

written by Krissa Rossbund photographed by Alyssa Rosenheck

In Small Doses

Splashes of color dot a light-flooded Nashville home bathed in white



You can't stop change—one of life's truisms—is evident in the world of design. But in designing a new home for repeat clients, Nashville-based designer Julie Couch found that some things hadn't changed.

Her clients still had discerning taste. They didn't want interiors that were trendy, favoring ones that adhered to timeless qualities. But a new era and a new home ensured that color preferences

switched from their old palette of deep red, beige, and brown to one that was light and bright.

From the moment the architect started plans for the house, situated on a generous lot with mature trees, the homeowners knew when to break their own rules. While they wanted a clean, light palette to pivot in a color direction that was different from their previous home, they understood that too much white lacked personality and appeared too new. A cedar roof provided the

structure with instant age, while bronze window frames inserted a graphic, edgy attitude.

The same was true inside. The white foundation was just that—a clean surface waiting to be jolted with colors, sometimes subtle and other times strong, to give the interiors interest.

"This couple was fortunate regarding the details that the architecture offered, including millwork," says Couch. "The color that we did incorporate was used as an exclamation point to



Back exterior A generous opening to the back courtyard blurs the lines between outside and in. *Living room* Reflective qualities are everywhere, including the high-gloss surface on the cocktail table. *Dining area* The dining table's mirrored top reflects the tree-filled property that beckons through undressed windows. *Foyer* Blue and aqua in the abstract painting make a big splash above an ensemble of black and white. *Preceding pages* A waterfall-style limestone fireplace adds a modern vibe to the living room's traditional furnishings.



The color that we did use was an exclamation point to enhance the structure. Color will always add interest, but it has to come with thought and attention."

—designer Julie Couch



Family room Tailored upholstered furniture is jolted by an oversized coffee table made of reclaimed wood that inserts a natural vibe.

Placed as in an art gallery, an abstract painting with touches of blue, pink, and peach hangs in an all-white setting above the fireplace. Drapery panels in ivory linen soften the painting on both sides.

Breakfast area The gold-tone light fixture bestows a hint of glamour to the streamlined table and chairs with short backs.

Kitchen Barrel-style bar stools with shimmering gold frames offer a comfortable stay at the island to eat or interact with the cook.



enhance the structure. Color will always add interest, but it has to come with thought and attention."

Couch didn't waste any time establishing her "white plus accent" formula. Inside the foyer, an iron table anchors a white ottoman and a pair of lamps, while an abstract painting in blue and turquoise surprises with contemporary flair.

Taking a cue from the painting, cool color gently glides into the adjoining living room on a greenish-gray rug that softens the limestone floor. Unlike the foyer, where art was used to grab attention, the living room's open

layout results in minimal wall space, prompting Couch to focus on the furniture's form so it also serves as sculpture. A curvy chaise longue covered in a houndstooth pattern in brown and olive at the former house was modernized with a new treatment of nubby ivory linen. The same fabric gives a current kick to two gilded chairs from the 1920s that sit in front of a sleek fireplace surround. An oversized iron-and-brass chandelier dramatically hangs over the seating area and avoids a stuffy "parlor" tone.

"I didn't want to fight the architecture in the dining room,





Master bedroom In a reversal of the palette that traverses the rest of the house, the master bedroom is drenched in dark gray on the walls, draperies, and upholstered furniture. A contemporary abstract painting weaves aqua into the tonal scheme for interest. The carved headboard in a dark stain is dressed in white linens. Master bath A mosaic tile wall and floor cocoon the sculptural soaking tub. The whole scene is warmed by a flush of color from the upholstered stool and the timeworn rug.

so a neutral palette was a must," Couch says of the light-flooded space. Sans window treatments, the walls of windows begged for furnishings that enhance the light. Repurposed from the clients' former house, an iron table with an antiqued mirror top mixes two styles of seating—slipcovered side chairs and vintage host chairs with chalk-finish paint on the frames. "I love modern, but I'm a big fan of giving spaces some sort of rustic, textural touch," says Couch.

Arresting beaded chandeliers with frames wrapped in hemp temper the seriousness of the room's symmetrical profile.

Even though the design keeps the formal spaces from bearing a strictly adult perception, the couple's three young children are naturally drawn to the lighthearted kitchen and family room. A built-in window seat in the breakfast area and barrel-style stools at the counter boast kid-friendly performance fabrics. "This family



lives in the kitchen," explains Couch. "They cook in here, they entertain, so the kitchen had to be functional and wear well."

Deep, comfortable seating with kid-friendly fabrics for the family to camp out and watch TV was the primary requirement for the family room. A massive table made from reclaimed wood shrugs off the wear and tear of drinks, crayons, and shoes from a family of five. Its patina will only get better with age, Couch says.

Two spaces depart from the white tone that ribbons throughout the house, adopting a dark, handsome complexion. The master bedroom is a lesson in tone-on-tone decoration—the wallcovering, paint, and silk draperies are executed in a greenish-gray hue. The home office adheres to the same effect with dark painted walls. A striking geometric rug marries the gray walls with the vaulted white ceiling, where an arresting metal

chandelier in a wavy form masterfully descends.

"This house has a timeless finish, but one that is current and modern," says Couch. "We stayed away from anything super trendy and aimed for ways to incorporate some vintage, some iron, some traditional, and some rustic so not everything is matched, but layered. Everything is recognizable but never dated. I love knowing that the family lives among this beauty so comfortably."