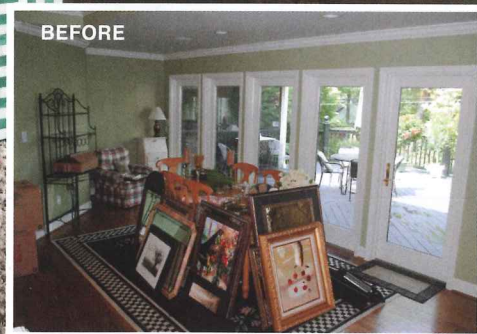


before & after

# family adventure

Text by CARA D. CLARK / Photography by JEAN ALLSOPP



Thanks to a renovation, the Huntley family comes home to a fresh interior and a newly painted facade. Designer Marianne Strong updated the brick exterior with a coat of French Canvas by Benjamin Moore. The door and shutters are covered in Sherwin Williams Comfort Gray.



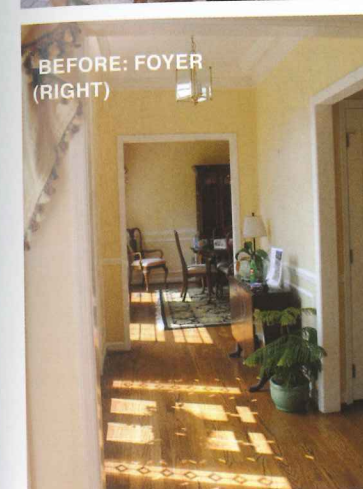
After living in their traditional home for a few years, this Vestavia family steps up the style quotient with some bold changes.

It's all too easy to travel the beaten path, but a more adventurous route paves the way for others to follow—an approach favored by Vestavia homeowner Emily Huntley and interior decorator Marianne Strong. The two share similar tastes as evidenced in the mutual design decisions made throughout Emily's home remodeling project. And the pair's boldest choices are apparent in the colorful transformation that liberated a dated kitchen from the confines of a box—both literally and metaphorically. The result is nothing short of trendsetting.

Having lived in the home three years before starting the renovation, Emily knew exactly what her family needed when it came to space and style. "She wanted to do something different, but not so much that it was over the top," says Marianne.

Brothers William and David Siegel of Twin Construction ably rose to the construction challenges that included compensating for load-bearing structures that threatened to inhibit the kitchen project. A structural beam was one source





**OPPOSITE:** The elegant curves of the gilded, chandelier, with bay leaf garland detail, provide the perfect contrast to the modern iron-based dining table and benches. A soft shade of high gloss Gray Cloud (Benjamin Moore), on the ceiling adds a soft, reflective touch.

**RIGHT:** The foyer sets the elegant-but-lively tone for the rest of the house with a bold, gold X-leg console table and new herringbone floors. The original understated light fixture was replaced with a modern globe. A painting by Shelly Stewart Cato completes the welcoming vignette.



of consternation for the Siegels, who transformed it into a design element. "The beam running next to the island on its own didn't make visual sense," Marianne says. "We used a coffered ceiling to add symmetry." The architectural element enhances a pair of brass pendant lights that team up with unfinished brass cabinet pulls, made to darken to a deep, rich gold over time. A breakfront cabinet and custom hanging brass and wood frame shelves showcase stylish plates, bowls, and cookware with streamlined elegance.

"The reconfigured kitchen design was an evolution," says Emily. "I knew I wanted dark cabinets with a French café look." The swatch of color she ultimately chose, a pre-finished choice from Twin Construction's Classic Cabinets By Design, dubbed "Mount Etna," offers a meeting of hunter green and deep blue that Marianne felt would be daring but not overpowering.





Taupe glass tiles along the backsplash fit snugly and required no grout, making cleanup a breeze in a high-traffic kitchen. Carrara gold marble countertops pop against the dark shade of the cabinets. "People can't believe this is the same kitchen," Emily says. Though they didn't take out a full wall or change the floorplan, the new cabinets, fixtures, and window open to the dining room totally transformed the room.



