

Triangle

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2021

# HOME

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Recently refinished, Summerford's staircase makes for a grand entrance. Hand-painted gold wallcoverings from Brunswick & Fils complement the newly installed black wrought-iron spindles in the foyer. An antique chandelier from a flea market in Paris hangs above a Pierre Frey rug, while an antique grandfather clock stands by.



# *Blurred* LINES

DESIGNER TULA  
SUMMERFORD'S HOME  
OOZES THE SAME KIND  
OF CHARM YOU EXPECT  
FROM A RALEIGH  
NATIVE BY WAY OF  
NEW YORK: CASUAL  
ELEGANCE.

TEXT BY ANNE MARIE ASHLEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CATHERINE NGUYEN



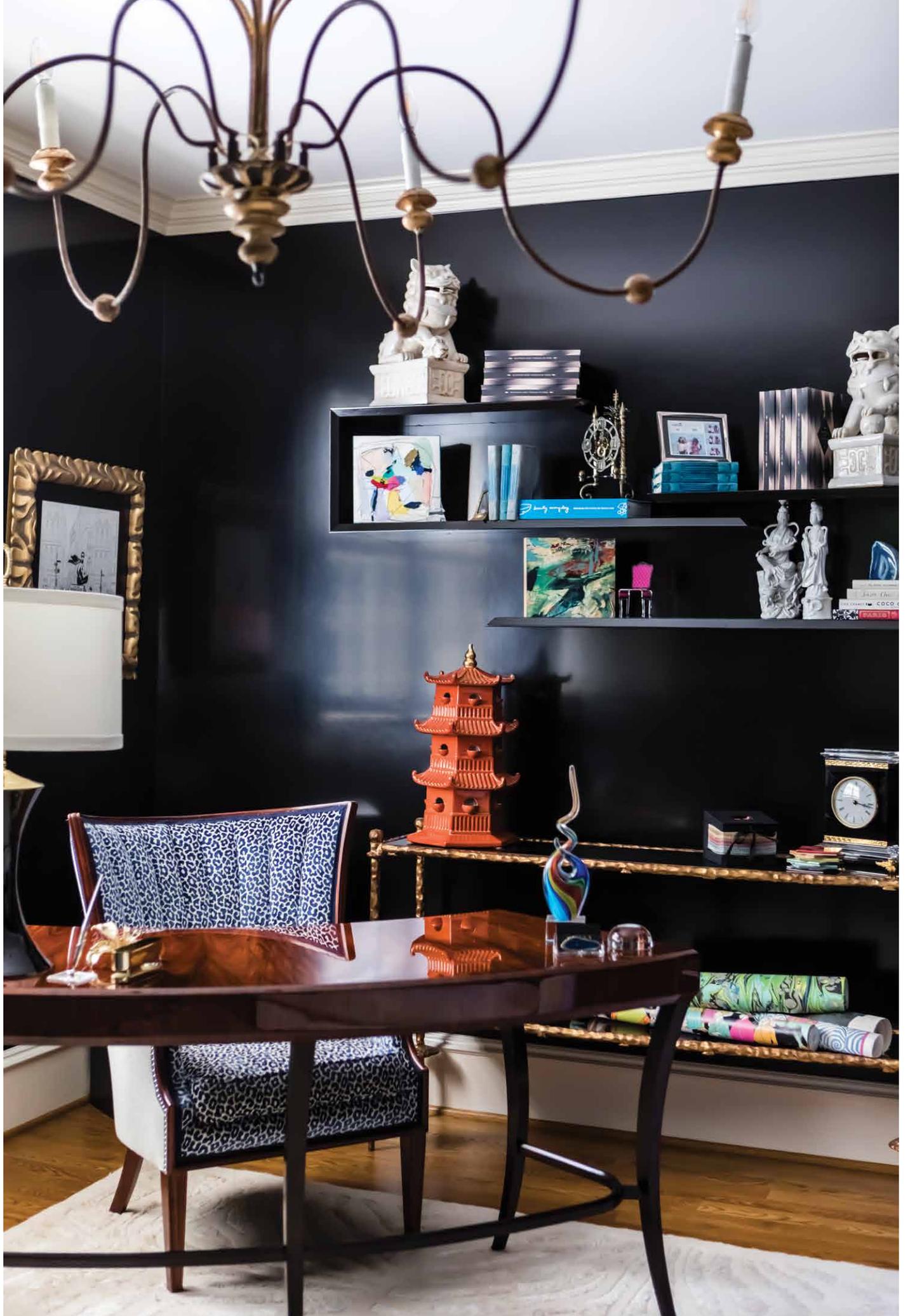
IT'S ALWAYS SATISFYING TO DISCOVER THAT AN artisan practices what they preach by living in the same beauty that they so lovingly create for others. Such is the case with the home of designer Tula Summerford. A peek into her personal space reveals a passion for the same understated elegance she infuses into her client's homes—a modern juxtaposition of old with new.

