



grand PLANS

In a new-construction Hillsborough home, a fresh family-friendly vision has emerged.

By Anh-Minh Le

Who says a spec home can't have personality in spades? Especially when it's in the very capable hands of Nancy Evars and Dimitra Anderson, the interior designers behind San Carlos-based Evars + Anderson (evarsanderson.com). "When you're buying a house where a lot of the finishes are already decided on, there are ways to make it your own," says Evars. "You don't have to change everything. A lot of times, it just takes some tweaking to get it to where it feels comfortable and complete." Of course, with Evars' and Anderson's keen eyes and expertise, those tweaks can be dramatic and transformative.

In 2016, after purchasing a newly constructed Hillsborough abode, a tech entrepreneur and his wife enlisted the design duo to turn a blank canvas into a haven for their family of five. Since "the bones were really pretty," notes Evars, introducing new light fixtures, window treatments, paint colors and wallcoverings went a long way in injecting a wow factor in previously ordinary spaces. "We were glad that there were areas that had been done tastefully, that we could enhance a little more, but not have to do construction and be invasive," she explains. In the kitchen, for instance, the existing crisp white cabinetry, Calacatta marble countertops and textured backsplash benefited from the addition of sculptural Cherner walnut bar stools and handblown glass crystal pendant lamps by John Pomp. In a powder room, they got plenty of mileage out of a single modification: enveloping the walls, which were initially gray, with Elworthy Studio's Blackish Magic wallpaper.

The clients didn't carry over anything from their former residence, so Evars and

From top: The great room includes a custom dining table, Century linen-covered chairs and an Apparatus chandelier; in the formal dining room, which is lined in Designers Guild wallpaper, a Maria Burtis painting hangs above a Global Views sideboard topped with midcentury ceramic and brass lamps from Epoca.



GREAT ROOM PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER STARK; FORMAL DINING ROOM PHOTO BY JAMES CARRIERE

Anderson started from scratch with the decor in the 5,570-square-foot dwelling, which is characterized by expansive spaces. In many cases, large rugs, like the family room's Stark carpeting in the antelope motif, contribute texture and warmth. With so much volume, the house "needed a lot of furniture, and you couldn't just put all the furniture in the middle of the room," says Evars. "There had to be accent pieces that tied everything together." Hence, multiple vignettes were devised within a space. Take the living room: Along with a

primary seating area, the St. Germain chair from Gregorius|Pineo is positioned beneath a pair of framed St. Frank textiles, in proximity of a grand piano. Next to the limestone-clad fireplace, an antique Asian armoire, procured from 1stDibs, stands 9 feet, a height that suits the lofty coffered ceilings.

When it was on the market, the territory between the kitchen and the family room was staged with a small table that left most of the area bare. Evars and Anderson saw its potential though, and carved out an informal dining

spot, as well as a work station for the wife (the husband has a separate home office). "If we hadn't put the dining table there, you could literally lay down mats and do gymnastics in the middle of the room," Evars quips. She and Anderson brought in a custom farmhouse-style table and an Apparatus chandelier comprised of a cluster of frosted glass orbs. In the formal dining room, they also relied on a table of their own design to ensure the appropriate scale; measuring 54 inches wide, it can accommodate two chairs or even a bench at either end.



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—NANCY EVARS, INTERIOR DESIGNER >>



Clockwise from top left: The master bedroom's cream-hued velvet headboard is a custom design; a small powder room swathed in Elworthy Studio wallpaper makes a big statement; the outdoor furniture is from Restoration Hardware.



Clockwise from top left: The kitchen lighting is by John Pomp; in the family room, Urban Electric sconces flank a Barbara Vaughn painting; Gregorius|Pineo St. Germain chair; the colors in a Myke Reilly abstract are found in the living room furnishings.

The clients trusted the designers, whose portfolio is marked by vibrancy, to go bold. “When we first met them, they hadn’t worked with a designer before and had in their minds that everything was going to be neutral and plain,” says Evars, adding: “We really pushed them out of their comfort zone. When they set out, they didn’t envision that the house would have so much color and pattern, but they love it.” Shades of blue provide a common thread throughout, from the chairs (part of Evars and Anderson’s own MoxieMade line) upholstered in a Castel geometric velvet and the Designers Guild woodland-inspired wallpaper in the dining room, to the living room’s tufted-back navy leather armchair and the guest quarters’ custom teal mohair headboard. Purple, a hue the clients hadn’t

considered before, punctuates a number of rooms, including on a prominently placed chair in the foyer.

Since the house was such a substantial undertaking, Evars and Anderson worked in phases, prioritizing the places where the family spends the most time together. Indeed, the home continues to evolve, with the kids’ bedrooms in progress. “The process was overwhelming for them,” recalls Evars of the clients’ initial mindset. “They really looked to us to take this big project and make it more accessible for them.” In addition to helping to ensure that the endeavor was less intimidating, there are other upsides to taking their time: “It’s been a really successful relationship with [the clients],” says Evars. “We think of them as dear friends now.” ■



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