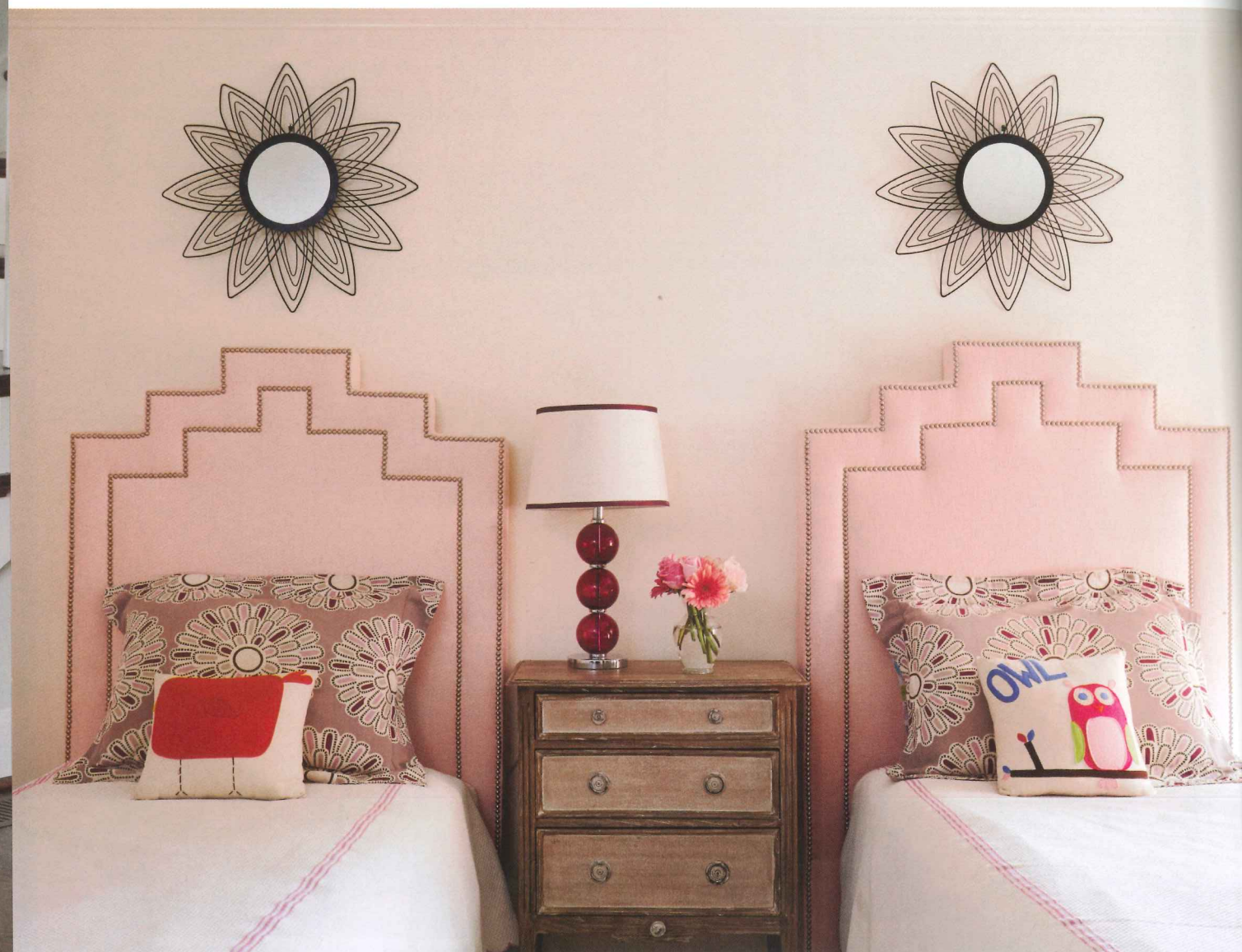
"This is truly *a home for the whole family.*  
Any place we could incorporate *elements for the kids*  
and have it look nice, we did." —Marianne Strong

In the space that opens up from the kitchen, gray leather club chairs with nailhead accents anchor a comfy conversation area next to a coffee table from Anthropologie. Adjacent are three homework stations, each with a corkboard above. "We wanted some type of desk but decided to create a ledge instead," Marianne says.

In keeping with their fearless style, Emily and Marianne chose to install a window over the kitchen sink that would open into the new dining space. "Everyone thought we were crazy," laughs Marianne. "But we stuck with our idea, and it turned out to be the best part of the renovation."

When viewed through the window, the softer hues of the dining room offer a nice counterbalance to the more dramatic kitchen. "We painted the dining room ceiling a soft blue to add some dimension," says Marianne. And the addition of the dark wood dining table anchors the room with a bit of weight in the otherwise airy space.

Now that the remodel is complete, Emily sees how well the changes work for her family. "I knew when we moved in that I would want to renovate the home," Emily says. "But I'm glad we didn't rush into it so we could truly realize our needs. It was worth the wait."



ABOVE: The master bedroom received a new coat of paint to set the tones for the soothing blue theme. The navy headboard and bright blue ottomans are custom. Bedside tables offer a modern metallic sheen. OPPOSITE: Pinks and reds work together to bring feminine appeal in a girl's bedroom. Marianne designed the twin headboards. RIGHT: A gray-print wallpaper offers a bit of flair in the small powder room.



**resources:** interior decorator: **MARIANNE STRONG, MARIANNE STRONG INTERIORS** 205.222.8876 • Marianne@mariannestronginteriors.com **Contractor:** **TWIN CONSTRUCTION, INC.** 205.802.3920 • twincompanies.com **interior window frame in kitchen:** **WELDON WELDING** Sterrett, Alabama • 205.672.7137 • **glass:** **NELSON GLASS COMPANY** • 205.322.1627 • nelson-glass.com **island countertop:** **RIVER BOTTOM PINE** 205.322.9944 • riverbottompine.com **island stools:** **AT HOME FURNISHINGS** 205.879.3510 athome-furnishings.com **kitchen cabinets:** **CLASSIC CABINETS BY DESIGN FROM TWIN CONSTRUCTION** 205.802.3920 twincompanies.com **kitchen hardware, shelves, and pendant lights:** **BRANDINO BRASS** • 205.978.8900 **leather club chairs in conversation area:** **GABBY** gabbyhome.com **study station letters:** **ANTHROPOLOGIE** 205.298.9929 • anthropologie.com **corkboard:** **HOBBY LOBBY** 205.985.5292 **inlaid bone coffee table:** **ANTHROPOLOGIE** **console in foyer:** **WORLDS AWAY** worlds-away.com **lamp in girl's room:** **TARGET** target.com