

CHARLOTTE URBAN

# HOME

APRIL / MAY 2016

CELEBRATING INSPIRATIONAL DESIGN AND PERSONAL STYLE





...and the  
LIVING  
— is —  
EASY

By Laura Jackson  
Photography by Chris Edwards

*The best designs emerge when designers  
and clients forge relationships built upon  
mutual trust and shared understanding.*

**I**nterior designer Amy Vermillion has long been intrigued by how the right design can inspire better and easier living. “What I mean by that is the importance of finding out what each of my clients needs to function at their highest level while enjoying life more,” she explains. “Fifty years ago, we had none of the conveniences that we do now, and yet we are more stressed and over-scheduled than we have ever been.”

Although always on top of the latest trends and newest technologies in home design, her biggest influence is her client’s lifestyle. She asks first, “What would make their lives happier? I want to know—does my client love to curl up with a book (Amy Vermillion Interiors is designing more libraries than ever before), do they need an entry point that is utilitarian (mudrooms!), or is it a cooking/entertaining kitchen that they have been dreaming about.” Vermillion believes in the “total fix—making homes not just beautifully appointed, but also functional and completely livable.”

One of her recent designs in Foxcroft provides an excellent example of creating beautiful functional living at its best. Vermillion and her client have worked together for years on









several projects and have developed just the type of trust and understanding it takes to build the most successful of working relationships. Together they found an excellent starting point in a home with great architectural potential, located in one of Charlotte's most desirable neighborhoods. However, the house had not been updated in several decades and "needed a lot of love."

The original design included a kitchen with an impractical floorplan, two master baths connected by an odd hallway, and a loft with a spiral staircase above the kitchen that had absolutely unusable square footage. Ultimately, they took most of the house down to the studs to allow for an incredible new functional design. They added a second story giving enough space for an additional bathroom, media room and even another bedroom.

Along the way, there were a few wonderful surprises as well. Some of the unfortunate finish choices of the previous owner featured pink shag in the master bath and carpet over antique heart pine floors in the kitchen. "We all high fived each other when we found the heart pine in the kitchen!" describes Vermillion.

Throughout the home today, a soothing, yet warm palette of colors flows through each room. Sunlight beams in from the home's many skylights set against gorgeous vaulted wood ceilings. From the beginning of the project, Vermillion understood her client's vision of his new home.





*Throughout the home today,  
a soothing, yet warm palette of colors  
flows through each room.*

“My client has a great aesthetic—he loves the mix of antique and modern pieces and truly appreciates architectural detail to set the stage.”

Understanding her client’s needs, Vermillion knew she wanted to create a home that he could entertain in, showcase his fabulous art collection, and truly enjoy day to day. As the transformation unfolded, she explains, “We laid out a thoughtful kitchen (he loves to cook), a functional master bath and turned a closet into a library office for his extensive book collection.” Another nonfunctional area was gutted and repurposed into a shared mudroom/laundry/wine room.

Her new favorite room of the home, the dreamy kitchen, is full of visual surprises and delights around every incredible corner. An engaging brick fireplace immediately creates a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere, anchoring a room lit by inviting brass lanterns among other delightful lighting choices. The gorgeous heart pine floors contrast with greige cabinets and quartzite counters to add clean lines and sleek sophistication.

“I wanted the cabinetry hardware to mimic the home’s original door hardware, so I designed it to scale and had it custom made in Chicago,” said Vermillion. “We used every inch of space, even incorporating cabinets with pull-up doors above the sink.”









*“Good design starts with the big picture,” believes Vermillion.*

The end result was not just an extremely functional kitchen, designed especially for someone who loves to cook, but also a cozy gathering spot where her client can read by the fire or have guests enjoy a glass of wine while he cooks.

“Good design starts with the big picture,” believes Vermillion. “Whether I am designing a whole house or one room, it’s really important to think about how design choices affect the rest of the home. Rooms should flow into each other and share similar finishes, colors or appointments.”

Vermillion also strongly advises, “Put some of yourself in the space! I always ask my clients if they have collections or anything they would like to showcase. It makes the space so much more interesting when it’s not all designer-related. One of my clients has a gorgeous assortment of antique objects all made with tortoise. We grouped them together in one room and they are now definitely conversation pieces.”

She explains that one major downfall of the popularity of today’s reality design shows is that they make it appear as if you can produce the perfect amazing space overnight. According to Vermillion, “Patience is also key. You can certainly stage a complete room quickly, but it won’t be layered with all the special details and custom touches that make a space truly inviting and yours alone.”◆