

TURN *for* the BETTER

TO REFRESH A 1930S DUTCH COLONIAL ON
THE NORTH SHORE, A HOMEOWNER GETS
BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HER FRIEND.

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INTERIOR DESIGN / **CLAIRE STASZAK,**
CENTERED BY DESIGN
HOME BUILDER / **JEFFREY LEVIN,**
PLUMB PROPERTIES CONSTRUCTION CO.

Shana Martin and her husband needed to make a move. As the parents of a 3-year-old and with a baby on the way, they knew their modern Logan Square residence wouldn't work for their family much longer. But Shana was just fine with leaving the city, since it provided the opportunity to find the perfect house. "I've always loved homes from the 1920s, '30s and '40s, and I knew that if I could find one, that would be my dream scenario," she says.

They discovered a Dutch Colonial farmhouse from the 1930s on the North Shore and, says Shana, "I fell in love with it." The house had been tastefully renovated with beautiful millwork in the early 2000s and, other than the kitchen, there wasn't a thing they felt they needed to change. "I knew we would renovate the kitchen at some point down the line," says Shana, "but we really hit the jackpot."

Fast-forward to two months after moving in, and she couldn't take it anymore. "The kitchen was ugly, and once we lived in it we realized the functionality didn't work either," Shana says. So, she called designer Claire Staszak, who's been her best friend since high school. "The big thing that spurred Shana was reconfiguring the kitchen layout," Staszak says. "There was just no way to work with what was already there." Essentially a long, narrow rectangle, the room had tight passageways and dated honey wood cabinetry. Working with builder Jeffrey Levin, Staszak added a bank of customized floor-to-ceiling cabinetry, pull-out cabinets that hide appliances and a concealed pantry. A custom metal range hood with brass straps and rivets creates a focal point and old-world sensibility, as does an island constructed of reclaimed

wood from an 1850s barn. "Shana has really great taste and an incredible design sense, but she is also extremely practical," Staszak says. "It was always a conversation of: 'Is it functional?' And then: 'Is it beautiful?'"

As tends to happen on many a design project, once the kitchen was underway, the job evolved into an all-over interiors refresh. Staszak put together a thoughtful color story that embraced the traditional layout and mixed new decor and lighting with the homeowners' own collection. Shana comes from a family of antique collectors and has the rugs, art and trinkets to show for it. The challenge for her was figuring out how to integrate them into her home. "I grew up going to art and antique shows with my mother, but if I were to put them together myself it would look like a garage sale," she laughs. So she leaned heavily on her friend to achieve a cohesive look.

In the dining room, a table that belonged to Shana's grandmother is paired with simple linen chairs and an elegant vintage buffet, all of which allow a William Morris green and peach floral wallcovering to take center stage. "I always knew the dining room needed wallpaper," says Staszak. "As soon as I saw this historical print and updated color palette, I realized it was perfect."

Once the bold print in the dining room was established, the butler's pantry was given new, moss-green custom cabinetry to create visual flow from the kitchen. In fact, Staszak's careful consideration of color is evident throughout the home: A pale blue shade graces the entry, while the family room is done in a deep navy and a niche in the front hallway glows a soft lilac. "Part of the reason I had so much fun on this project is because I love light and bright, but I don't like all-white," Staszak notes. "There isn't a crazy amount of color or pattern here—just enough to add personality."

Of course, as the home of a young family, other aspects of the interiors had to be considered as well, such as how the furnishings could hold up to young children and two dogs. Anchored by one of Shana's vintage rugs, the family room features new furniture upholstered in durable fabric that can withstand daily use. And the living room—while elegant with its antique rug and metal-tile fireplace—welcomes anyone, young or old, to curl up in the reading nook. It is, in the end, a home that perfectly suits the family—a place that was obviously designed by the person who knows her client best. But this comes as no surprise. As Shana says, "I never entertained the thought of doing a renovation without her." ■

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Designer Claire Staszak established this home's eclectic vibe immediately upon entry with walls coated in Farrow & Ball's Light Blue, an antique bench from South Loop Loft and a Niermann Weeks chandelier.



Homeowner Shana Martin has an extensive collection of antique rugs, which Staszak used in the living room—along with the unique metal tile on the fireplace—as a jumping-off point for the interior design. A wood-and-metal coffee table and linen-covered chair and ottoman, both from RH, impart a casual elegance to the space.



For the butler's pantry, Staszak brought in Studio 912 to make the custom cabinetry in a timeless moss green, creating continuity from the kitchen and picking up on the tones of the wallpaper in the dining room.

Morris & Co. Pimpernel wallpaper from Zoffany is the highlight of the dining room and serves as a bold backdrop for an heirloom dining table paired with linen chairs by RH. The chandelier is from Arhaus.





Staszak reconfigured the kitchen for functionality in a style that emits European country with an industrial spin, pairing custom cabinetry by Studio 912 with a professional Thermador range and custom stainless steel hood with brass straps by Avenue Metal Co., Inc.



Woodworker David Howard of The Handmade Table in Knoxville, Tennessee, built the island table from reclaimed wood to fit the narrow space. The oversize lantern from Circa Lighting was chosen for its old-meets-new sensibility.

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Staszak turned an awkward nook in the living room into a cozy reading spot, where a built-in bench upholstered in a Schumacher fabric sits beneath a painting by Michael Waterman from Shana's collection.



Below, left: Staszak created carefully curated vignettes with Shana's antiques throughout the house. In the entry, an antique chest holds a vintage jug, candleholder and a silver tray that provides a spot for keys and mail.

Below, right: A vintage chair from South Loop Loft picks up the warm tones of the wallpaper.

