

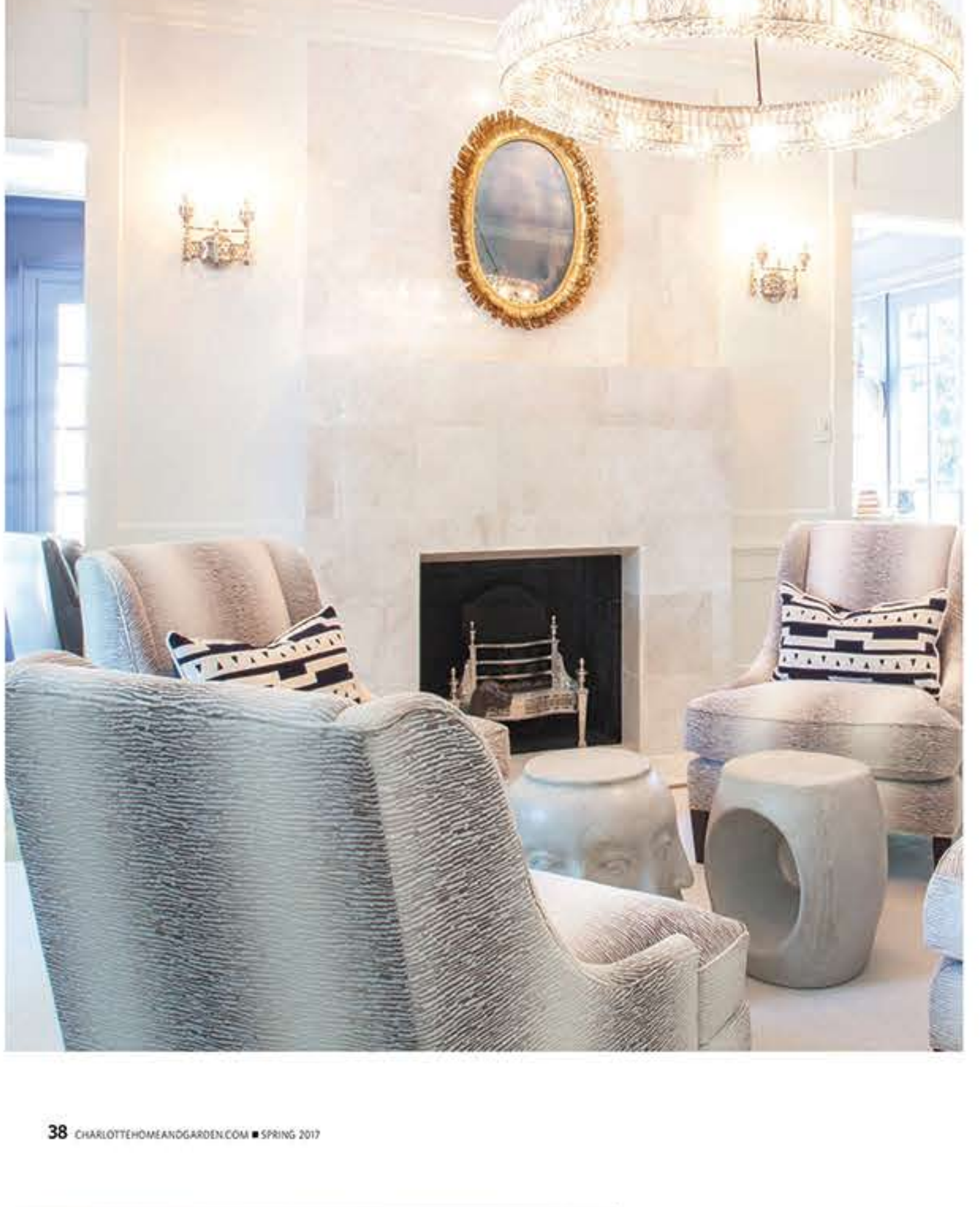
Historic Living

A glamorous, 1920s uptown condo

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A CONTEMPORARY COMBO

A Charlotte couple ditched a modern uptown apartment and tried to mix contemporary and traditional elements in their Myers Park home

