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Fresh *and* Bright

Boston transplants hand over their house to designer Beth Keim, asking for a modern spin on traditional favorites

BY **BLAKE MILLER**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **CHRIS EDWARDS**



Opposite: In the foyer, the family Lab keeps watch on a braided felt rug by Surya. Bold textures and colors, like the navy grasscloth by Phillip Jeffries, energize traditional architecture.

This page: Gray walls and a light blue ceiling set the tone for the great room that overlooks Lake Norman. Custom cabinets with midnight blue interiors flank the fireplace. Over the mantel, a painting by Japanese artist Ken Otsuka incorporates seashells; the canvas is molded to represent the movement of water and sand.



When Beth Keim's then-New England-based clients flew down to find a new home on Lake Norman, they had in mind what they wanted. Though the couple's previous home had been formal and traditional, they wanted something with more modern finishes and accessories that retained the traditional aesthetics found in historic homes of the Northeast.

It took one look at the charming, lake-front New England-style house located in the Peninsula and the couple was smitten. "We flew down to house-hunt for the weekend, and this house was the second one we saw," says the wife. "Honestly, it spoiled me for the rest of the trip. As much as my husband was reluctant to admit it, we both knew it was the one, even then."

Not long after, she began researching local designers to help overhaul the formal interiors of the home. "I have a fascination and appreciation for design, fueled in part by design blogs and websites," she says. "When I realized that Lucy and Company photos dominated my online idea book, I knew it was time to connect."

Keim, whose Dilworth-based studio, Lucy and Company, has been a mainstay in the Charlotte interior design scene for years, reworked the home's living areas completely. To achieve a more modern feel, the walls, which were once a buttery yellow, were painted a neutral gray throughout. A palette of blues, grays,

To lighten the look of the old kitchen, new countertops of Carrera marble were installed. Window treatments were skipped; the large casement window over the sink keeps the room bright. Traditional beadboard panels and bin pulls are a nod to historic architecture.

In the dining room, the Phillip Jeffries ikat-painted grasscloth is a playful backdrop to the homeowners' traditional furnishings. The large table, chairs, and side chest were crafted by the Robert Bergelin Company of Morganton.



Left: a vintage Audubon print of a great blue heron hangs in the kitchen. The bird is a favorite among bird watchers at Lake Norman; during the summer it breeds on Heron Island.

Below: This playful cabinet, with a laser-cut Queen Anne highboy silhouette framing the shelves, was one of the first pieces to draw the homeowner to Lucy and Company. Placed between Windsor chairs in the kitchen, it's a humorous comment on iconic design.



and whites—a nod to a more coastal aesthetic—was chosen to complement the home's beachy vibe. In addition to incorporating a traditional-meets-formal look with the decor, artwork, and accessories—all of which were purchased new for the home—the house needed to be family-friendly. “They have two young kids and a dog,” says Keim. “They just wanted a whole new look; they wanted to completely change up what they'd always had with what they always wanted: a more modern space with traditional elements.”

To bridge the line between traditional and modern, Keim kept much of the furniture's lines conventional while the fabrics, finishes, and artwork leaned modern. The jumping-off point for the home's design was the Phillip Jeffries grasscloth wallpaper in the foyer; from there Keim seamlessly combined normally formal Chippendale chairs in the dining room with an abstract ikat-painted grasscloth also by Phillip Jeffries. In the den, she took a Chesterfield sofa—known for its classic deep-buttoned back—and upholstered it in modern navy leather. In the great room, she paired two wingback chairs, decidedly formal on their own, with a cozy sofa, then upholstered them in neutral fabrics with classic nail-head trim. Artwork by



Keim's husband, Keith, and artist Edward Walsh bring playful, modern additions to many of the living spaces, while accessories from Slate Interiors and Cotswold Marketplace help create a cohesive traditional-meets-modern look throughout. With lots of windows overlooking the water and marina, the rooms feel fresh and bright. "The space is so light and airy and a good mix of traditional and modern clean lines," says Keim.

And kid-friendly. Durable seagrass rugs are layered with smaller area rugs. Rustic elements, such as the reclaimed barn-wood coffee table in the den, are not only stylish but indestructible to the couple's two young children and family dog. "It's so livable," explains Keim.

Though the living spaces are complete, the homeowners are looking forward to working with Keim on phase two of the home, which includes revamping the master bedroom and the children's bedrooms. Taking chances with new colors, fabrics, and art has opened the door to a clear sense of personal style. The wife says, "You know, I walk through the dining room and the artwork makes me smile. Even though it's a new house to us, it already feels like home." 🏠

The family room adjoining the kitchen is another blend of old and new. Navy leather on the Chesterfield sofa and navy crewel on the spindle chair feel fresh, while the coffee table from reclaimed barn wood brings the past forward.