

COLOR

GUARD



Whitney Durham gives an Atlanta home her signature pop

WORDS BY NICOLE LETTS // PHOTOS BY HEIDI HARRIS INTERIORS

When decorator Whitney Durham joined the design team for Kay and John Alexander's home, she was tasked with one driving objective: to give the family's new build a few traditional Tudor touches. The Alexanders and their four children live in Atlanta's Buckhead neighborhood, a posh in-town community that marries the amenities of city life with comfortable suburb lots. John grew up in a Tudor and hoped to replicate the vibe for his own family. The Alexanders had gathered a stellar team of contractor Harrison Homes and architect Luz Montiel, and they hired Durham to pull that signature Tudor style from the outside in. Think wooden beams, oversized archways, and dark finishes. With Durham's keen eye, the team set out to achieve the family's desired look in a contemporary way.



On the main floor, wooden details rule. Guests enter through an arched, wood-stained front door. In the breakfast nook, timber lines the ceilings, creating a cozy space for dining. That feel is mimicked in the kitchen where beams run perpendicular to the island, elongating this thumping heart of the home. In the primary bedroom, the wood is repeated, but this time on the towering asymmetrical ceilings. "We went with a lighter finish to keep it fresh. It added some warmth too," says Durham. The result is a serene and airy space that maintains the integrity of those Tudor signatures.

Other Tudor finishes throughout the home include a nod to wrought iron, one of the architectural style's hallmarks. "The paint colors we chose were intentionally selected. The trim and

doors in the kitchen, breakfast room, and keeping room are all Kendall Charcoal by Benjamin Moore. The study and mudroom are in Granite Peak by Sherwin Williams. There are windows and doors in the back part of the house with black grills." Even the hardware throughout the home is matte black. All were chosen to reflect the ancient, hardy metal. "I love pulling in black to anchor a room. I add it anywhere I can," Durham says.

Juxtaposing color is one of Durham's specialties. "I use a lot of white and then add in layers with lots of artwork and interesting textiles. Next, I try to pick up variations of similar colors throughout." In the Alexanders' case, blues spill from the dining room performance velvet chairs to the breakfast nook's geometric pelmets to the living room's Roman shades.



While many of the walls are painted Sherwin Williams' ever-popular Alabaster, the study is the family's homey gunmetal grotto. There's a piano for precise fingers, books for curious minds, and plenty of seating for post-work cocktails. The room, in large part, was inspired by John's taxidermy collection. "He really wanted a chic man cave. It needed to be a place for Kay and John to wind down after the kids go to bed. A spot to drink whiskey and relax," says Durham.

In all the ways that the study seeps masculinity, the primary bedroom is the peak of feminine sophistication. "I always feel like the primary bedroom should have a little more of a feminine spin. It has those tall ceilings, so we added the wood but played with the tone to make it airier." The custom bedding is made from floral Schumacher fabric that's laced with pink corals and robin egg blues. Rattan side tables bring in a natural wood element, while the towering four-poster Serena & Lily bed is finished in ebony (another salute to iron).

Durham says what truly pulls her spaces together is her art affinity. "I obviously love color, so it's important for me to incorporate art throughout my designs. I especially love large-scale art that has a big impact." Take for example the pheasant above the family room fireplace. The Alexanders chose to have it commissioned by Georgia artist Elaine Burge. "Since John hunts, I thought it would be appropriate to have Elaine do the piece because these pheasants are her specialty," recalls Durham. "We sent her all of the fabric selections so she could see the colors. Then we left it up to her. It really pulls this room together while tying in with the kitchen behind it."

The designer's panache for art resonates throughout the rest of the house. There are feather watercolors by Birmingham artist Lacey Simmons. There is a nude in the powder bathroom by Kelley Ogburn out of Fairhope, Alabama. There's a striking butterfly lady in the entry, a print sourced from Etsy and grandly framed. Durham made the homeowner's Lulie Wallace floral the leading lady and focal piece in the dining room. "I even think of Turkish rugs as art, which are all over the house," Durham explains.

The overall goal of any space, she says, is to make it look collected over time. "When I choose furnishings, I like selections that have that curated feel to make it feel like it's been there longer than it has. Sometimes that's using family heirlooms, but sometimes that's selecting new-to-the-homeowner antiques." In the case of the Alexanders' house, the result is a marriage between traditional Tudor details with Durham's brightly-hued pizzazz. **GG**



THEY HIRED DURHAM TO PULL THAT SIGNATURE TUDOR STYLE FROM THE OUTSIDE IN.

