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Bookshelves are taken to a whole new level with Schumacher's Acanthus Stripe wallpaper. Neutral upholstery by Jonathan Louis accents the World's Away chandelier, while pillows backed with Windy O'Conner fabric and fronted with Kelly Wearstler's Channels makes for interesting pops along the way. Artwork by Benson Cobb hangs over the fireplace and grounds the whole room.





SIGNED,
*Brooke
Cole*

WHEN DESIGNER BROOKE COLE AND HER FAMILY MOVED FROM BOSTON TO CHARLOTTE, SHE FINALLY HAD A HOME ON WHICH SHE COULD TRULY PUT HER OWN SIGNATURE.

Written by Anne Marie Ashley
Photography by Erin Comerford





If there were a style that defined residential design in the '90s, it would be what interior designer Brooke Cole calls, "the Tuscan Brown era." Dark trim work, brass fixtures, travertine tile, warm brown and jewel tone palettes – we all know the look. So when she and her family purchased their home in Providence Country Club seven years ago with exactly that aesthetic, she knew it would take a lot of work and a lot of love to bring it up to date. "It was, indeed, tragically stuck in the Tuscan Brown era," Cole says. "But it had a perfect layout for our family and a big backyard in a family-friendly neighborhood. It was worth the work we had to put into it."

Coming from big-city rentals and a bachelor-pad brownstone in Boston, this home was the first place that Cole could indeed make her own. "With the fixed elements like the travertine tile, dark cabinets, and all brass fixtures, I knew this home would require time and patience," she says. "I gave myself five years. We're on year seven, and there's still more to go!" For a designer, of course, "more to go" may seem relative. The interiors have been completely transformed into a modern, light, and ultra-chic home that has Brooke Cole written all over it.

"I am really thrilled, though, with everything I've accomplished and appreciate all the experience and expertise I've gained along the way," Cole says. A three-month renovation included new paint throughout the entire home, new flooring, and custom cabinetry, along with a kitchen overhaul, new light fixtures (Cole replaced every single one in the home), and all the details too varied to mention. "The paint alone makes a tremendous difference, especially when you're going from earth tones to cool tones. But when the floors went in, I could really see how my design plan would take shape," she remembers. Cole designed and contracted everything herself and even pulled her own permits. "People don't realize that the Habitat Restore will come and do demolition for free! And you can hand over your old fixtures for someone else to treasure."

The dark kitchen was given a brightening facelift with light grey cabinets painted the same Benjamin Moore Brushed Aluminum color as the walls, white marble countertops and backsplash, gold hardware, and the centerpiece to the whole room – a La Cornue range in Tapestry enamel with a custom hood and a hand-painted Gracie wallpaper mural as the backsplash. "The paper is covered with glass, of course, so it

Opposite: Brooke Cole creates a feeling of more space in the kitchen by painting the walls and cabinets the same Benjamin Moore color – Brushed Aluminum. A custom hood by Thompson Traders sets off the La Cornue range. A hand-painted Gracie wallcovering doubles as a backsplash, which is protected by a glass cover.

Top: Phillip Jeffries' Beyond textured wallcovering peeks out from behind the stairs, adding just enough color and interest to make this foyer exciting. The chandelier from Circa Lighting creates an inviting glow in the entryway, and an original piece of art by Kerry Steele leads you up the staircase.

Bottom: Acrylic bar stools from Scout Design Studio refuse to impede the view of the gorgeous grey and gold kitchen. Seats are upholstered in cut velvet Jardin Maze by Anna French for Thibaut.



Two-toned chairs covered in Thibaut Crypton fabric on the front for durability and Anna French for Thibaut fabric in Anita Damask on the back for interest create a stunning yet intimate appeal in the breakfast room. A Wesley Hall curved banquet adds more seating and the chandelier by Oly Studio is an instant icebreaker. Simple cotton blend curtains are stepped up a notch with Schumacher's Malmaison embroidered tape lining the edges.

has all the protection against splashes and spills,” Cole says. “I also custom designed the mullion detail on the glass doors in the kitchen and bar area based off the trim detail on the drapery in the breakfast room.” Acrylic barstools from Scout Design Studio

round out the space without imposing too much.

Off the kitchen, a neutral haven of a breakfast room layered with pastels beckons family and friends to enjoy coffee and casual conversation – conversation perhaps started by the Oly



Studio bubble chandelier, an interesting piece grounded by a cozy banquette in place of a couple of chairs.

Not afraid of patterns, Cole creates subtle pops of interest with wallcoverings in both the redesigned

This stunning powder room takes its cues from the cool grey Cowtan & Tout wallcovering that sets the mood. Circa Lighting sconces create a complementary glow as you freshen up.





laundry room and in the built-in bookcases in the living room. A chandelier above the washer and dryer transforms an otherwise utilitarian room into a notable space, while the carefully layered and welcoming living room is set off by any number of curiosities found around the room. “Accessories are cultivated over time through travels, gifts, and discovering things that I love,” Cole says. “Otherwise, I believe accessories sourced all from one place or in one style can look contrived. Vintage retailers, flea markets, and online scavenging are great resources for creating that cultivated look.”

A former buyer in the fashion industry, Cole’s eye for style and knack for design come as no surprise. Much like fashion, she infuses her home with edgy design where she chooses to surprise but maintains a universal appeal that can’t be dated. “I believe mixing design styles is the key to the longevity of an interior,” she says. “Pairing modern lighting or abstract art with classic furniture or modern wallpaper with traditional lighting gives an eclectic, curated look that will surpass design trends and fads.”

Cole is, of course, naturally inspired by her background in fashion but has also discovered true inspiration in the women she meets through her work. “I love supporting others’ work, and I try to incorporate items in my own home as much as possible, which gives more meaning to my purchases,” she says.



Items like original art pieces and textiles from Mia Malcolm, Windy O’Connor, and Kerry Steele dot corners of her home, as well as decorative hardware from local artisan Addison Weeks. “I really admire these women’s work and creativity. Having it in my home inspires me not only by bringing me joy but also to do my best.”

From the airy kitchen and layered living room to the re-imagined playroom and tranquil blue of the guestroom, this home wreaks of Brooke Cole in the very best way – a true reflection of her personal style and care for design. And of course, a testament to the impact of patience in creating a thoughtful home.◆

Opposite: Brooke Cole relishes the rare occasion to wake up in this soothing blue guest room. Garden Silhouette wallpaper by Anna French for Thibaut soothes the soul, while the high gloss ceiling painted with Sherwin-Williams Rainwashed is like looking into a refreshing pool. The chandelier, bench, and above-bed mirror, all from Ro Sham Beaux, add a touch of glam that’s hard to resist.

Left: Designer Brooke Cole is breaking out on her own and will be leaving her signature wherever she goes.

Right: Thibaut wallpaper in the laundry room makes a mundane chore a pleasure. Hardware by Charlotte-based Addison Weeks adds a special touch.