

Degrees OF DESIGN

Just as each snowflake is unique, no two interior design projects are ever the same.

Whether dictated by budget, design skill, home architecture or other factors, projects range from simple consultations to outright overhauls for Vicky Serany, owner of Southern Studio Interior Design in Apex.

Along with her colleague Martha Brown, Serany has worked with numerous local homeowners to create rooms that fit their tastes, budgets and lifestyles.

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Whether her designer influence is large or small, Vicky Serany helps families create cozy, comfortable rooms.

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“I tell every client that great design can be achieved at any price point.” – Vicky Serany



The Gebhardt family sought Southern Studio's help in pulling together furnishings for an open, inviting living room.

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Serany gave us a look inside the homes of three Cary families who requested different levels of services from Southern Studio. All three families have young children, so she chose durable fabrics and finishes that simultaneously provide comfort, style and utility.

Before embarking on a new design project, Serany and Brown meet with a client to discuss the homeowner's desired look and budget. "I tell every client that great design can be achieved at any price point," she said. Her work proves it.

In all projects, Serany emphasizes the core design principles of balance, proportion, contrast, repetition and harmony. In doing so, she's able to create warm and inviting spaces catered to the needs of all types of families.

Whenever possible, she keeps the décor local. "I try so hard to use products that are made in the U.S. and especially in North Carolina, because we live in the furniture capital of the world. When you go out to High Point you become accustomed to having a wide array of locally made furniture at your fingertips," Serany said.

Helping Hand

Interior design work is usually full-service, from concept through execution, but on occasion Serany finds a client who just needs a boost.

Kirsten and Chris Gebhardt found themselves in that situation last year when they bought a new Cary home. Kirsten had stacks of design magazines and knew precisely what look she was aiming for, but needed a bit of assistance

turning her vision into reality. Enter Southern Studio.

She shared her inspiration and ideas with Serany, who assisted her in locating the pieces she needed and adding finishing touches. "I took it all to her, and she pulled it all together. I never could have put these things together," Kirsten said.

The first step, as always, was to determine the function of the room. "It was important to her to have the family room really open and integrated into the kitchen space," Serany said. "Space planning and how you lay out a room is just as important as the pieces you put into it."

After establishing the utility and desired look of the room, it was time to shop. Instead of ordering custom-made furnishings, Serany looked in stores for pieces to fit the Gebhardts' plan.

"We use retail outlets to minimize expense to the homeowner from design time and process," she said. The result is a room that feels cozy and put-together without the long wait or higher price tags of custom pieces.

Keeping the process simple, Serany didn't change the paint color for the whole room, but she always adds a personal touch to her design projects. "We added a splash of color on the back of bookcases for visual interest," she said. In addition, she accessorized the bookcases with photos and other items the Gebhardts had on hand.

Consultation isn't limited to furnishings. "If somebody wants to paint the exterior of their house and needs a color consultation for the exterior, we'll do that kind of thing," Serany said.

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Middle of the Road

After moving into their first single-family home in June, Carolyn and Eric Homberger had a lot of empty rooms. Seven years in Manhattan followed by two years in a corporate apartment in Louisville, Ky., meant they had far more space than they were used to.

They shopped around at big box stores for awhile before deciding they needed help and went to Southern Studio. Without any particular ideas, they simply wanted a space that looked good. Serany ran with it and created two idea boards. The couple favored the color palette of soft blue and neutrals over the alternate suggestion of purple and chocolate brown, and their room was born.

Custom finishes were used for some of the furniture, with Serany selecting fabrics from manufacturer standard selections to reach a balance of customization and affordable price.

Patterned linen window treatments add a pop of color and a sense of casual simplicity. A large ottoman is finished in leather for durability — critical for a family with a 2-year-old daughter. An element of contrast comes from a textured rug that complements the sleekness of the leather.

The biggest impact comes from one of the smallest details. Serany wanted to add customized pillows to the room, and the homeowners had recently located their family crest. She saw an opportunity for a truly one-of-a-kind accessory.

With original colors of red and black, the crest's design needed to be customized to fit the cool colors of the rest of the furniture. "The embroiderer scanned it, and Martha picked every thread color and kept it neutral to match the design of the room," Serany said.

The Hombergers were delighted with the resulting family room. From colors to finishes, functionality to cost, it fit them just right. "If we would have bought everything retail, it would have been about as much, and I think we have a better space," Carolyn said.

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With a mix of custom elements and manufacturer standard options, Serany gave the Homberger family a design that's casual yet elegant. Custom-made pillows bearing their family crest make the room uniquely theirs.



“If we would have bought everything retail, it would have been about as much, and I think we have a better space.”
– Carolyn Homberger



Southern Studio helped the Fergusons build a stylish room using high-quality custom fabrics and finishes that will stand the test of time.



Hand-forged hardware, gathered pleating detail on window treatments and other luxurious details left no option overlooked.

“We wanted something that was not trendy, but timeless.”
— Cindy Ferguson

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All Out

Occasionally, homeowners pull out all the stops.

Cindy and Marty Ferguson were looking to create their dream living room — once. Busy professionals with two young children, they wanted to do the design right the first time and generate a luxurious room that would stay stylish for good.

“We wanted something that was not trendy, but timeless,” Cindy Ferguson said. She challenged Southern Studio with bringing together a detailed and customized design that would look elegant, in materials that would last.

The slate was initially bare. “Our house was pretty builder basic when we started,” Ferguson said.

Every element of the room was tailored uniquely to the family. To avoid

any urge to upgrade down the road, top-of-the-line finishes and fixtures were integrated from the outset.

“Instead of painting inside the ceiling coffers brown, we did a four-level metallic foil hand-glazed finish,” Serany described. Hardware on window treatments was uniquely hand-forged rather than stock, as were finials on lamps.

The furniture, made to order, went a step beyond selecting upholstery out of a catalog. Serany located “the perfect fabric” elsewhere and had it sent to the manufacturer, resulting in pieces that are quite literally one-of-a-kind.

Details like gathered pleating trim on window treatments left no options forgotten.

To learn more about Southern Studio Interior Design, visit www.southernstudio.com or call Vicky Serany at (919) 362-5143.

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