Summerford's aesthetic is all encompassing, based on her varied experiences and rooted in a well-rounded appreciation for different aspects of design. With her Greek heritage, it's perhaps unsurprising that she adores timeless architecture and old-world style. Though she recognizes that growing up in New York shaped her love for these things, she acknowledges that the ever-changing landscape and newness of the city imparted modernity in her, too. Add to that her time spent in Edenton, North Carolina, "the smallest of small towns," coupled with her now forever home in cultured Raleigh, her design view spans the range of old, new, elegant and modern to familial, functional, pretty and showy. Meanwhile,





The living room is one of Summerford's favorite rooms, and it's full of her treasured antique pieces: side tables from Paris, a vintage coffee table, and an antique mirror from Italy. The white Lane sofa is one of the first pieces of furniture Summerford purchased for herself in the late '80s. **OPPOSITE:** Summerford created a cocktail lounge feel in the sunroom with a custom-made bar from Fulford's in Wilson, North Carolina. Black-and-white barstools from Christopher Guy are covered in Dedar fabric, as are the drapes, while vintage chairs are swathed in Romo fabric. An original Louise Gaskill chandelier in white and gold hangs above.



**BELOW:** Large artwork purchased from a live auction in Atlanta hangs above the leather Chesterfield sofa in the sitting room. A coffee table from a market in Italy centers the room, while a chandelier from the Helmsley Hotel auction hangs above a pair of antique chairs covered in Jim Thompson silk fabric.

**OPPOSITE:** Summerford's recently renovated home office is bathed in bold black. A Jonathan Charles desk is outfitted with a vintage chair covered in Kravet fabric, while trinkets from her travels provide an intimate backdrop. A console from Alfonso holds an antique Chinese tower purchased in Italy, and a chandelier from Louise Gaskill completes the room.



everything she's picked up along the way, she has brought to her clients—and left a little in her own home as well.

Summerford was only spending the summer in Raleigh twelve years ago, renting a home while her daughter attended camp, when she fell in love with the city. By late August, the family had decided to pack up their Edenton home and move to Raleigh. “Our friends thought we were crazy,” Summerford recalls. “But we just loved the town so much and knew we wanted to make a new home here.” When she found the Country Club Hills home, it was brand new—a blank slate. It was a traditional home, and in an effort to make the exterior a little more French country, her ideal, she designed the landscape herself and had it installed. “I wanted a simple and elegant landscape, so I drew it up myself,” she says. “I painted the house white and added shutters.”

While traveling here and there, Summerford would find treasures and have them shipped back to her Raleigh home. In

Paris, she found several antique lighting fixtures at flea markets, and in New York, she scored original gold light fixtures from the Helmsley Hotel auction, which she installed in her living room. Not everything was an antique, or new, or shipped from overseas, though; Summerford repurposed the first sofa she ever purchased, a Lane sofa she bought in the 80's, in her family room. Of course, paired with a couple of eighteenth-century chairs from Paris that have never been reupholstered, she manages to elevate even the most ordinary of pieces.

“We really *live* in our home,” she says. “We drink wine, we entertain, we relax; everything is very livable while also being classic and chic.” From her favorite tone-on-tone white formal living room to her newly designed modern home office, Summerford shuffles design in her home so that each room reveals a new face. “I turned my sitting room into a conference room for work and went very modern with black walls, a white sofa, white leather chairs, and vintage chairs covered in a Christian Lacroix



