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Painting the family room and the entire downstairs in Wool Skein by Sherwin-Williams created a blank canvas for the designers. To create interest in the built-in bookcases, Serany added a Phillip Jeffries wallcovering to accent the Lee Industries sofa and chair.







# STATE *of* *the* ART

A WEST RALEIGH HOME GETS A BRIGHT, MODERN UPDATE INSPIRED BY THE FAMILY'S ART COLLECTION.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY VICKY SERANY AND ELIZABETH O'NEAL OF SOUTHERN STUDIO DESIGN  
TEXT BY BLAKE MILLER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY STACEY VAN BERKEL



Serany and O'Neal transformed the gold-hued dining room into a more sophisticated space by updating the walls with a wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries and adding a dining table with clean lines by Vanguard and a chandelier by Currey & Company. **OPPOSITE:** A brass chandelier by Generation Lighting provides a modern touch to the living room.







FOR JALEH AND DANNY REEVES, THE HOME was not meant to be. The couple had been searching for their new home and thought they had finally found the one. “The house hunt had been quite the journey,” Jaleh says. “We’d sold our previous home quickly and needed another fast, and this one was it.” But during the inspection process, multiple red flags were raised, among other issues, and the Reeveses were forced to back out of the sale. “We walked away from that home and it broke our hearts,” she says. For the next year and three months, the family of four continued their search in West Raleigh for the perfect home. In the meantime, they moved into a tiny apartment.

After an exhaustive home search, the Reeveses found a home in West Raleigh that they loved. “It was a long time coming,” Jaleh says of finding the circa-2005 house. “It had great bones but really needed to be updated on the interior.” The Reeveses reached out to the original builder, Jon Carter, who, ironically, was also the original homeowner, to help refinish the hardwood floors of the home. “Connecting with Jon was priceless,” she says. After lamenting that she needed help with the interior design process, Carter introduced Jaleh to designers Vicky Serany and Elizabeth O’Neal of Southern Studio Design. “Jaleh’s biggest concerns with the house were the paint colors and the kitchen itself,” Serany says.

Dark-wood details and cabinetry coupled with faux finishes and an earth-tone color palette made the interiors feel dated and dark. “It was unnecessarily dark in the







**LEFT:** To modernize the once dark and ornate powder room, Serany added a painterly wallcovering by Charlotte-based artist Windy O'Connor. The contemporary mirror by Four Hands and the double sconce by Visual Comfort round out the updated look.

**OPPOSITE:** The modern chandelier by Hudson Valley and the Hickory White dining table complement the more traditional lines of the Vanguard dining chairs in the breakfast area. The original wooden beams remained during the renovation because they brought warmth to the space.

house,” Jaleh says. “And there were some strange architectural details that were more of an eyesore than anything else.” Serany and O’Neal went to work pulling together a design plan that would help brighten the home while simultaneously modernizing it. “I showed Vicky photos of our old house and said, ‘I don’t want anything to look like this. It’s all yellow and red and dark. I want something fresher,’” Jaleh says. “I felt like that furniture and decor didn’t match our personalities anymore. Vicky and Elizabeth really got my goals and skillfully executed them.”

After painting the interiors a soft-white Wool Skein by Sherwin-Williams, Serany and O’Neal started on the kitchen, which was the biggest project, resulting in a huge aesthetic change for the entire downstairs. “I went into this saying I wanted to paint the cabinets,” Jaleh says of the cherry-wood kitchen cabinetry. But the designers could see past the cherry

finish and felt that with the wood ceiling beams in the same finish, it would be better to keep the cabinetry finish the same and focus on other finishes. Removing the black granite countertops and tumbled stone backsplash and painting the island cabinetry a slate gray instantly refreshed the kitchen. “We see so many fresh, white kitchens, and Jaleh wanted that, but I think the richness of that cherry wood is coming back,” Serany explains. Adds O’Neal, “Darker wood tones in cabinetry are coming back. They provide richness to a space.” To further update the kitchen, the designers added pendant lighting by Hudson Valley and a trio of counter stools by Lee Industries.

The rest of the home’s design was inspired by the Reeveses’ art collection. “We tried to design spaces with the art as the backdrop,” Serany says. “Jaleh really wanted to go outside of her traditional box.” For the Reeveses, the artwork

**LEFT:** The piano room's design centered around the large piece of art by family friend Kristan Five, a gift the couple gave one another for their tenth wedding anniversary. The ottoman is by Lee Industries, the hide rug is by Saddlemans, and the chandelier is by Currey & Company.

**RIGHT:** Serany worked with the homeowners' existing bed and rug in the master bedroom and layered in various new pieces like the dresser and nightstands by Vanguard to update the overall aesthetic of the room. The chandelier is by Hudson Valley, the bedding is by Pine Cone Hill, and the accent pillow is by Vanguard.



never really received the attention it deserved in their prior residence. “It always felt like a strange add-on in our other home,” Jaleh says. “But I loved how Vicky incorporated the artwork into the design.” In the piano room, an oversized piece by family friend and artist Kristan Five was a tenth wedding anniversary gift to each other. In the dining room, another piece by Five hangs prominently, complementing the Phillip Jeffries wallcovering and the modern chandelier by Currey & Company.

And though the powder room does not feature any of the Reeveses’ artwork, Serany and O’Neal wanted to update it with art, so they applied a stunning wallcovering by Charlotte-based artist Windy O’Connor. “The existing powder room had this terrible yellowy faux-Venetian plaster finish that looked inherently old and dated,” says Jaleh, adding that the vanity, which was ornate and dark, also needed to be removed. In its place, the designers added a white vanity with a marble top as well as a Visual Comfort double sconce and a modern mirror by Four Hands.





The Reeveses' artwork even inspired fabric selections throughout the home, including the family room. "We had fun in this room, pulling the colors from the artwork for our design choices," Serany says. "We wanted to be bolder in our color choices, but still timeless and classic." The trim detail by Kravet on the sofa by Lee Industries was one such choice that was subtle but helped to create an overall curated look. "I fell in love with that trim fabric," Jaleh says.

After a quick three-month renovation, the Reeveses and their two children were able to move in. And as if fate was working on their side after having spent the previous year searching for a home, they moved into their new home just in time. "We finished about a week before COVID hit in March 2020," Jaleh says. "This house is a much better fit for us. It's a better home overall. It was as if this was all meant to be." ♦