



This Verona living room was transformed with a mix of bright neutrals and pops of blue. Designer Kathryn Cook was able to reuse many of the homeowner's best pieces in the new design.

# color me bright

This Verona homeowner wanted the designer to make her house fresher, brighter—but not too different.

Text by **Darcey Gohring** Design by **Kathryn Cook** Photography by **Vic Wahby**



It was a challenge not every pro could meet. Imagine a stoplight flashing both red and green. The homeowner wanted to freshen up the interior of her Verona home but keep a lot of her furniture. She craved the new—and also the familiar. It turned out that Kathryn Cook was just the designer to answer her ambivalent call.

“She really liked the bones of what was there, but wanted to lighten up,” says Cook. So how do you incorporate beloved existing pieces but reimagine them for a design that looks updated? Cook’s solution was to brighten the color scheme, improve the flow and mix in thoughtfully selected new elements.

The result: a space that is modern, inviting and comfortable but still feels like home.

At the beginning of the process, the client admits she felt overwhelmed. “While I knew I needed a new look, I assumed that would mean having to give away pieces that I really liked but that were dated,” she says. “I loved how Kathy created a new look for me but made some 20-year-old pieces of furniture look brand new.”

A linen floral print on a pair of favorite chairs in the living room served as the jumping-off point for the design. The original wood trim and mantel were preserved, but for the walls Cook selected a light,

A favorite is the bergère chair, which the designer revamped by repainting the frame and recovering in a bold ribbed velvet fabric. To keep the room light, Cook selected glass tables for their airy and reflective qualities.





This page, top and bottom: In the dining room, the homeowner wanted a bar to serve drinks when entertaining. On one shopping trip, she fell in love with this stylish piece. Its black finish with gold accents offered the palette for the room's accessories. Opposite: The bright blue wall color is enhanced with boldly patterned and layered window treatments.

neutral color that would work well with the fabric and open up the space. She then added a coordinating rug to break up more of the wood. Window treatments were hung higher and off the wall to add dimension. "The room doesn't get a ton of light throughout the day, so we enhanced the lighting and used glass pieces to get the reflection," Cook explains. Once they had the right foundation, the layout was reconfigured to allow for a more comfortable and streamlined seating arrangement.

In the dining room, Cook elected to use a rich blue color for the walls. Because the space was

previously a deep red, she knew it could take a bold hue, and the new shade worked beautifully with the room's wood tones. Replacing the matching 18th-century dining chairs with upholstered ones and adding a tonal rug brought it all together. For finishing touches, Cook worked around a black-and-gold bar piece the homeowner fell in love with on one of their shopping trips.

The next room to get a facelift was the library. The homeowner wanted this space, with its collection of family books and mementos, to serve as a refuge. Cook began by removing an old bookcase



and adding a floor-to-ceiling built-in, which she painted a glossy blue-gray. The plain walls were updated with boldly patterned wallpaper. Cook took a chair and ottoman that had been in the living room and reupholstered them in a velvet-trimmed textured tweed. The homeowners' Canterbury desk and chair were the final touches.

The last space to tackle was the garden room, which connects the backyard patio and a casual seating area for the family. "We wanted to link it to the outdoor space," Cook explains. This was accomplished by making selections that enhanced what

was there and ensuring that any new additions were the right scale for the room. The brick walls and French doors give the space immediate character. A unique storage cabinet with textured grillwork was introduced for height and interest. Finally, Cook added a rug to play up the textures and make it a comfortable year-round retreat.

"The new design makes every room a place you want to spend more time in," the homeowner says. "The library and the garden room used to just be unused spaces off the living room. Now they are everyone's favorite rooms."

This page: The goal for the garden room was to connect the space more to the outdoors and add pieces that fit with the scale of the room. Opposite page, top: Greenery and organic touches such as the rattan chair add interest and help tie the space to what's just outside the French doors. Opposite page, bottom: In the library, custom shelves were built to house the homeowner's books and favorite family treasures.