

A FAMILY OF EIGHT—YES, EIGHT!—CALLED ON DESIGNER TOBI FAIRLEY TO USE HER SIGNATURE BOLD PALETTES AND TAILORED STYLE TO TRANSFORM A CRAMPED COTTAGE INTO AN ACCOMMODATING HOME FULL OF BRIGHT IDEAS

A COLORFUL Family Home

The family room is a study in contrast between sturdy and delicate. Glass and marble lamps add polish, while a pair of armchairs and set of ottomans are covered in an indoor/outdoor, striped fabric by Sunbrella. The paint color used on the walls and kitchen cabinets is Tidewater by Sherwin Williams.

STORY: JENNIFER BONDS PHOTOGRAPHY: NANCY NOLAN

A marine-colored sofa from Lee Industries grounds the room's mix of a wide range of styles. Facing page, clockwise from top left: Fairley covered the breakfast table's vintage French chair backs in a soft toile, but chose a more durable leather-look vinyl for the seats. The turquoise chandelier is a lacquered model from Shine by S.H.O. An ornate, high-style mirror from Horchow contrasts with the hall bath's preppy painted stripes, which are repeated with glass mosaic tiles on the lower portion of the wall.



As a family grows and changes, so should the family home. When a recently married couple with a combined total of six children was ready to bring everyone under one roof, finding a house that suited their complex needs was a challenge. The couple called on friend and Little Rock-based designer Tobi Fairley to turn a small cottage on a quiet street into a hard-working (and spacious!) family home. "The house wasn't large enough and definitely didn't suit their needs, but it is often better to address a home's challenges than to start with a blank slate," says Fairley of the family's decision to renovate rather than build a home.

Fairley and her team worked with Carolyn Lindsey of Yeary Lindsey Architects to open the kitchen into a large family room and add a new master suite, office, powder room, and utility space. Upstairs, they reclaimed the under-used attic for living spaces, installing dormers to add square footage and maximizing personalized storage wherever possible. The result is a study in creating an ideal space for a family of any size.



EMPLOY DURABLE FINISHES

The family room's marine-colored sofa and striped armchairs hide wear and tear, and the cotton rug from Dash and Albert can be easily flipped over for a crisp, fresh appearance when company arrives. Fairley had the ticking stripe fabric on the barstools coated in vinyl to make them easy to wipe clean. In the children's bedrooms, she chose FLOR tiles over wall-to-wall carpet. They add a graphic punch, and individual tiles can be replaced if they are stained or damaged. "Kids are hard on bedding, so this is not the place to splurge," says Fairley, who sourced easy-to-find brands such as Pottery Barn Kids to outfit the bedrooms.

"Since this is a blended family, we wanted to support building new relationships within the family as well as provide ample private space for everyone," Fairley says. "I wanted everyone to feel like they had a voice during the renovation and now have a place to be, so each personality can shine."





ADD LIFE WITH NATURAL COLOR

In the kitchen, the turquoise cabinets and coordinating backsplash might seem daring. However, in the context of the open-concept room, they actually allow the kitchen to recede into the background. "We used color to wrap the room, so it acts more like a neutral," Fairley explains. "It would have looked busier with white cabinets because the contrast would cause the eye to stop." Inspired by the family's love of the water, the adjoining family room is awash in shades of blue. "Most people find the colors of nature to be relaxing," Fairley says. "This is home to five females and three males, so we wanted it to appeal to everyone."

A large, marble-topped kitchen island now sits at what used to be the back wall of the house. Dual refrigerators are disguised behind cabinet panels flanking the range. The glass-and-polished-nickel pendants are by Thomas O'Brien for Visual Comfort & Co., and the glazed ceramic tile backsplash is by Pratt & Larson Ceramics. Above: Along the side wall, Fairley chose deep drawers over traditional base cabinets for their ease of use in neatly storing serving pieces and cookware.



In the master bedroom, a graphic Duralee print sets the color scheme of pewter and daffodil yellow. Embroidered linens are from Matouk and the Lucite ceiling fan—a favorite of Fairley's—is by Quorum International.

