

YOUR HOME

Design Refreshers

DESIGNER / ROBIN GANNON

LOCATION / LEXINGTON

Order from Chaos

A LEXINGTON HOMEOWNER WITH A HAPHAZARD APPROACH TO DECORATING CALLS IN A PROFESSIONAL WITH AN EYE FOR PATTERN AND COLOR.

BY JACI CONRY // PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL J. LEE

AFTER 19 YEARS LIVING in their Colonial Revival Cape-style home, Linda and Marc Shpilner felt it was finally time for a change. They wanted a larger kitchen with a breakfast area, an office, another bathroom, and a garage. “We entertain a lot,” says Linda Shpilner. “We wanted more space to move around when people come over.” The couple have two children, Zachary, who is off to college in the fall, and Brenna, who lives on her own but returns to the family home “all the time,” her mother says.

When the Shpilners started planning the renovation, they brought interior designer Robin Gannon on board. “I had never worked with a designer,” says Linda. “I was the type who would buy things for the house and bring them home and the scale would be completely off. The lamp would be the wrong size, the couch too big for the room—that sort of thing. So we hired Robin in the very beginning.” Not only did Gannon take charge of the updated spaces, she also worked on other areas of the house—designed by Royal Barry Wills and built in 1933—to ensure a compatible aesthetic.

The homeowners “had no preconceived ideas of what they wanted,” says Gannon. “They let me go where I wanted with the design, which was fun. I pushed the boundaries of color and pattern much further than they would have on their own.”

Throughout, touches abound that are personal to the Shpilners, including a tree slab cut by Marc’s father that Gannon placed in the mudroom on top of a glass console table. The table in the new breakfast nook belonged to Linda’s aunt.



Zachary and Linda Shpilner sit at the breakfast-area table, inherited from Linda’s aunt. Romo fabric covers the three-sided built-in banquette. In the sunroom (facing page), Gannon installed wow-worthy ikat drapes made of Schumacher fabric; roman shades are cream linen embellished with pink grosgrain ribbon. Tibetan lamb hides accent black rattan chairs. The gold-and-black Visual Comfort floor lamp pairs well with the Shpilners’ bar cart.



In the adjacent dining room, Gannon added a lot of punch, including host chairs upholstered in hot pink linen. “I really wanted to make the room fun,” says Gannon.

The expanded kitchen has a monochromatic palette, in keeping with the origins of the architecture. “It was important that the kitchen seem like it could have been there for a long time,” says Gannon. The color scheme also helps obscure the fact that the ceilings are low, at just over 7 ½ feet. To add a little dimension, the white cabinetry gained dark brass hardware and the base of the island was painted black.

A built-in U-shaped banquette offers ample seating that comes in handy when the couple entertain. “Sometimes they have as many as 60 people over,” says Gannon. Custom pillows add pops of green, pink, and purple—Linda’s favorite color.

In the adjacent dining room, Gannon added a lot of punch, including host chairs upholstered in hot pink linen. The formerly white corner cabinet was painted purple-blue, and the blue and white tones of the drapes create an ombre feel. “I really wanted to make the room fun,” says Gannon. “Linda and Marc not only use it when they entertain at night, but it’s where they often eat during the day when it’s just the two of them.”

A wall was removed between the living room and sun-room, and a step down now separates the spaces. An awkward window that wasn’t centered on the wall presented a tricky design challenge for Gannon in the narrow living room. “It was very randomly placed,” Gannon recalls. “There was no budget for construction to remove it, so I had to find another way to make it disappear.”

Her solution was a whimsical Lee Jofa wall covering, designed by Hunt Slonem, that depicts bunnies. “It’s super fun and sort of looks like a gallery wall,” Gannon says. “But I thought they would think I was nuts.” Linda loved the idea—though she kept the concept from her husband until it was installed. Gannon also had the covering applied to a roller shade; when it’s pulled down, it obscures the off-center window.

The project was completed in January, and even though it’s the same house the family has lived in for years, it feels new. Says Linda, “Friends tell us the living room looks like a boutique hotel.” ■

Jaci Conry is a regular contributor to the Globe Magazine. Send comments to magazine@globe.com.



In the dining room (top), new pink linen host chairs and Zentique curved-back side chairs surround the existing table. Drapes are blue-and-white Osborne & Little fabric. In the mudroom (left), the flush-mount light fixture echoes the stars in the tree-motif Cole & Son wall covering. The gold stools are from Bungalow 5. In the living room (facing page), the Hunt Slonem for Lee Jofa wallpaper takes center stage. The antelope-pattern chenille Wesley Hall sofa holds bold-hued throw pillows. A Wesley Hall blue leather armchair adds a textural dimension. The marble-top table is by Lillian August for Hickory White.

