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Shannon O'Hara photos

HOME

Designer's marching orders: Color my world

By Diane Cowen

Walls and cabinets are painted pale shades of green, living-room chairs sport orange and yellow prints. Velvety turquoise ottomans rest aside a gold table. Bold, multicolored art adorns the wall above.

The mix of hues in Holly and Rick Carr's Memorial home sounds like a riot of color.

In reality, the colors all are drawn from a single piece of fabric that, in the end, found its place on just a couple of decorative pillows.

Holly Carr met her interior designer, Joani Scaff, when she stumbled onto Scaff's Paisley House home-décor shop. She loved an ivory settee — it was perfect for a sitting area she wanted — and she struck up a conversation with Scaff, who has been an interior designer for more than two decades.

When Carr approached her about helping with a full-home makeover, she wanted to share a folder of photos she liked. Scaff asked her to instead look at fabric samples.

It was a test to see what Carr would react to: soft or dark? Neutral or bold? Solids or patterns?

Quickly, one pattern — Schumacher's Chiang Mai Dragon — stood out. On a pale-green background is a menacing, multicolored dragon, an Asian vase in shades of muted green, flowers in bursts of coral and red, and vines and leaves in greens and teals.

"This was so much fun for me because she was super receptive to color," Scaff said. "This one pattern was the catalyst for everything that happened."

Carr loved that print when she first saw it, and she still loves it today. Though it didn't find a home on two armchairs as originally planned, the homeowner and designer used it as their barometer throughout the design and shopping process.

If Carr was shopping, she'd look for those colors. If a piece had any of them, it would work. Most important, it meant those things would work anywhere on the first floor, so she can change things up if she ever tires of any arrangement.

"It was great inspiration for color and cabinets, for a lovely infusion of color that goes into the dining room and (family rooms). As the house started forming, it just felt like too much pattern," Scaff said of why that fabric ultimately was edged out.

The two often shopped together, and when they shopped on their own, they'd



call and text photos.

Once Scaff had to fend off three hungry shoppers circling a coffee table at Round Top. Another time she kept a new item at her own store off the floor until Carr had a chance to see it.

The friendship they developed meant that Carr could easily say, "Hey, look at what I just found," and Scaff was free to respond with, "No, don't think so."

"At times, I tend to buy what I like, and I needed to make sure that would come together cohesively," Carr said. "I know myself well enough that I know I like to mix vintage with modern. I have a little eclectic, Bohemian in me."

Holly's from Ohio; husband Rick is from Alaska. They met while working for Deloitte Consulting and have lived in Southeast Asia. When they landed in Houston in 2008, they were ready to make something their own.

The Carrs bought the home knowing they would remodel and took their time deciding what to do.

"We lived in this home for five years, so when it came to renovating it, we knew exactly how we were going to use the space," Holly Carr said. "So there wasn't any mystery around how this house was



Interior designer Joani Scaff collaborated with Holly Carr in the makeover of the home Holly shares with her husband, Rick. Bright, Asian-inspired colors proliferate in vintage-modern mixed spaces, particularly the first floor, top and middle, for a look that's both fun and elegant. A powder room, above, features brightly colored flowers and birds.

going to be used."

A dark and choppy floor plan needed to be light and open. Isolating walls in the kitchen — described as looking like the shape of Nevada — would be removed. A small breakfast area would get built-in cabinets to display family heirlooms and become a relaxing place for small-group conversations.

Carr wanted a home that was both fun and elegant — not one that felt stuck in "Beige Land." They host smaller dinner

parties for friends, big family events at Thanksgiving and Christmas and more formal affairs for work. Their three kids are busy with sports, so when they're home there are always friends tagging along.

Holly's kitchen now has an outside wall lined with cabinets and a giant island — 12 feet long and extra wide — topped with walnut.

One summer when her sons played baseball together, their team ended up in a

championship game. It was one of those seasons when the stars are all in alignment; kids make good memories and the parents happily meld into one tight-knit group.

She knew she was right about that kitchen one day when they all gathered to eat.

"We all were in the kitchen, and we held hands around the island and prayed. It was so cool," she said. The boys didn't win, but it was a magical moment nonetheless.

In the new breakfast area is a bright navy, croc-embossed faux leather banquette beneath a row of windows. Two bistro tables sit beneath a lengthy zinc top.

An addition on the back allowed for a bar, family room and a sizable laundry room.

It's also the site of a new powder room that pops with color. Paneling painted in Sherwin-Williams' Halcyon green is topped with ornate wallpaper that has a beige-gold background with brightly colored flowers and birds. And a custom-made vanity painted in coral fits perfectly. (It was originally lime green, but they decided that was simply too much.)

The dining room goes softer with a long table with chairs on top of a neutral rug and pale-green wallpaper with light, geometric shapes.

Upstairs, the children had some say in their own room décor, and the boys kept it simple. A game room holds the requisite foosball and air-hockey tables and comfy furniture for them to curl up in.

Their older sister, however, taps into her own bohemian side in her room.

"I got to decorate my room when I was a kid, and I remember my mom never saying a word," Carr said. "I wanted my daughter to have full reign. She's old enough now."

She's got an orange headboard for her bed and a bold, multicolored quilt and bedding, with blue walls and red-striped curtains.

The Carrs' home now fits the needs of a young, contemporary family.

"This house lives bigger than the floor plan. To be able to fit 60 people in here is not a problem," Scaff said. "Nobody goes into a renovation or new build lightly. My clients are all self-made and have worked hard to get there. You do want to be thoughtful in the process and be conscientious about where their money's going."

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