CREATE A SUITE RETREAT

The new master bedroom, which features soaring ceilings and a soft palette, is a quiet retreat for the busy homeowners. A bold, abstract painting by Kansas City-based artist Jane Booth adds a contemporary air that coordinates with the accent hues in both the bedroom and bath. A nearby office provides an out-of-the-way place to work from home, and it also has a built-in sleeping area for the couple's visiting college-aged daughter or guests.

SOLVE STORAGE ISSUES

Though the square footage of the once-small Heights cottage nearly doubled during the renovation, it was still imperative to make every inch useful for the family of eight. "We really opened up every nook and cranny of the house to make it practical," Fairley says. Attic space was enclosed to create built-in shelves and cabinets in the upstairs bedrooms, and a mudroom with locker-style cubbies for each family member was added at the home's back entrance. Fairley also chose furniture pieces that pull double duty, such as beds with pull-out trundles and ottomans with interior storage space.

Facing page, clockwise from top left: The Hickory Chair upholstered bed features a yellow band and nailhead trim detail. Bedside chests are from Oly Studio and the abstract artwork is by Jane Booth. In the bath, graphic stripes and a freestanding Kohler tub give an upscale spa-like feel. The silhouette pillows along the window seat are from the designer's own collection, Tobii Fairley Home. At the home's back entrance, each family member has both open and closed storage space thanks to custom cubbies. The floral, gray-and-white wallpaper is by Schumacher. Fairley carved an extra sleeping spot for the couple's college-aged daughter or guests into a window nook in the study. Floor length linen curtains close for privacy.



A bold floral pattern by Rubie Green Textiles is used throughout the teen girl's pink-and-black bedroom. Furniture and bed linens are by Pottery Barn Teen, and the carpet is a mix of FLOR tiles. To make good use of the space in the dormer windows, Fairley added a small side table that pulls up to the window seat as well as built-in drawers and shelves for storage.







To save floor space in the boy's room, an upholstered bed is tucked beneath the window. Custom built-ins offer ample desk space and storage for electronics.

LET THE CHILDREN CHOOSE

As a mother herself, Fairley appreciates the value of allowing children to have input in their spaces. "I like to conduct interviews with children away from their parents to hear about what is important to them," she explains. "Then we find ways to get everyone what they want and need." The teenaged daughter requested private space for entertaining friends. Her pink and black bedroom includes a small sleeper sofa, which is ideal for hangouts and sleepovers. Next door, the tech-savvy boy's room has ample built-in storage to keep his many electronic accessories tidy, and—at the end of the hall—the space for the preteen twin girls is colorful and whimsical, making it reflective of their tastes.





In the twin girls' room, Pottery Barn Teen beds each have a rollout trundle. The desk chair is by Room Service and the suspended blossom pendants are by 3form. In the bath, hand-painted polka dots continue the bright color scheme.



Design Resources

Architect Carolyn Lindsey, Yeary Lindsey Architects, Little Rock, (501) 372-5940, yearylindsey.com
 Contractor Scott Greenwood Construction, Little Rock, (501) 868-9062
 Interior design: Tobii Fairley, Tobii Fairley Interior Design, Little Rock, (501) 868-9882, tobiifairley.com
 Accessories, fabrics, furniture, lighting, and mirrors Tobii Fairley Interior Design, Little Rock, (501) 868-9882, tobiifairley.com
 Decorative pillows Sew Much by Monica Smith, Little Rock, (501) 952-3768
 Appliances Metro Appliances and More, Jonesboro, (870) 933-7800, North Little Rock, (501) 758-1988, Springdale, (479) 750-2200, metroappliancesandmore.com
 Painting—decorative Tracy Rivers, Angelfish Studios, Little Rock, (501) 960-4826, angelfishstudios.net
 Rugs C&F Flooring and Rug Gallery, Little Rock, (501) 399-9909, candforpet.com; Tobii Fairley Interior Design, Little Rock, (501) 868-9882, tobiifairley.com
 Paint Sherwin-Williams, locations statewide, sherwin-williams.com
 Upholstery Robbie Chism, Little Rock, (501) 257-7932
 Window coverings Mounrjos's Custom Draperies, Mabelvale, (501) 455-2216