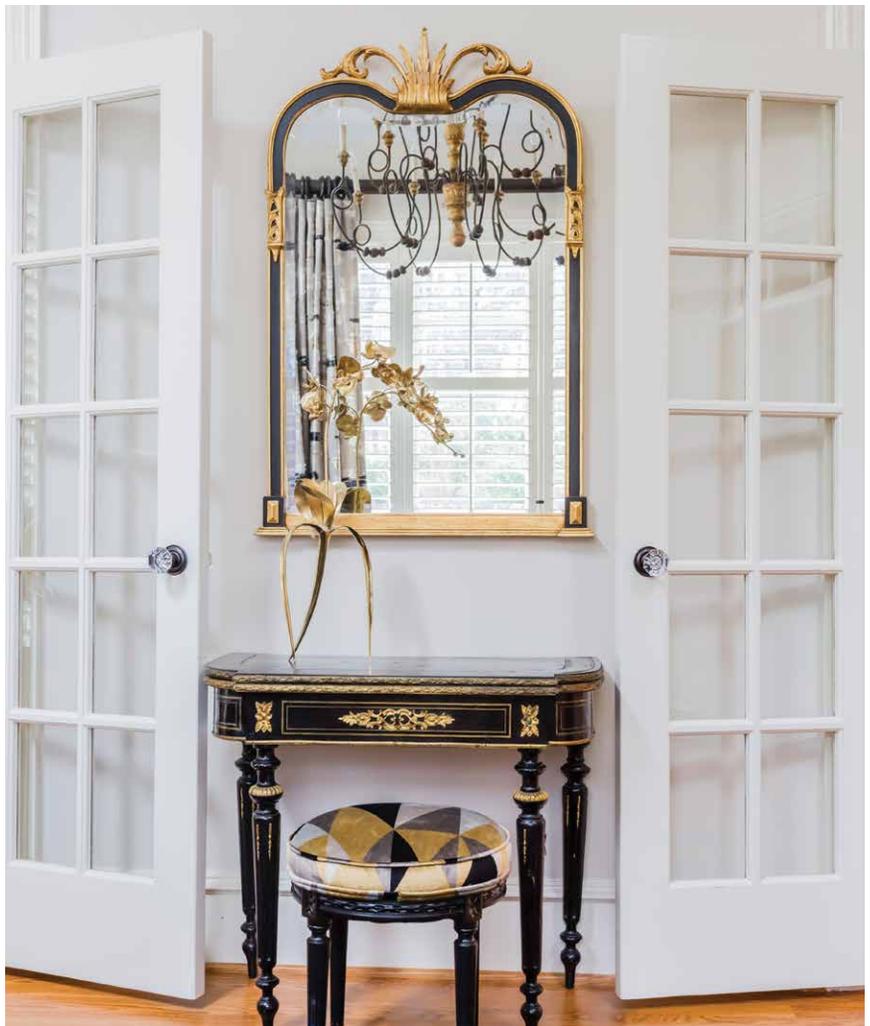
**TOP LEFT:** Summerford loves to incorporate pieces she's collected from her travels into her interior design work, especially in her own home.