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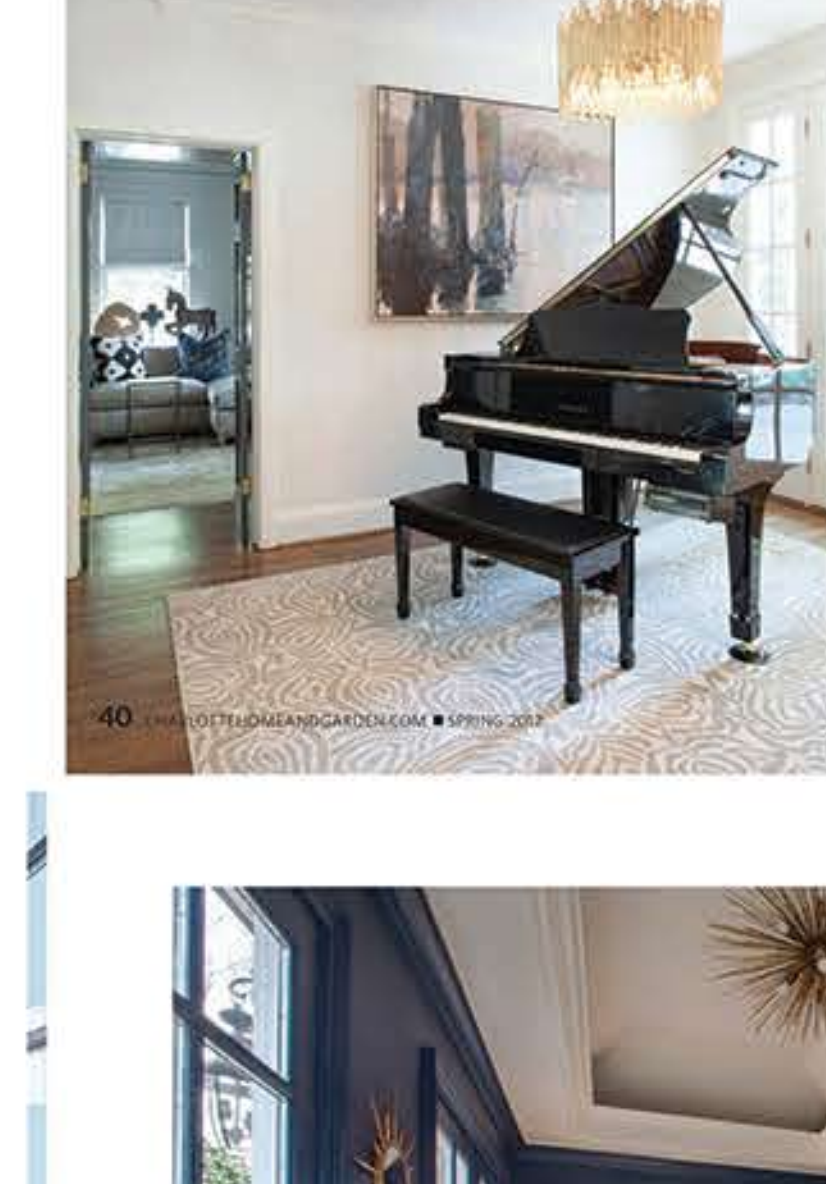


Beth Keim was tasked with creating a design that suits both homeowners, one who has traditional taste, and one who prefers modern touches.

Inside a two-story, colonial, Dutch-style home on Queens Road West, a striking mix of traditional pieces and contemporary elements tastefully contrast with one another. It's cozier than the homeowners' previous, modern uptown apartment, yet it's more contemporary than their beach house on the Carolina coast. It has a comfortable balance of both places: a feat Beth Keim of Lucy and Company accomplished by bringing in a fresh color scheme, modern furnishings, and sleek accents.

Keim's mission for this project was to combine the retired Charlotte couple's contrasting tastes, to create a dwelling that appeals to both style profiles. While the wife vies for traditional touches, the husband moves toward modern looks. Keim says, "After collecting years of traditional pieces, they thought it would be fun to throw in some more modern pieces for the look."

