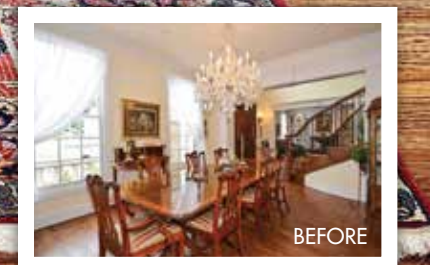




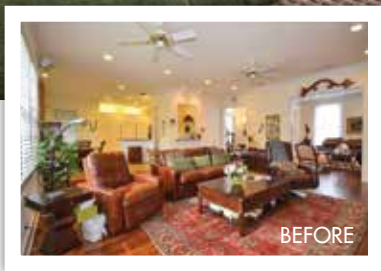
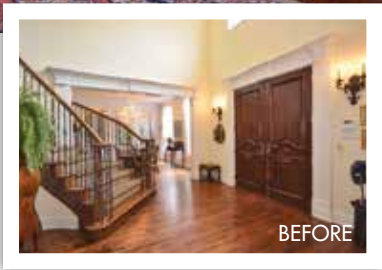
Meaningful Makeover

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PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHEN KARLISCH

IN FORT WORTH, DESIGNER TORI RUBINSON USES CHERISHED FURNISHINGS AND TIMELESS MATERIALS TO CREATE A HAVEN FOR TWO OF HER MOST BELOVED CLIENTS—HER PARENTS.



BEFORE

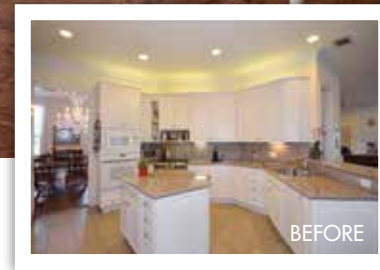


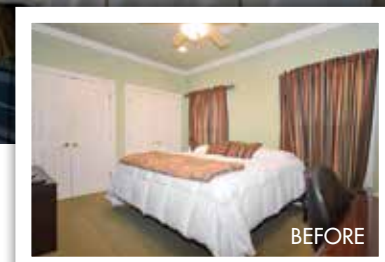
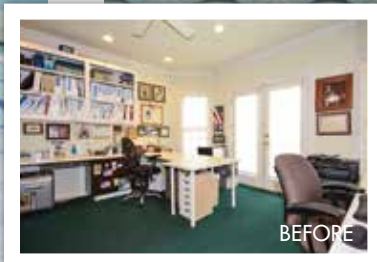
When Shaaron and Buzz Barlow were looking to move from their home in The Woodlands, Texas, to Fort Worth, they knew just who to call to make it happen: their daughter. “My parents are the reason I’m in this industry,” says interior designer Tori Rubinson. Growing up, Rubinson recalls her dad spending time as a hobby carpenter, while her mom painted, hung wallpaper, and created a home in the houses where they lived. “This was a big part of my childhood,” she says. “So, I think it’s very natural that I took an interest in design and that I have focused my firm on family homes for all stages of life.”

To this point, the Barlows were not afraid of a renovation and began searching for a smaller home to suit their next phase of life. They knew their daughter had her eye on this particular house. “We walked in, took one look at the millwork, and knew we loved it,” says Barlow. Located in a historic neighborhood just three minutes from Rubinson, most of the houses surrounding them were built in the early 1900s. However, this one had been meticulously crafted in the 1990s by a woman who was a builder.

With the keys in hand, ideas that formed at the first showing began to take root. “We’d never built, but the moment we moved in, we started painting and updating,” says Buzz. “This is really the first house we’ve made entirely ours.” The couple credits Rubinson with making the space what it is today. “Honestly I think a lot of people lack vision when it comes to a renovation. This house had some eyesores, but we could see what it could be,”

Clockwise, from top: In the kitchen, Rubinson notes her dad was drawn to the Wolf range’s functionality, while her mom meticulously thought out the renovation’s cabinetry plan and workflow. In the mudroom, which Barlow uses frequently for gardening projects, Rubinson urged her mother to go for colorful cabinets and brick floors—design elements for which they both have a fondness. A cherished table and set of chairs that previously belonged to Barlow’s mother bring charm to the breakfast nook.





