

# *A family* AFFAIR



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Visitors to this Dallas house find an eighteenth-century Swedish Gustavian chest in the foyer. The family's art collection includes a graphite-on-canvas work by Blair Vaughn-Grufer and a flight of ceramic butterflies by Jennifer Prichard.

## *A Dallas designer TRANSFORMED her family's home into a place full of HAPPY MEMORIES.*

**T**ranquility is an elusive quality, but Dallas designer Shannon Bowers has captured it in abundance throughout the light-filled home she shares with her husband, Dan, a pediatric oncologist, and their two children. A calm serenity envelops all who enter, and Bowers's soothing palette of colors, skillful mix of materials, and instinctive sense of restraint create a sophisticated and memorable atmosphere.

The home looked quite different when the couple first toured it three years ago. On their initial introduction and walk-through, dark walls, limited natural light, and layers of inconsistent modifications by previous owners greeted them. Bowers and her husband recognized the inherent architectural integrity of the structure and, in her words, knew, "It was a Tudor just waiting to be reborn."

Its location in a coveted enclave of older homes known as Greenway Parks was a tremendous asset. The close-knit community is comprised of some 300 homes, most of them lovingly preserved from the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, and the area is interlaced with lush parks and greenbelts. The neighborhood has a lively calendar of annual neighborhood events and gatherings, fostering an idyllic family atmosphere.

In a renovation that spanned eight months, Bowers directed a thorough transformation of the home that breathed new life into it. The dark walls were brightened and hardwood floors were stripped and restained. Generous arches were added between rooms to create spatial interest, and windows were enlarged to bring in more natural light. When the old sheetrock was removed from the living room ceiling, a rhythmic pattern of beams and trusses was exposed, a change that added such unexpected visual interest that Bowers decided to leave them uncovered.

An otherwise ignored, yet spacious, attic space was

reclaimed and transformed into a guest suite that includes a bedroom, separate sitting room, and full bathroom. The space exudes a storybook charm, with its high-pitched ceilings and sun-filled windows with views in and among the treetops. The seating area, positioned beneath the pitch of the roof, features a soft floral print by Designers Guild on the ceiling and walls, along with artworks. An antique lantern set high on the ceiling casts a warm glow over a grouping that includes a sofa, chairs, and a distinctive horn-legged coffee table.

Significant revisions were made to the exterior of the home as well. A new limestone façade was designed to frame the front door and add visual depth, as well as create a welcoming entry transition. A pair of antique French lanterns balances this entry element, and the glow they emit adds visual warmth to the smooth stone. Careful attention to the elements in courtyards and side yards ensures that a memorable view is afforded from every window. A terrace features a pizza oven surrounded with seating. The area opens to one of the shared parkways and draws neighbors when the aroma of freshly baked pizza wafts through the air.

Bowers's design philosophy embraces the belief, "Home should be a happy, fun place where you are surrounded by objects that evoke memories." All of the interiors are painted the same fresh, neutral color, which creates a natural cohesion among rooms and allows Bowers an "artist's canvas" to build her thoughtfully crafted designs. She gravitates toward a mixture of antiques and art from different time periods and then layers accents with strong texture — a well-worn leather chair and antler chandelier harmonize seamlessly with antiques and a mix of contemporary and traditional art.

"Texture gives warmth to a neutral background," Bowers



A beamed ceiling adds architectural charm to the sunken living room. Gray and white C&C Milano ticking is used throughout. A Serge Mouille three-arm ceiling lamp provides lighting. An eighteenth-century Gustavian T-table rests in front of the sofa. The chartreuse club chair is slipcovered in Designers Guild linen.



Previous page: In lieu of a piano bench is an unusual horn chair with a hide-upholstered seat. This page: An early-nineteenth-century Italian crystal chandelier is situated over a bleached pine table from the south of France, surrounded by Moorish-inspired bone-inlaid chairs.



Swedish Farm Table  
from Chateau Domingue

Left: The Bowers children, who like to cook in the open-space kitchen, prep dessert at a custom island with an antique four-inch-thick oak top. Above the stove hangs the designer's collection of eighteenth-century brass pots. This table, Eames's molded plastic dowel armchairs, are gathered around a Swedish farm pine table.



The series of shades and the upholstery on the chair in the master bedroom are in Berrison Roses mono gray on oyster. The custom bed in Rogers & Goffigon linen is made up with a collection of white bedding.



explains. "And a whimsical touch in each room keeps things from becoming too serious or stuffy." One example of a particularly stunning accent is an installation of ceramic butterflies that was a gift to Bowers from her father. The artist, Jennifer Prichard, mounted the flock of butterflies on the wall to appear as though they are floating up, with each butterfly carefully positioned. "I wanted it to look like someone opened a jar and they just flew up the staircase," says Bowers.

Bowers draws an important distinction between a home that has been simply decorated and one that has been thoughtfully designed. "A well-decorated home looks beautiful and may be filled with beautiful things, but a truly well-designed home welcomes you, surrounds you with warmth and makes you feel comfortable. A thoughtfully planned room draws you in and feels very personal. This is what I strive to do in all of my projects — to really listen to my client and design spaces that feel good to them."

Evidence of her philosophy in action is the combined kitchen and family room that serves as the heart of the home. Both husband and wife are avid cooks, and they often include the children in meal preparation. The couple loves to entertain, so the generously scaled area functions well for large groups of friends and, most importantly, as the perfect setting for family time. The space was planned

to bring everyone together, while maintaining distinctly defined areas. The designer's ability to combine textures and furniture from different eras is showcased here: an antique Swedish farm table, illuminated by a French iron chapel chandelier, is surrounded by molded plastic Eames armchairs; an old English chopping block topped with a four-inch-thick oak slab creates a generous work surface and anchors the room with style. A nineteenth-century zinc bull's head from a French butcher's shop hangs above a collection of gleaming copper pans conveniently positioned near the range. Slipcovered chairs, a comfortable sofa, and a large fireplace welcome visitors in and encourage lingering.

"Our homes tell the stories of our lives," Bowers emphasizes. "The objects we choose reflect our experiences and our values and should evoke memories that make people feel warm." This peaceful family home is a tale happily underway with many untold chapters yet to be written. ■

Opposite page: In her daughter's room, a Swedish side table is positioned beside a canopy bed dressed in white bedding. Walls are covered in Quadrille's Aqua IV in turquoise on white. Above: One of the home's side gardens.