

HOUSE OF FIFTY

ideas for *inspired* living



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the moments this
Holiday season!

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Ready to Entertain

Interior Design &
Photography by Beth Keim
Story by Janell Beals

When a couple and their two young children moved into a new home in Charlotte, NC, they were finally ready to cast aside furnishings left over from their single days and the lifestyle that had tagged along with their "seen better days" approach to decorating. Brian and Laura first met Beth Keim, Interior Designer and owner of the shop Lucy and Company, when they paid a visit to her showroom. Looking for design help, they shared they were unhappy and even embarrassed by their inability to comfortably welcome guests into their home. The time had come to "grow up" and pull together a real home that would allow them to enjoy entertaining in stylish comfort.

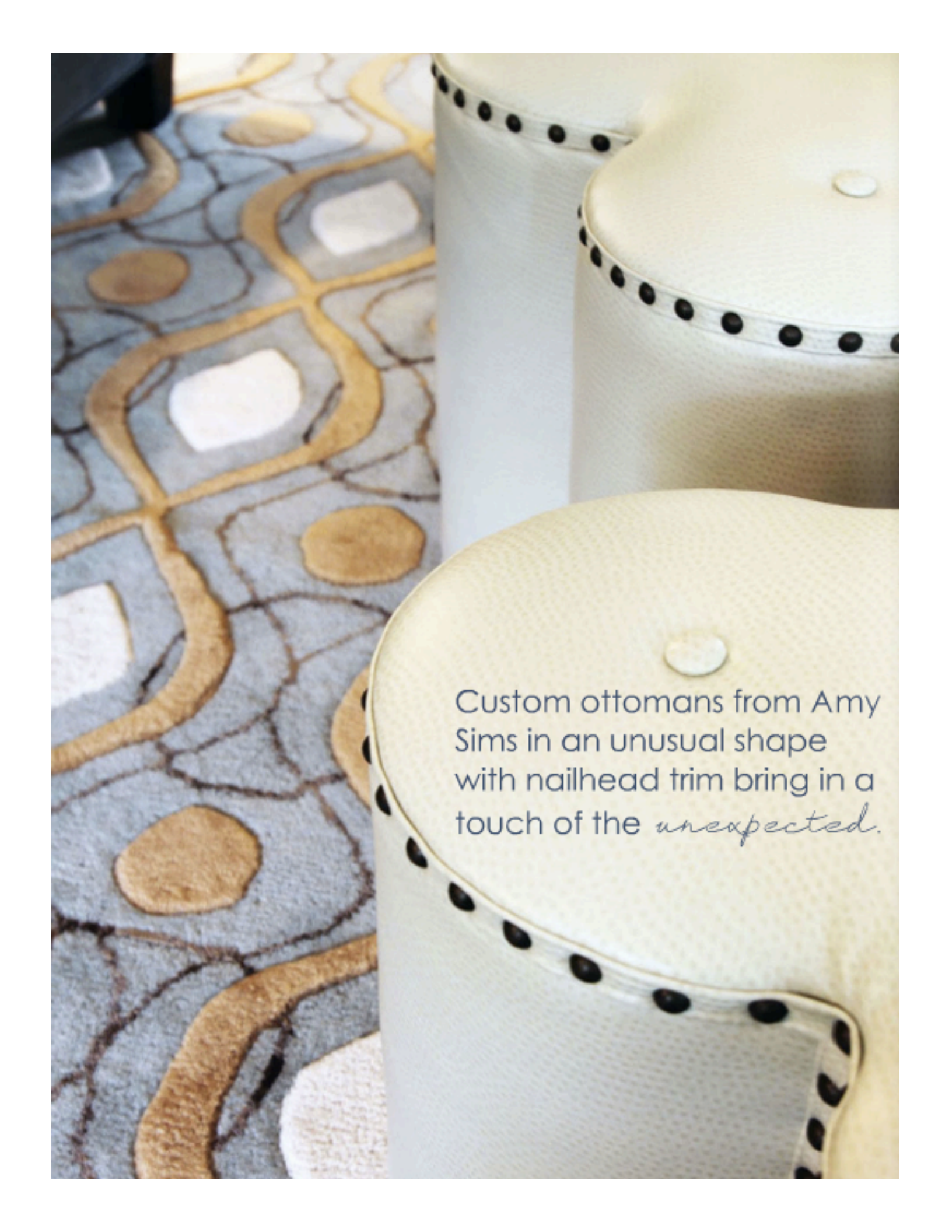
The pair had no previous experience working with a designer, but fortunately this was not the first time Beth had worked with decorating newbies. "I have been doing this work for so long that I know what will work in a particular project and how to guide clients through the process." She listened to the couple's objectives and preferences for their living and dining rooms, including Laura's desire to incorporate orange and Brian's requirement that the project stay on budget. Afterwards, creating design boards to illustrate what the finished rooms would look like, Beth effectively sold them on her ideas for transforming these

rooms into the spaces they wished for.

