

HOME DESIGN & DECOR

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.best. intentions

A CLASSIC
COLONIAL IS
REIMAGINED
FOR A FAMILY'S
MODERN LIFE.

TEXT BY BRANDY WOODS SNOW
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNA ROUTH BARZIN

The color-drenched library is a departure from the home's alabaster walls and feels like a cozy hug. **Love seat:** Lee Industries. **Love seat fabric:** Schumacher. **Pillows:** Schuyler Samperton Textiles. **Chairs:** Highland House. **Chair fabric:** Kravet. **Coffee table:** Worlds Away. **Lumbar pillow:** Soane.



The light-blue hue of the built-in cabinetry is a custom mix that Zinn created to perfectly accent the airiness of the windowed mudroom. **Lighting:** Visual Comfort. **Cabinetry:** Cabinet Creations.

When designer Debra Zinn was hired by Sally Wood and her husband Niko Schutte in 2021,

she was tasked with a moderate refurbishment of the owner's suite and home office. It didn't take long for it to expand into a full down-to-the-studs renovation.

"We purchased the home in 2017 for our growing family and loved the quiet neighborhood," Wood says. "Once initial renovations began, we realized we really wanted to do much more."

The Colonial Revival home in The Oaks at Chapel Hill Country Club sat on a generous lot with mature landscaping, but its 1982 layout felt closed off, with low ceilings and a darker interior. As two busy professionals with four children and a dog, the couple needed a space that worked better for their daily lives.

"We focus on thoughtful design that mixes modern comforts with meaningful pieces from the past, and the homeowners wanted to include antiques into the mix," Zinn says. "My goal was to ensure every space in the 3,900-square-foot home was equally beautiful and comfortable."

Zinn collaborated with architect Reid Highley, builder Greg Niemiroski, and Cabinet Creations to bring the vision to life. Construction began in spring 2023 and wrapped in summer 2024, with major changes like a private guest suite, a larger, more efficient mudroom, a seamless indoor-outdoor connection, and an overall fresh aesthetic.

Zinn masterfully balances soothing and cheerful elements, blending blues and greens with pops of pink and yellow against an airy, neutral backdrop. Color comes through textiles, wallpaper, and accessories rather than painted walls. The family room—the home's main gathering spot—pairs



Foregoing a backsplash and opting to continue the countertop up the wall creates continuity. **Countertops:** Mogastone. **Faucet:** Newport Brass. **Lighting:** Visual Comfort. **Hardware:** Water Street Brass.

bright hues with durable performance fabrics, all anchored by a striking Donna Walker painting. Bold window treatments add personality, from emerald-trimmed curtains in the living room to navy-edged neutrals in the owner's bedroom and green café curtains in the guest bath. The navy-drenched library offers a moody retreat with pocket doors and a custom walnut bar, while raspberry velvet bolsters with green piping in the guest suite and layered hues in the breakfast nook bookcases create a lively, curated aesthetic.

Highley included many classic architectural details that add layers of interest. Reclaimed elements like a leaded window sash in the upstairs hallway and antique beams in the mudroom bring warmth and texture, while custom cabinetry lends stylish functionality. His thoughtful touches include elegant fireplaces anchoring the family room and library, a stunning wall of windows in the owner's bedroom framing the private patio, and casement windows in the kitchen offering glimpses of the walled secret garden. Chippendale railings on the back deck are a nod to the homeowners' University of Virginia roots.

The result is a home where every detail feels intentional, personal, and enduring. "The entire team was overjoyed with the final project. All the rooms have a purpose, and there are ample spaces for the family to gather, relax, do homework, and read," Zinn says.

Wood struggles to pick a favorite space—the natural light, thoughtful color, and attention to detail make each one special. "Our dream team helped us create an amazing home that we truly love," she says. "I walk through my home every day, amazed at how stunning everything is." 🏡



LEFT: While the rest of the home includes whispers of pink, the raspberry bolsters give a dramatic pop in the guest bedroom. **Lamp:** Visual Comfort. **Chair:** Mainly Baskets. **Pillows:** Titley and Marr. **Headboard and bed skirt fabric:** Lisa Fine Textiles. **ABOVE:** A monogrammed Weezy towel gives the daughter's bathroom a personal touch. **Wallpaper:** Schumacher. **Fixtures:** Delta. **BELOW:** The homeowners gave Zinn creative license to select high-end and interesting cabinet pulls and handles throughout the home, seen here on the custom beadboard bookshelves. **Hardware:** Modern Matter. **Sofas:** Highland House. **Sofa fabric:** Thibaut. **Coffee table:** Worlds Away.

Caption TK





A rattan chandelier pulls warm wood tones into the design, and expansive windows reveal peeks of the secret walled garden on the side of the home. **Chandelier:** Visual Comfort. **Hardware:** Modern Matter. **Cabinetry:** Cabinet Creations.

“We focus on thoughtful design that mixes modern comforts with meaningful pieces from the past.”





LEFT: From tortoise bamboo to luxe velvet, Zinn wasn't afraid to layer textures and colors in the home, as seen in the home office.

Sofa: Lee Industries. **Sofa fabric:** Schumacher.

Ottoman: Highland House. **Ottoman fabric:** Heather Chaddock.

Desk: Hickory Chair.

Chair: Mainly Baskets.

Cushion: Ferrick Mason.

TOP: Custom structured window treatments give the look of a fabric background to complement the owner's antique bed. **Coverlet:** John Robshaw. **Pillows:** Sister Parish. **Bolster:** GP&J Baker. **Lamp:** Visual Comfort.

BOTTOM: Custom cabinetry with chinoiserie gives the appeal of refined furniture in this powder room. **Wallpaper:** Schumacher. **Faucet:** Delta. **Custom vanity:** Cabinet Creations.

