

Heart and hearth. In the living room, also called the keeping room, a stone wall brings drama to the relaxed space. Not shown but built-in cabinetry houses a television set for family entertainment. The room is centrally located near the kitchen, so “you don’t need to leave,” Vicky says. The painting above the mantel, a piece by North Carolina artist Susan B. Hecht, brings a pop of color to the space.

Naturally ELEGANT

This North Carolina home uses a neutral color palette and earthy materials to create a natural look, while bringing in luxurious layers and textures to refine the theme.

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Using stone as the design foundation of your home can be tricky—it's a heavy material and can easily be overdone and make a space feel bulky and blocked in. But done right, stone can bring a sense of comforting, natural elegance to a home. Vicky Serany and her team of interior designers at Southern Studio helped a young family through the entire construction process of their home in Raleigh, North Carolina. Natural elegance infuses every square inch of the home, from the outside in—starting with the handpicked stones of the home's exterior that determined the interior's warm brown color palette, all the way down to the hand-scraped wood floors.

Mother Nature's Muse

"We wanted a casual, natural theme that included natural elements," Vicky says. Stone is one element that repeats throughout almost every room of the home. In the keeping room, a stone wall behind the fireplace adds drama, while stone-like tile mosaics on the walls in the master bathroom, powder room and kitchen create a layering effect that adds depth to the rooms.

Reclaimed, hand-scraped wood floors create another layer of texture. "They really set the theme throughout the house," Vicky says. Hand-scraped wood has a naturally worn, uneven texture that feels organic and allows for natural wear-and-tear—perfect for a young family. The unfinished look relaxes a space, balancing other refined, elegant elements, like the plush, modern chairs in the formal dining room.

Cozy Luxury

Balancing the seemingly opposite themes of elegant and natural can be a difficult task. Too much elegant, high-end décor and a home feels untouchable and uncomfortable. But over-using rustic finds can make a home feel worn-down, old and distressed. Ideally the two can temper each other—when elements of each are incorporated into a space.

In the dining room, the round dining table features a lazy Susan, adding a taste of country to the formal table. Conversely, chandeliers throughout the home are elegant pieces that serve to dress up the rooms they light. In the living room and master bathroom, the gently curving lines of iron chandeliers elevate the refinement of each space.



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Layered textures.

The heavy round table in the formal dining room serves as the focal point of the room and perfectly embodies the design of the house: natural, homey comfort with a touch of refinement. "It makes a statement right as you walk in," Vicky says. A custom-textured wall treatment, exposed ceiling beams and lush fabrics adorning the windows complete the natural, layered look.



Cabinet contrast. The homeowners chose a wood finish for the kitchen island different from the cabinetry wood to add contrast to the space. A custom-finish hood brings in another texture, creating visual interest.

Dynamic Design

One technique that adds sophistication to any space is incorporating layers and textures. In this home, Vicky infuses each room with greater depth and visual interest by stacking textures and materials. In the powder room, the quartersawn oak vanity is topped by a granite counter with a chiseled edge. A metallic mirror offsets the natural elements in the room.

The space is glammed up with a modern tree-branch-patterned wall covering, which is mirrored in the twig-adorned light fixture. The look is completed by cabinet hardware with leaf details. Each texture adds layer upon layer to make the room feel full and rich.

This effect also works to add visual interest in a space with a neutral color palette. Shades of brown can become dull unless



Set in stone. The master bathroom's design was inspired by the mosaic tiles in the shower. A luxurious tub and bench in the shower enhance the spa atmosphere of the space, and stone and marble tile details add layers, giving the room depth.

1 Leaf motif. Chiseled-edge granite adorns a custom, quartersawn oak vanity in this powder room. The leaf details on the cabinet hardware, as well as the hanging lamp lined with twigs, incorporate natural elements, while the metallic mirror brings in an element of glamour.

2 Spa luxury. Vicky says designing the vanity and cabinet in the master bathroom was a challenge because of the angle of the wall, though the custom armoire now provides ample storage space. A beaded chandelier provides soft lighting to create a spa-like feel, a departure from the typical harsh lighting found in bathrooms.



broken up, by pops of color or by mixing up textures. In the living room, a splash of green paint on the walls breaks up the browns. In the formal dining room, lush fabrics, like the suede coverings on the chairs and the gold-patterned curtains framing the window, add layers with an air of sophistication. The custom wall treatment in the dining room, a faux-paint finish by a local North Carolina artist, adds a subtle, worn texture to the room as well.

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Like a fine wine. The statement piece in this powder room is the wine barrel vanity, a piece made by a local North Carolina company. A hammered copper counter highlights the tones of the handmade tile wainscoting.