When Ben Collins decided to move to Charlotte 16 years ago to start his construction business, The Salins Group, he wasn't quite sure where he was going to live. It wasn't until after friends of his mentioned that the home they were renting was going on the market that Collins finally knew where he was meant to set down his roots. "It was the second home we looked at," says Collins of the then 1,100-square-foot home near Charlotte Country Club in Plaza Midwood. "I knew I was going to buy it the minute we saw it."

Though the circa-1934 home was charming, it also was in need of a major overhaul. After living in the home for a year, Collins had figured out exactly what they wanted to achieve with the renovation: create a seamless addition to the existing home so that it looked as if it had always been a part of the original structure. After assembling a dream team with architect Allan Brooks, designer Aida Saul, and landscape architect Bruce Clodfelter, Collins began demo of the couple's cottage. "We did everything we possibly could to preserve the charm of the existing house," says Collins of gutting the home and adding multi levels resulting in a five-story home. "The outcome with the collaborative effort was amazing."

The now 3,600-square-foot home boasts four bedrooms and four baths not to mention a gourmet kitchen—perfect for chef enthusiast and Collins' husband, Scotty Vanhoozier—and an interior that combines traditional elements with the couple's collection of artwork and antiques. Painted black hardwood floors—an inspi-



Homeowner Ben Collins. Additions like a staircase tower and chic pool area dramatically updated this Plaza Midwood home.

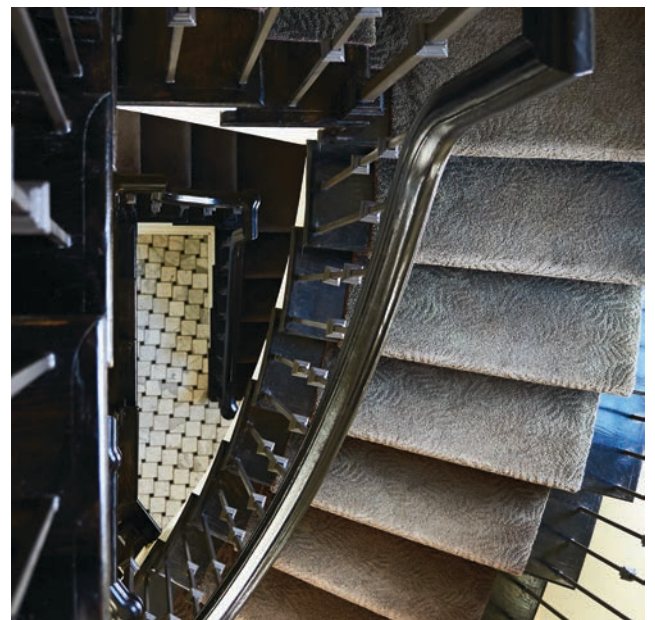




ration from a home Collins saw in *Architectural Digest* years before—run throughout the home. With its large windows providing brilliant light, the kitchen is one of the most used spaces of the home. “I often sit at the banquette, which is covered in a soft buttery yellow leather and watch as Scotty cooks dinner,” says Collins.

Avid entertainers, the couple wanted to make sure the existing sectioned-off footprint was transformed into a seamless, more open floor plan. “One of the struggles was that the footprint was so small that there wasn’t space to put in a staircase,” he says. A stair tower that connects the top floor with the lowest level was installed allowing for an easy way to move from floor to floor. Oftentimes the couple retreats to their downstairs pub room with friends where a casual table, perfect for card games and conversation, and fireplace prove to be the ideal setting for entertaining. The upstairs dining room, however, is less often used for casual dinners and more as a library. It’s here that the couple pores over books and relaxes rather than dines.

Though it’s been 15 years since the renovation, Collins feels the finishes and accessories he and his team chose for the home have stood the test of time—and will continue to do so for years to come. “Trying to make any addition or renovation seamless can be very challenging,” he says. “I often show people the house to show how you can renovate seamlessly from old to new without having it look awkward. I’m probably the most proud of this project.”



A stair tower connecting the top floor and lowest level adds ease to moving around the expanded home.



It's been 15 years since the original renovation, but the classic finishes and accessories continue to feel up to date.



THE URBAN LOFT

Photography By Justin Smith



Meredith Jackson has always had an eye for design. After living in cities like New Orleans and London, the Tulsa, Oklahoma-native had access to some of the most exceptional design elements in the world. So when she looked at a map and chose Charlotte as the city to set her roots, she was hoping to find a home that exemplified the same level of high-quality design that she'd become accustomed to.

"My Realtor took me to some homes and apartments but everything was so vanilla," says Jackson. It wasn't until her last showing—an 1,800-square-foot loft in the former Lance Crackers factory in South End—that she knew she'd found the perfect space. With exposed brick, high ceilings, and weathered hardwood floors, the apartment fit all the major criteria the jewelry designer was looking for.

Though Jackson originally intended to move to Charlotte to attend the Art Institute and to become an interior designer—she worked with designer John Bossard for a couple of years—she decided instead to pursue her love of jewelry making. Today, her eponymous line of costume and fine jewelry can be found at her Myers Park boutique.

The same eye for design she applies to her jewelry was used in designing her loft. The aesthetic is an eclectic combination of old meets new, traditional meets



Homeowner Meredith Jackson. This 1,800-square-foot loft with its high ceilings, exposed brick, and hardwood floors, is located in the former Lance Crackers factory in South End.





Jackson, who is a jewelry designer with a boutique in Myers Park, has used a similar old-meets-new aesthetic for decorating her loft.

modern with a neutral base and pops of color throughout. “I’ve always appreciated the collection process,” says Jackson, who, over the years, has scoured flea markets and consignment shops around the world to find pieces for her home. “That’s my personality. I buy what I like and make it work.”

The open floor plan served as the perfect place for Jackson to incorporate some of her oversized furniture—including a Henredon sofa—which, she says, might not normally work in most homes. Recently, though, Jackson completed an overhaul of most of her furnishings, much of which included reupholstering pieces that had worn over time. “I didn’t think my living room was comfortable,” she says. “Everything needed an update.” To help her through the process, Jackson looked to friends and colleagues Erin Dougherty of Isabella Style in Myers Park and designer Bryn Alexandra. “They really helped me pull it together and fluff it the right way.”



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