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Spring 2011

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MODERN MOVEMENT

A Greenwich couple takes a big step toward the contemporary, sweeping away a classic colonial look for a fresh approach that better suits their active young family.

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Designer Michelle Morgan Harrison brought drama to the living room with a wall of antiqued mirrored panels and glamorous materials like the silvery white sofa fabric and the combination of a silver-and-white patterned fabric from David Hicks and a metallic linen from F. Schumacher (*facing page*) on the chairs.





impressed with the designer's approach. "She did different styles for different people," she recalls. "She didn't have her own style that she was imposing."

To give Bonny and Joe Bob the look they wanted without doing away with their favorite things, Morgan Harrison went through the house with the couple, identifying furniture, art and accessories they loved too much to lose. "It wasn't so hard," Bonny says. "There were some paintings and some rugs, but I was really ready for a change."

Previous owners had put on an addition intended to open the kitchen and enlarge the family room. Because the new space had a high ceiling while the older section still had its low ceiling, the family room—while indeed larger—was functionally the equivalent of two smaller rooms. Morgan Harrison brought new and old spaces into a harmonious whole by replacing the high ceiling

in the addition with a lower, coffered ceiling. Playing off the handsome white cabinetry and a pillared half-wall in the kitchen, she added columns on either side of the family room. The fireplace that had stood largely ignored at one end of the older space now became the



In the living room, the designer introduced silver and white to dramatic effect.





The library's dark wood paneling was lightened up with a coat of luscious butterscotch-colored paint. *Facing page:* Restful aqua mixed with neutrals forms the palette for the main living spaces.



Classic and modern elements mingle in the dining room chandelier. The dining chairs wear an easy-to-clean Sunbrella velvet. *Facing page bottom:* The brass-and-glass table's shape is a perfect match for the tufted dining chairs. *Facing page top:* Colonial-style light fixtures and bar stools made way for a more modern interpretation.

focal point for the spacious new family room. "I love how the kitchen flows into the family room now," Bonny says.

Cozy but traditional furniture was swapped out for low-lying sofas with an elegant modern shape and sleek barrel chairs that are every bit as comfy as the overstuffed easy chairs they replaced. A pair of rich-toned oriental rugs made way for one large and lovely silk carpet from Stark in a luxurious golden-wheat color. And the reds, greens and deep golds of the old space have given way to a breezy palette of aqua, camel and buttercream. "I knew I wanted a more neutral look," Bonny explains. "When we started looking at fabrics I was drawn to the pale bluish-greenish. It's soft; it's so soothing."

The same restful color scheme forms the basis for the living room, but here Morgan Harrison has ratcheted up the glamour in a big way. The aqua has lightened to the palest of blues and is found only in the wool-and-silk rug and the occasional toss pillow. The camels and buttercreams of the family room have morphed into dazzling golds, and the designer has introduced silver and white to dramatic effect. The room's far wall seemed to waste its potential, standing as little more than a backdrop for the seating area. Morgan Harrison covered the entire expanse with panels of antiqued mirrored glass, adding visual impact and making the room seem much larger.

A swoop-armed sofa wears a sumptuous silvery-white linen. A pair of Hollywood-elegant Thomas Pheasant chairs that Bonny and Joe Bob already owned were recovered in a combination of metallic linen from F. Schumacher and a silver-and-white patterned fabric from David Hicks.



As grown-up as the new decor is, Morgan Harrison made sure the house remained kid-friendly.



A golden sunburst mirror and a vintage brass peacock provide finishing touches.

Lightened up, too, is the library that doubles as Joe Bob's office, where Morgan Harrison painted the dark paneling a luscious butterscotch shade, then added a boldly patterned carpet in a soft neutral and dressed the windows in simple linen with a butterscotch trim.

As grown-up as the new decor is, Morgan Harrison made sure the house remained kid-friendly. "It really needed to work for a family," she says. "The trick was the fabrics I chose. I used a lot of vinyl and Kravet's Smart Weaves fabrics." In the dining room, for example, the chairs are covered in a Sunbrella velvet that Morgan Harrison swears is indestructible. "You can spill ketchup on it and it wipes right up," she marvels.

The sophisticated tone of the living areas continues to the bedrooms. In the master bedroom, the designer converted the velvet draperies into roman shades and brought in a new bed with an upholstered wingback headboard. The boys' rooms, too, find a way to be stylish yet age appropriate and a bit whimsical. For the youngest son, who was moving from crib to "big boy" bed, she created a playful room in a palette of cranberry, dark brown and cream. For another son, who needed some persuasion to give up his *Star Wars*-themed room, she outfitted the space in irresistible deep, dark chocolate and buoyant orange. "It's fun and modern," Morgan Harrison says. "It's a great room for a boy to grow up in; it'll grow with him."

Indeed, the whole house has taken on a more fun, modern aspect that's just right for its young family. •

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A son's bedroom is kid-friendly but not babyish. *Facing page top:* Cof-fered ceilings forge unity between the family room and kitchen. *Facing page bottom:* Velvet roman shades and an upholstered headboard add a plush note to the master bedroom.