So that's what they did.



The starting point for Keim's design was a rug near the front door (above left). She painted the door navy blue—a color that continues through the rest of the downstairs.



The sunporch's bold geometrics are a significant departure from the room's previous design, which was mostly white and traditional.

"We kind of came up with a game plan for the front door and back," Keim says, noting that the existing vintage rose and taupe dyed rug welcoming guests through the front door was the starting piece. The only other existing elements on the first floor were the dining room wallpaper and crystal chandelier. Everything else was a touch of Keim.

Color-wise, the designer wanted to bring in peach, navy, and neutrals, threading the complementary hues throughout the first floor. They painted the front door navy and applied a busy Romo wallpaper to the foyer walls, producing a grandiose atmosphere.

"To me, giving the entrance a strong, graphic feel, mixing in the traditional lighting, was how we wanted to go about it," Keim says. She picked those colors because the visible dining room wallpaper was a Phillip Jeffries cork-and-metallic textile, and she thought it would mesh well with the new hues.

In the dining room, the original crystal chandelier hangs with panache above a pedestal-based, circular dining table and rosy upholstered chairs. Certain switches such as this one—a modern, round table in place of a traditional, rectangular one—are the ways Keim incorporated modernism in the home while maintaining balance.

In a similar fashion, she updated the formal living room to include four chairs instead of couches, to create a conducive

conversation area. They tore the traditional mantelpiece off the fireplace and tiled marble all the way up to the ceiling. This space saw a zip overhaul, with its oversized light fixture, a big pop of navy curtains, and a substantial piece of modern art by Beth's husband, Keith Keim.

The homeowners are art lovers. Keim says, so she wanted to make artistic works stand out in the home. Beyond the foyer, a piano sits beneath a glamorous light fixture, and on the wall behind the piano, a large work by Andy Braithman demands attention. The painting blends all the colors being used in the home, and features a landscape instead of an abstract image, positioning itself as a focal point amid the modern furnishings. Keim found the piece at Shain Gallery and says it's important not to fight the art—just complement it. Other artworks can be found in just about every other room of the first floor, inciting intrigue from all angles.

Moving into the sunporch, guests' eyes are drawn to the Benjamin Moore Westcott Navy-clad walls, juxtaposed against a gray-washed, geometric bookcase, stark with drama. Before Keim got her hands on this cozy reading area, she says it was plain, with too much white and traditional furniture. Now, a stylish marble and gold desk sits in the corner, facing one of the many windows in this colorful, yet sophisticated, room.



A work of art plays a big role in the design. In this home, helping to draw the eye and control the color palette.



Upholstered doors (left) are unexpected and inviting, as is the TV room (bottom), where the homeowners can each lay back and relax in the evenings.



Although the sunporch is filled with flair, the TV room—where the couple spends time at night—is relatively simple, as Keim describes it, with tone-on-tone accents. The custom, U-shaped couch encompasses dual loungers, and the blue pillows keep the navy theme consistent as it stretches from room to room.

Just outside the TV room, an upholstered door awaits curious hands. Nailheads jut fashionably through the navy fabric. This door leads to the basement, and there's a matching one across from it, concealing cleaning supplies. A surprising touch to transform an everyday detail, upholstering a door is something Keim says she's done once before for a project, and she loved it so much, she did it again.

The back family room is the final stop on this floor, a place where the homeowners spend playful days with their grandchild. Serving as a functional space, this area boasts a large, black chest that houses toys. But to keep the room stylish, Keim had Stark's popular Antilocarpa carpet installed in a silver hue from wall to wall. On top of this patterned, two-cushioned swivel chairs and a sizable leather sofa sit around a modern, circular table. The real star in this room, however, is the Amanda Talley painting nestled on the fireplace mantel, presenting a first impression that warrants a "Wow."

Tip-toeing around traditional elements and introducing sleeker furnishings to the mix, Keim gave the couple exactly what they wanted—a home that feels put together and up-to-date without feeling like a cold showroom floor.

Mission accomplished. ■