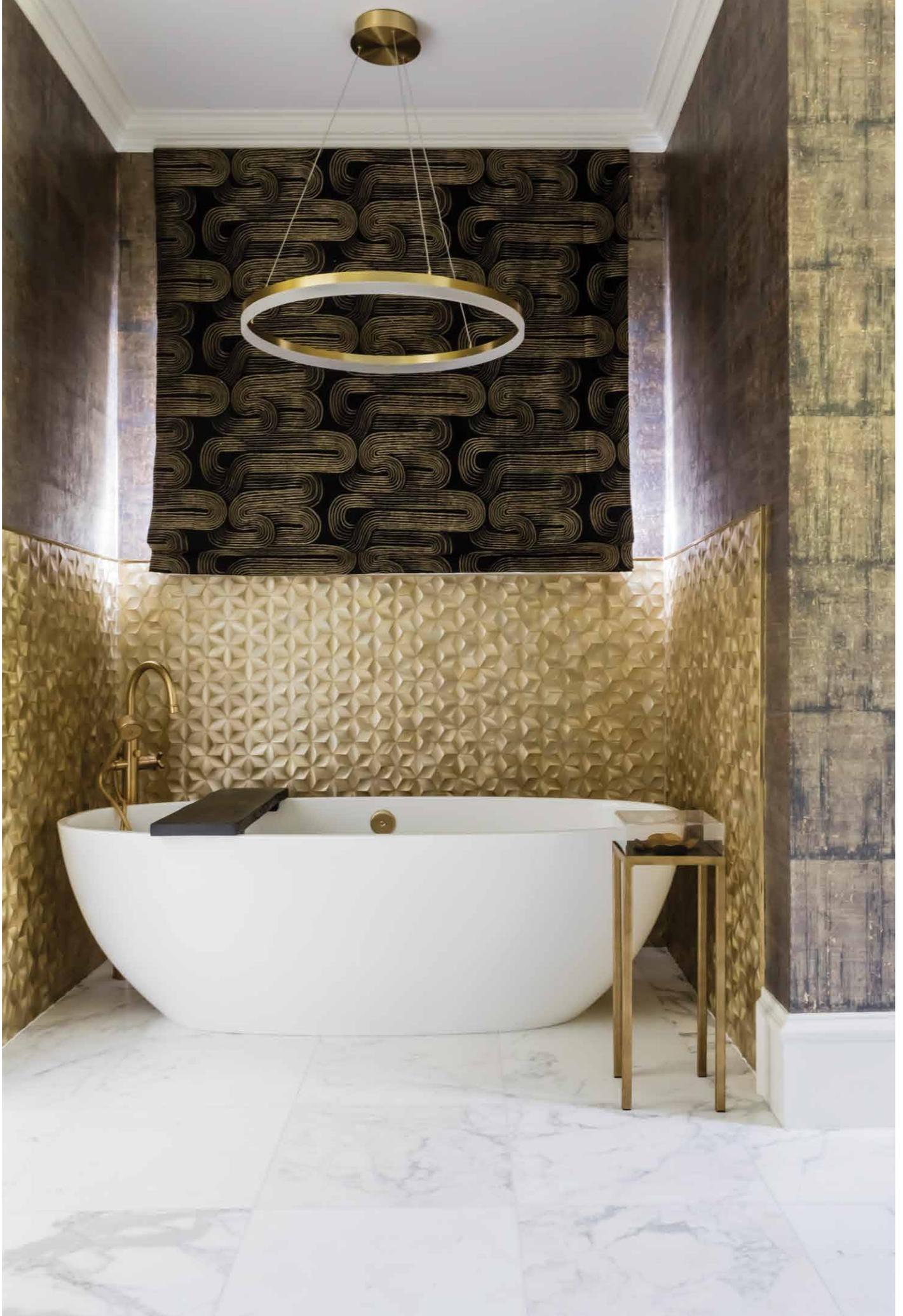
**TOP RIGHT:** An antique Chinese tower purchased in Italy adds interest to Summerford's accessories, which dot her home filled with pieces from her travels abroad.

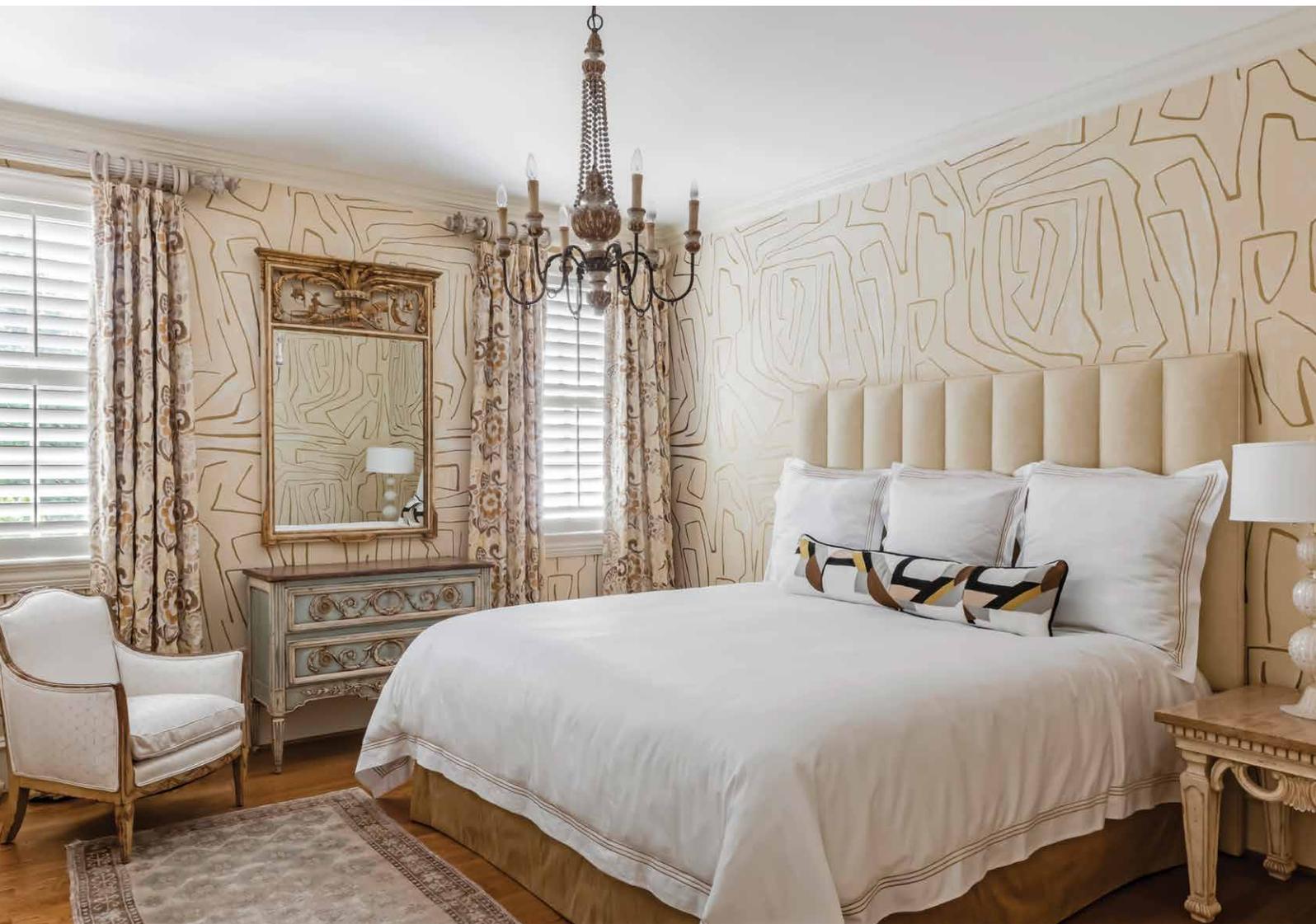
**BOTTOM:** In the sunroom, a console and mirror found at various flea markets in Paris create a lovely vignette. An antique stool covered in Romo fabric offers a perch, and a gold flower sculpture from A. Hoke Ltd. adds a beautiful finishing touch.