Beth shares this project has become one of her all-time favorites. The rooms meet the expectations for a "complete, party ready living and dining space." There were no unusual challenges, the rooms had an easy layout with traditional bones, and the clients were easy to work with. "They knew they didn't know anything about interior design, so they trusted me to do the job right."



"Embarrassed by the inability to comfortably welcome guests into their home when entertaining, Laura and Brian were ready to have a real 'grown up' home, finally letting go of the furnishings left over from their single days." Beth Keim

The image shows three custom ottomans in a light cream color with a subtle, pebbled texture. Each ottoman is topped with a circular, slightly raised center and features a decorative border of black nailheads around the top edge. They are arranged on a grey and tan patterned rug with organic, flowing shapes. The ottomans have a unique, rounded, and somewhat irregular shape.

Custom ottomans from Amy Sims in an unusual shape with nailhead trim bring in a touch of the *unexpected*.



A rich mix of hues and strong patterns seen on the rug, striped drapery panels and painting create a *vibrant* yet cozy environment.



At the end of the long living room a vintage desk creates a place for Laura to catch up on a bit of work if she wishes in the evening. Above it hangs a favorite piece of artwork the couple already owned and while "shopping the home," something Beth enjoys doing during the installation of a project, she came across the beautiful plate that hangs above the print. When she revealed the design to the couple, Brian was thrilled to see the plate here as it originally belonged to his grandmother.

What is key when working with her clients towards a successful outcome? "I keep everything for the project as it arrives at the shop

until all the elements are on hand. Then I arrange to do the install all at once. I've learned that if I bring things over one item at a time the client will begin to question things, seeing the chair, rug or wall color out of context from what the finished room will be." The installation typically takes two days, with the painting and any wallpaper hung first, installing everything else directly afterwards. "This way of working is a lot more fun, not only for myself but for the clients."

Another factor in the success of Beth's work is to really listen to her clients and to take a good look at their home and the pieces and colors they have previously selected without



the assistance of a designer. "Then I try to push them a bit out of their comfort zone, coming up with one or two design plans, but not overloading them with too many ideas."

Working in this field has come naturally to Beth; growing up her parents flipped houses and she learned from an early age to be interested in creating things. In her late 20's she started Lucy and Company, focusing on colorful upscale kids' rooms having identified an untapped market at the time. And in her personal life, despite being single, Beth knew it was time to become a mother and adopted her daughter Lucy from China. "It's funny how things work out, not long afterwards I met my

future 'artist' husband Keith in a paint store. He was hired as an in-house artist, then we married and had our daughter Kate. We are definitely a family of artists and designers and enjoy working together!"

Keith is a talented artist and Beth takes advantage of this by incorporating his works into many of her designs, commissioning him to do a painting as a gift to the clients upon completion of a project. Typically the two will bounce a few ideas back and forth for direction, such as "modern with blues and greens," but she stops short of giving him too much direction.



A luxurious play of *organic* finishes...



For the dining room in Laura and Brian's home, Beth employed a similar palette as the living room for flow. A mirror from Arteriors has an organic quality, which is at home against the Phillip Jefferies grasscloth. And so is the collection of watercolors Laura had set out on her kitchen table the day Beth first visited, hoping they could be incorporated into the design.

The striking gold lantern completes the room and when inquiring about its source Beth replied, "My dining room!" The budget was getting tight but a strong replacement for the existing fixture was a must, so in this one came. Plus, it gave Beth an excuse to hang a new style she had her eye on in her own dining room.

The request for a sideboard was met with equal ingenuity, Beth spying the console that now sits here in another room of the home unused. They weren't convinced when Beth made the suggestion to place it here, but once lacquered and dressed with new hardware, it is a gorgeous addition to the design that everyone is thrilled with.



Beth's Tips for Working Successfully with an Interior Designer



1. Do your research! Look at the portfolios of a wide range of designers and ask for referrals from people you know. Take the time to find a designer whose work you connect with strongly and whose personality and way of working is a good fit with your own personality and needs.
2. Settle on a look for the project through design boards and agree on a budget.
3. Trust the designer or firm you have decided to hire. There is a reason you choose them, so now trust and allow them to do their job.
4. Let the designer fulfill their vision for the room that you agreed upon with them. If you begin to question every step along the way and every element brought into the space, you'll never enjoy the reward of seeing what the room could have been.



Trust the designer you have selected and enjoy seeing the potential of your spaces come to life!

