



memories *in the* making



OPPOSITE: The breakfast room features a trio of antique gems—the oak dining table, perfectly-weathered leather chairs, and a brass chandelier scooped up at Tricia’s Treasures. THIS PAGE: A Lee Industries sofa and chairs, purchased at Circa Interiors, make cushy counterpoints to stately items such as the antique hutch.

Designer Fran Keenan looks to a treasure trove of family antiques to create an inviting home with style that was years in the making.

Text by CAROLINE MCKENZIE / Photography by JEAN ALLSOPP

Many women shudder when they recall the furniture their husbands brought to the marriage. Not Leslie Brooks. Her husband Michael’s late father, Terry, hailed from Charleston and spent his retirement days acquiring antiques and artwork in the Holy City. Michael was the recipient of his refined collection—a wedding jackpot for Leslie if there ever was one. The problem? A move to a Crestline rancher, which the couple has called home for the last 11 years, meant a lack of space to show off the prized pieces. Worse



The head-turning upholstered pantry door, complete with nailhead trim, belies its durability. It's crafted from a virtually indestructible marine-grade vinyl.

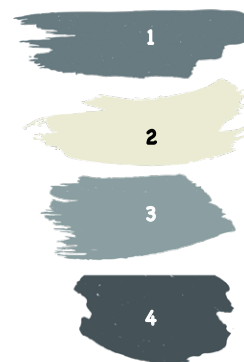


“A vibrant pop of color, like the kitchen’s bold blue island and pantry door, can instantly make antiques feel less serious.” -FRAN KEENAN

yet, the house was feeling increasingly cramped as their four sons approached teen years. “This is a rare pocket of Mountain Brook where the lots are spacious and children can walk to both elementary and middle school,” Leslie says. “The location was everything we could ask for, but the boys were sharing bedrooms, and our guest bath was also the master bath. We definitely needed more space.”

Enter architect Dean Roberts and interior designer Fran Keenan to help the couple reimagine the low-slung ranch home. The result is a two-story abode with an expanded kitchen and master suite downstairs and four boy-approved bedrooms, anchored by a duo of Jack-and-Jill baths upstairs. The overhaul, which took the house from 2,000 square feet to a little over 5,000, also presented the family with the opportunity to raise

ABOVE: In a house full of antiques, an overly modern kitchen wouldn't do. To give the new kitchen a bit of old-house charm, architect Dean Roberts designed an inset range, flanked by shelving alcoves, that feels reminiscent of an old-fashioned kitchen hearth. BELOW: The handsome powder room takes the home's blue streak to the hilt by coating every last surface, save the curvy marble countertop.



Mixing Blues

The house talks a blue streak but maintains interest from room to room by using subtle variations in each space.

- 1 } Benjamin Moore “**Providence Blue**” #1636
- 2 } Farrow & Ball “**Pavilion Blue**” #252
- 3 } PPG Pittsburgh Paints “**Aqua Smoke**” #1034-5
- 4 } PPG Pittsburgh Paints “**Obsidian**” #1035-7



“A good designer knows when to push their client. The inky blue bedroom walls and trim were my hardest sell. But now Leslie would be the first to admit she loves the cocoon-like effect.” —FRAN KEENAN



FRAN KEENAN

design philosophy

Each project should inspire and reflect the passions and personality of the client. My work begins and ends with lots of listening.

designing with antiques

It's all about the mix! My favorite hashtag is #oldbreaksthemold. The market can be saturated with the same look, but antiques bring the needed integrity for timeless appeal.

working with collections

There's strength in numbers. It's as true in decorating as it is in anything else. Gather like items and display them in one place. The abundance instantly elevates any item.

worth keeping I try to make any and all family pieces work. That's especially true when there is an original patina, finish, or texture that only comes with age.

favorite accessory A room isn't complete without ambient lighting and books to infuse a space with soul.

OPPOSITE: The master bedroom's daring wall color is softened with plush textiles, including the velvet-upholstered bed frame, knobby white bedding, and perfectly puddled curtains. ABOVE: From the multi-colored grass cloth wallpaper to the arrangement of the salon-style wall, the study was designed to mimic the look and feel of a home office that once belonged to Michael's father.

the downstairs ceiling height from 8 to 10 feet. “It gave the house less of a bowling alley effect and also made way for taller furnishings and more artwork,” Leslie says.

The newly expanded house meant all those precious family heirlooms could at long last come out of storage. “As a designer, I always find it inspiring to work with what a client already has—pieces with pedigree that bring instant memories and stories to a space,” says Fran, who, as Leslie’s first cousin, was especially equipped to spotlight the items. Since many of the pieces were rather formal, the designer helped make them feel more family friendly by bringing in a healthy dose of pattern and color. Intricate designs on rugs, wallpaper, and textiles worked to take the edge off of the stately items. For the palette, Fran used various shades of blue, often in unexpected spots such as window sashes, built-ins, and even the pantry door, to liven up the abundance of antiques. “We went with hues that don’t scream at you but still offer personality,” the designer says. “And I made sure they were all a bit ambiguous—not quite blue, not quite green, not quite gray. They have a bit of mystery and timelessness to them that way.”

Room by room, Fran worked her magic by pairing old with new to create inviting layered spaces where the entire Brooks family feels completely at home. “This seems like the house that was always meant to be here,” Leslie says. “And the fact that we have included our family treasures now makes it even more special.”

Yes, it was once a rancher! Gabled dormers and a creamy white paint job top off the reconfigured home with classic touches that make it feel like it has always looked this way.



Leslie and Michael Brooks with sons Miller, Denton, Carter, and Wyatt.

RESOURCES: **Designer:** Fran Keenan, frankeenanandesign.com **Architect:** Dean Robinson, 205.229.0377 **Builder:** Mark Williams **Landscape:** Vision Landscapes, Inc., visionlandscapesinc.com **Kitchen cabinets:** Shaun Haddock of Deep Fried Southern Cabinetry, deepfriedsoutherncabinetry.com **Hardware:** Brandino Brass, brandinobrass.com **Faucet:** Ferguson, ferguson.com **Countertops:** Pacific Shore Stones, pacificshorestones.com **Tile backsplash:** Robert F. Henry, henrytile.com **Rugs in family room:** Hiltz Lauber, hiltzlauber.com **Powder bath:** Cabinets-Shaun Haddock, 205.224.0097 **Kitchen:** **Runner and kitchen table-**The Nest, thenestbham.com **Hand towel:** Suite Dreams, shopsuitedreams.net **Entryway:** **Runner-**The Nest, **Asian urn-**Defining Home, defining-home.com **Office:** **Lampshades-**Village Firefly, thevillagefirefly.com **Master bedroom:** **Bed-**At Home, athome-furnishings.com **Lamps-**Hiltz Lauber, **Bench-**The Nest **Family room:** **Rug-**Hiltz Lauber **Pillows-**Suite Dreams; West Elm, westelm.com **Rug pillow-**Olde World Acquisitions, oldeworldacquisitions.com **Coffee Table and marble top side table-**The Nest **White chairs-**Richard Tubb, richardtubbinteriors.com **Sofa table-**Argent Antiques, argentantiques.com **Lampshades-**Village Firefly **Vintage lamps-**Urban Suburban, 205.592.0777 **Chandelier-**Antiquities, 205.870.1030 **Chest-**Tricia's Treasures, triciatreasures.us