

Lake Norman

M A G A Z I N E



Easy living

Lake Norman couple transforms neglected house into home sweet home

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Sophisticated sanctuary



Local designer turns man cave into **contemporary paradise**

It's quite often that homeowners feel that they have outgrown their houses. But that probably won't happen at a house that spans more than 4,000 square feet, complete with an in-ground swimming pool surrounded by a beautiful outdoor living space. What you could find, however, is that you've outgrown the feel of the house, that it's outdated, and no longer reflects your current tastes. So you bring in a "star" interior designer, which is what this homeowner in Huntersville did.

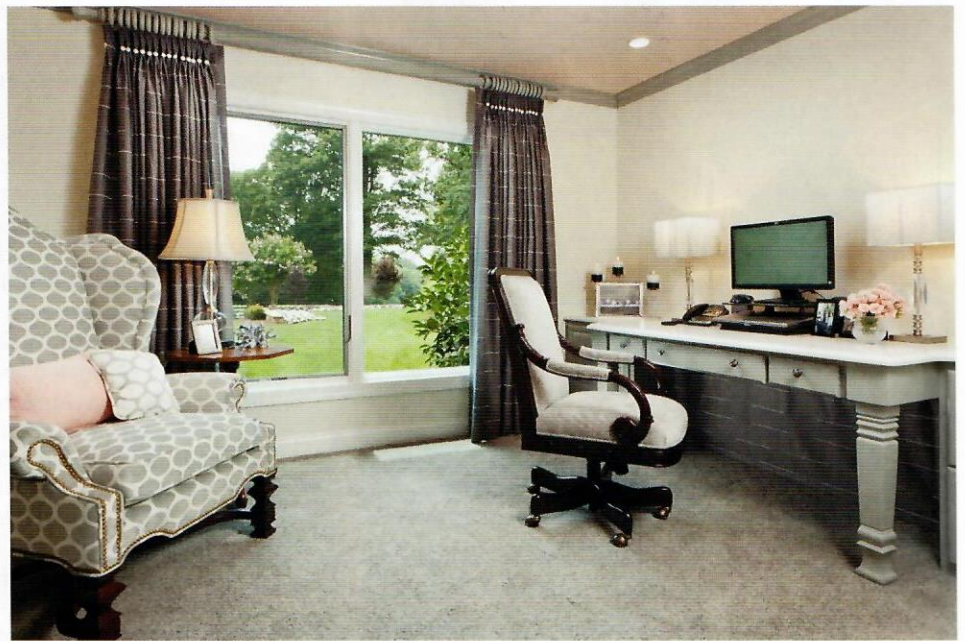
Starr Miller, of the Cornelius-based Starr Miller Interior Design, Inc., was hired (the homeowner requested to remain anonymous) to transform the central living spaces of the home. These are the rooms that greet you from the front door, straight back through the rear of the house, including the foyer, family room, and sunroom – all in a row – and the home office, located to the right of the foyer.

The rooms are large, so Miller had plenty of space to work with.

They featured multiple shades of brown, with large pieces of heavy, wood furniture (think curio cabinets and big wall units). It had a very masculine feel. Miller's client was eager to make it all more contemporary and feminine – the homeowner had become a widow in the last couple of years.

"She has a great opinion, and the key for a great client for us is one that has an opinion," Miller says. "She really wanted fabrics that moved together, that weren't your old, traditional, stodgy fabrics. She wanted something that was new and crisp, which was fun."

During the initial consultations with her client, Miller was instructed to not use greens, reds, yellows, or oranges in her color choices. Where some designers might have panicked, Miller sought inspiration. She found it in a collection of Delft pottery that had been in the family for years, scattered throughout the house. The navy blue of the pieces would become the dominant color in the



renovations, paired with glowing grays and creams.

Entering through the front door, you step into the large foyer. On the right wall, where there formerly were two, cushioned chairs with a small table in the middle, Miller replaced them with a secretary by Harden and a hand-painted chair with custom upholstery. For the larger window next to it, she added custom drapery made from fabric from Pindler & Pindler and Mackenzie-Marble (most of the custom upholstery came from Pindler as well).

Directly across from the front door in the foyer is a large stone wall, separating the foyer from the family room (the wall is the backside of the fireplace). Miller removed the large, oak curio cabinet (filled with the client's gnome collection) that was against the stone wall, and replaced it with an elegant wall mirror by Tritter Feefer and a weathered-wood console table from John-Richard.

You can step down into the large family room from either side of

the stone wall. Here is where the blue from the Delft comes to life. Your eyes are drawn to the back of the room where the A-frame-shaped wall, which holds the double doors to the sunroom, has been painted navy blue. Light-brown wallpaper covered the walls in all of these rooms before, and other than the two blue ones the others were painted white, adding a lighter feel to the previously dim spaces. Crown molding was also added. And Miller was able to accentuate the walls by bringing in great pieces of artwork that were previously in other rooms of the house, including hanging the Delft collection in a central place.

All of the furniture in the family room is either new or has been refinished and reupholstered. The custom sofa is in the center of the room, acting as sort of a divider for the large space. To the left and right of it are tight-back, Vanguard armchairs with a blue and gray, puzzle-like pattern in the upholstery. Across from the sofa and



in front of the fireplace are two oversized, blue-cushion chairs with gray piping.

On the other side of the sofa is an area that has been redesigned to appeal to the homeowner's love for bridge. Two Lexington game tables, each with four Hickory Chair game chairs, upholstered with the blue and gray scheme of the other chairs but with a slightly different pattern, are on either side of this section of the room. It's certainly conducive to playing card games, yet it still serves as elegantly appointed furniture when no one is sitting there.

In a room this size, which is clearly intended to entertain people, you might look around and wonder why there isn't a television. Aha, but there is. It's behind the large wall mirror. It's an innovative concept known as hidden TV framing and Miller found a vendor that specialized in it. She then brought in KS Audio Video from Cornelius to handle the delicate installation of the 42-inch Samsung and mirror, which also included installing speakers in the wall to be covered by thin pieces of drywall and painted over.

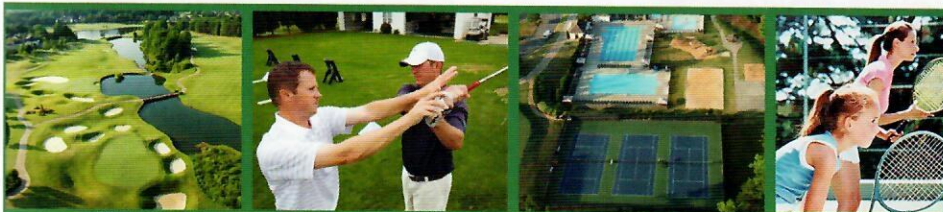
"She wanted a room with a TV – and a nice-sized one – but not for the room to be focused on it," Miller says. That was certainly accomplished.

Off the family room is the sunroom, which Miller has turned into a space that rivals most people's living rooms. "We took it from being outdoor furniture to indoor furniture. But all of it is outdoor fabric. You could throw Clorox on it," she laughs.

The sunroom continues to be conducive to the fact that its sliding doors open to the pool area, which means family members and guests can come in dripping wet. The wicker furniture with flowered cushions has been replaced with beautiful loveseats and wingback chairs by Charles Stewart, Butler nesting tables, and a CTH Sherrill coffee table.

Miller and her team completed the work over the span of about five months. The center of the house is almost unrecognizable from its previous state, and Miller has another satisfied customer.

"She made some dramatic changes from where the home was." **LNM**



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