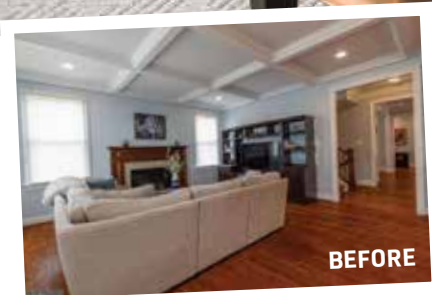


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Memories Made Modern

Family heirlooms, bright colors and sumptuous textiles transform a home from basic build to bespoke beauty.





BEFORE

COLOR CONNECTION. To unite the adjacent kitchen and island color with the family room, Susan had the back of the built-in shelves painted green. “It creates great flow and helps meld the two spaces together,” she says. The paint color is the same as what was used on the island (Sherwin-Williams’ Inverness).

The past gets a colorful present in this vibrant renovation filled with family heirlooms, thanks to Susan Sutter, principal/owner of Susan Sutter Interiors. The Arlington, Virginia, home is a Craftsman-style standard build, but Susan gave the interiors a classically updated refresh with bright colors, lush fabrics and family heirlooms. “My clients had just moved into this residence and wanted to blend their inherited pieces with some modern looks for the main floor,” Susan says. “They also wanted to transform the kitchen and primary suite to better match their style.” She wove the cherished heirlooms into the rooms and gave them new life while also imbuing the basic build with custom, colorful details, filling it with character and warmth—all while navigating the setbacks and restrictions of the post-pandemic landscape.

“I enjoyed using fun, updated fabrics on vintage and heirloom furnishings for a fresh, new look.”



BEFORE





Seeing a Pattern

Pattern mixing can feel like a hefty design challenge, but Susan has some foolproof tips that will elevate your style game and have you combining patterns like a pro.

- **BALANCING ACT.** Use one larger pattern and then a smaller complementary pattern to balance for pairs of pillows. For example, a large floral with a smaller-scale check or dot pattern. "Then, unite each pillow with a welt that ties the colors together," Susan suggests.
- **WALLPAPER FOR MODERN TIMES.** This is not your grandmother's wallpaper, as you can see by the selections in this home. A variety of wallpapers are an easy way to incorporate and mix patterns.
- **HAVE YOU ANY WOOL?** There are gorgeous, neutral patterns on lush wool rugs. "Wool rugs will ground your space and provide a cozy neutral backdrop for your amazing design to shine," Susan says.
- **SURFACE LEVEL.** Look for natural materials like quartzite countertops to bring in gorgeous veins and patterns to an otherwise flat space in a kitchen or bath.
- **MAKE A SPLASH.** Think of backsplashes as a way to add patterns to your home. "We used an antiqued mirrored backsplash in the butler's pantry/bar in a harlequin pattern with brass rosettes for added texture, color and light reflection in this darker space," Susan explains.



OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

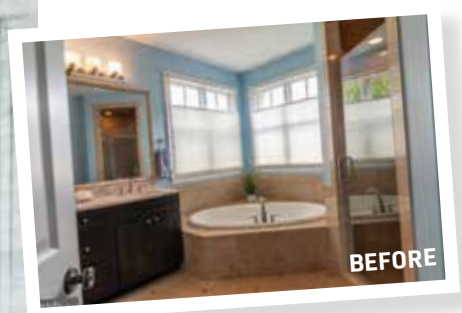
The project began during 2022, and the ramifications of the pandemic created a series of challenges, including delays and supply-chain issues. "The clients waited nine months for the refrigerator!" Susan recalls. The standard-build home had issues as well. Some of the finishes were not well planned and were tricky to navigate. For example, the spacing for the coffer ceiling in the family room didn't match up to the crown in the adjacent kitchen. "We worked with our amazing trades to find a great solution. There is always something with construction, and we always make it work," Susan says.

Both the kitchen and primary bath were total gut renovations. There are always obstacles when doing such drastic work, but it presented the opportunity to close off windows to bring in symmetry and a more functional layout. "Removing a window from the back kitchen wall allowed for the range to be centered with the island and sink, providing fabulous symmetry," Susan explains.

CREATIVE CULINARY SPACE. The kitchen project was straightforward in terms of renovation, but when it came to creative aspects Susan did what she does best: giving the room a classic yet fresh design that is unique to her clients' tastes, budget and style. "That's the fun part!" she says. The green island and elegant details combine to create a functional kitchen with personal flair.

IN STUNNING STYLE

As a designer, Susan has an appreciation for beautiful rooms, natural light and color. She loves to incorporate fun patterns and color into her designs and craft them to her clients' tastes, styles and preferences.



PERFECTLY PETITE. Susan appreciates freestanding tubs because they can fit into a more compact space and appear lighter and more airy than built-in tubs. This is a “petite-sized” tub that fits perfectly in the smaller primary bath corner. “It’s still very comfortable despite the petite size and has great ergonomics for a relaxing soak,” Susan says. “We always recommend clients try out various sizes of tubs and calculate their height into the selection.”

“The homeowners for this project love color too,” Susan says. “The home has lush green spaces in the surrounding yard and the client loves arranging flowers, so when I found the main kitchen dining-nook wallpaper, it launched the whole color scheme.”



| ABOVE, LEFT | WALLPAPER WHIMSY. "This home really went from blah to fabulous and the fun wallpapers were instrumental," Susan says. In this bathroom's wallpaper, a delicate menagerie of creatures frolic through the trees, making for a whimsical, airy and immersive space.


SITTING ROOM. The clients' primary bedroom features a cozy little seating area. "I styled it with their family heirlooms, which include the Asian chest and table lamp," Susan says. "We added two cozy chairs for reading and gorgeous layered custom window treatments (natural woven Roman shade and custom drapery panels) for light control and softening."



“My clients had just moved into this residence and wanted to blend their inherited pieces with some modern looks for the main floor.”

Susan paired colorful and patterned fabrics and papers with neutral elements to ensure the décor wasn't overwhelming and that there were ample places for the eye to rest in each space. "I enjoyed using fun, updated fabrics on vintage and heirloom furnishings for a fresh, new look," she says. She opted for lush velvets with more modern geometrics, large florals and silk fringes on furnishings and pillows for a fun, contemporary update to traditional furniture pieces. In addition, she used patterns on the backs of chairs and contrasting welts for a distinctive look.

The home is now a joyful expression of new and old, a place where memories are treasured and brought into the modern day to be appreciated on a daily basis.

"It reflects the clients' needs and personalities," Susan says. "Nothing makes me happier than that." 

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