**OPPOSITE:** The sitting room is full of color, and the Bruce Andrews sofa covered in Christian Lacroix fabric sits at the center of it all. A Turkish rug anchors the room, and artwork by James P. Kerr, purchased from ArtSource, hangs above the sofa. The vintage yellow chair is covered in Ernest Gaspard fabric.









fabric,” she explains. Walls are adorned with Steven Wilson’s art, and all of the designer’s favorites can be found dotting the room, from butterflies to Gucci and Chanel.

Over the years, Summerford has curated her home, along the way adding a sunroom complete with a custom bar created by Fulford’s in Wilson, North Carolina. Silk drapes and cowhides set the mood for a loungy feel, perfect for happy-hour cocktails.

Summerford recently refinished her staircase, completing the dramatic entry, which features gold hand-painted wallpaper by Brunschwig & Fils and wrought-iron spindles in place of the original white. “I try to do everything in my house in a timeless fashion,” she says. “I like to change out accessories that may be trendy, but at the end of the day, I love rooms that are layered with patterns and filled with substantial pieces, whether they are from my travels or antique and vintage.”

Each space in Summerford’s home bears the mark of an expert designer, flowing easily from room to room, yet each with a distinct design and feel. “I will never do a home with all neutrals or all antiques,” she says, “because I think there is a time and place for color and modernity, and that balance can give integrity to a design.” Between the gilded mirrors and inlays, you’ll find funky new fabrics (her first love) and contemporary art—a balance that she executes with precision. “Antiques have been around for two hundred years, and they will be around for two hundred more; they bring an unpretentious feel to a home, all the while coating it in elegance.”

It’s that passion for blurring the lines between past and present that is a hallmark of Summerford’s work, and if her home is nothing else, it’s a testament to practicing what she preaches. ♦

**ABOVE:** The guest bedroom is a sanctuary with soothing taupe tones amped up with a patterned Kravet wallcovering. A bed from Curated Kravet is creamy and dreamy, while draperies made with Cowtan & Tout fabric are soft and feminine. An antique chest, mirror, and chair covered in fabric from A. Hoke Ltd. complete the look. The lumbar pillow is covered in Pierre Frey fabric.

**OPPOSITE:** In the primary bathroom, Summerford opted for opulence, surrounding the tub in gold tile from Triangle Tile & Stone. Behind the freestanding tub from R. Jacobs, the walls are covered in Omexco paper. A Curated Kravet chandelier adds drama above.