

**YOUR HOME**

*Design Refreshers*

DESIGNER / JIM BURKE

LOCATION / SOUTH BOSTON

# Family Style

**A CONSTRUCTION PRO TACKLES A VERY PERSONAL JOB IN A SOUTHIE THREE-DECKER.**

BY JACI CONRY // PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARAH WINCHESTER



**T**HE ELDEST OF FIVE KIDS, Jim Burke grew up in South Boston. His grandparents and his uncle's family lived in a three-decker next door; another aunt and uncle and several cousins had a home across the street. "There was something like 13 of us cousins [in the neighborhood] 10 years apart," recalls Burke. "It was pretty nuts sometimes."

By the time he entered high school, his family had relocated to Milton. His parents kept the 1920s three-decker in Southie, renting it out from time to time. As an adult, Burke lived in the Washington, D.C., area before returning to Boston more than a decade ago. He and business partner, Randy Milburn, own Cambridgeport Construction, which specializes in high-end historical restorations and renovations.

"I started renting the house in Southie from my parents," recalls Burke. His wife, Emily, moved in after they married five years ago. After their daughters, Georgia, 3, and Mairead, 1, were born, the couple decided they were in the home for the long haul.

Making the house their "forever home" required some work. "The place was in decent shape, but it was showing its age," says Burke. "The house hadn't been touched in decades. My dad had renovated it himself 35 years ago on nights and weekends when he was a surgical resident at Mass. General."

The family rents out the first level of the house and lives on the two upper floors. On the second floor, an updated kitchen and a more modern layout were essential. The kitchen was revived with custom Mission-style cabinets crafted by Salmon Falls Woodworks and a striking walnut-topped island.

On the third floor, significant structural work—by Cambridgeport Construction, of course—was required to accommodate a master suite, two additional bedrooms, and another bathroom.

"Since we couldn't go outside of the existing footprint, the



Jim, Georgia, Mairead, and Emily Burke in their updated kitchen. The Mission-style cabinets are fumed oak; the island top is walnut. Counters are "white rhino" quartzite. The backsplash is made of Heath Ceramics tiles. "Each dual-glaze tile mix includes a blend of dual and solid glazes in a combination of matte and glossy finishes," says interior designer Sarah Scales. The new white oak kitchen floor, stained Jacobean, matches the original flooring throughout most of the second level.



“There was a lot of reluctance on my part to redo what my dad had done to the house because he had so put so much of himself into it,” says Burke.



In the living room (above left), oak shelves Jim’s father built in the 1980s feel modern thanks to a coat of white paint. Chairs are by West Elm. Jim had an 1899 hand-drawn map of Boston (above) printed on canvas, then made the frame. The sofa is from Article. Several 1920s houses on the street have original stained-glass windows. Jim designed a sitting area off the master suite (right) with a Juliet balcony that offers lovely views of Dorchester Bay.

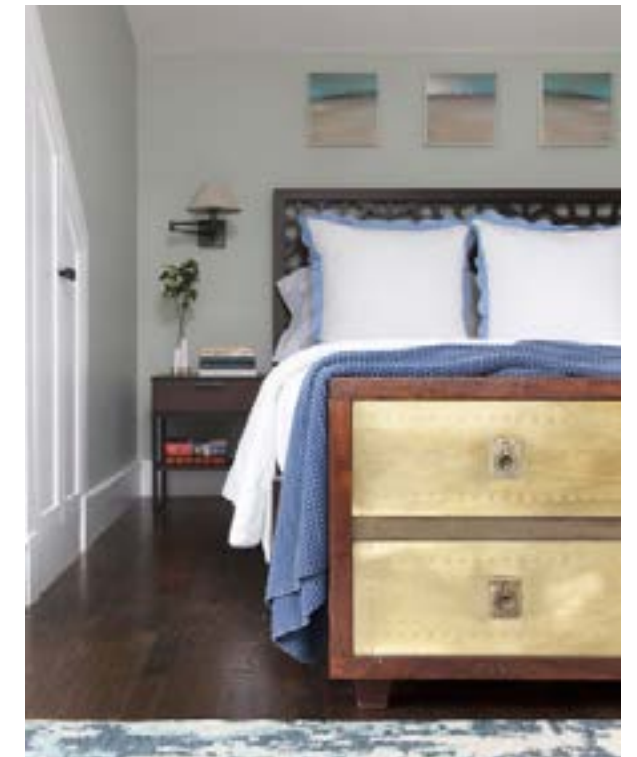


Mission and Arts and Crafts-style elements, while Emily veers toward more beachy, soft, and serene things,” says Scales.

Arts and Crafts style wins out in the dining room wainscoting and the handmade coffee table. The color palette centers on calming gray, blue, and white tones that Emily Burke favors. In some cases, Scales found furnishings that satisfy both spouses, such as the West Elm capiz light fixture in the dining room. “Since it’s made of shells, it has a beachy, more contemporary feel while also feeling connected to the leaded-glass elements often associated with Arts and Crafts style,” says Scales.

The home now feels comfortable and personal for a young family, yet very much connected to its past. At the foot of Emily and Jim’s bed is a large wooden hope chest with brass detailing on the front. “It was made for my mother by my dad 40-plus years ago,” says Jim. “It’s very special to now have it in our bedroom.” ■

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For the master bedroom (above), Scales chose a West Elm “Morocco” headboard in chocolate. Swing-arm sconces with linen shades are from Restoration Hardware. At the foot of the bed is Jim’s mother’s hope chest, made by his dad. The powder room floor (below) is white hexagonal mosaic tile. One vanity encases the sink; a second holds storage. Clear glass funnel sconces with filament bulbs are from Restoration Hardware.