Barlow notes many of their past home renovations took resale value into account, causing them to play it safe in terms of palette and materials. However, with this house, Rubinson encouraged them to choose materials and colors they truly love. For example, green, blue, and white are favorites of Barlow's and flow throughout the home, creating a happy, continuous palette even in the most functional spaces, such as the office-turned-craft room, laundry, and powder bath.



Rubinson says. "I have the most supportive parents. They wanted to give me an opportunity to showcase what I do. It was easy because I know them, and I know their furniture and treasures well."

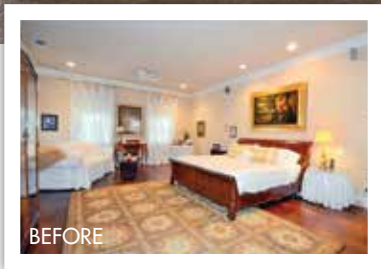
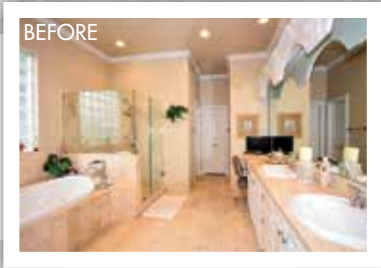
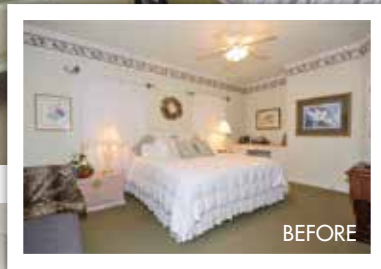
While most of the floor plan remained the same, several key changes took place in the utilitarian spaces: The pantry was transformed into a mudroom; an office was reimagined as a craft room; and the kitchen was taken down to the studs and reordered. "It wasn't efficient before; there were lots of angles and since they wanted a mudroom, we re-drew it to accommodate that," says Rubinson. The open-concept plan now connects the kitchen, family room, and breakfast nook, making it one space for entertaining, a style that's conducive to the way the Barlows live. "Reorienting the room also allowed us to give them a big island where her mom can put out nibbles before dinner and we can see the kids run out in the backyard," says Rubinson. Upstairs, two guest rooms were also designed specifically with the couple's grandchildren in mind.

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love. For example, green, blue, and white are favorites of Shaaron's and flow throughout the home, creating a happy, continuous palette.

Finally, not only is the Barlows' relationship with their daughter and grandchildren honored in the updated design, generations past are also represented through heirloom furnishings, many of which came from Rubinson's maternal grandmother. From the Persian rug that greets guests in the entry to the coffee table in the living room and the table, hutch, and sideboard in the dining room, these cherished pieces hold prominent places and have influenced both women's style. "My grandmother taught me to invest in pieces, to save up and buy what I love, and that's my mentality when I go into a project," says Rubinson.

With her young boys in mind, Rubinson designed a retreat that has what she calls a "colonial boy vibe." Upholstered beds covered in a Ralph Lauren plaid set the tone, while a chest that once belonged to Rubinson's paternal grandfather and prints of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin continue the theme. A Jack-and-jill bath connects to this space as well as a guest bedroom. Here, hexagonal tile and needlepoint artwork play into the early Americana feel.



Upstairs, the designer retained an existing wallpaper border to create a special bedroom for her daughter when she visits her grandparents. Modern accents, such as the Gray Malin print, keep the look current. In the adjoining bath, a bolder shade of green brings a hint of playfulness to the vanity, complemented by a vintage bamboo mirror. The home's blue hue carries into a guest room that is also located on the second floor. The Barlows, who enjoy crafts and DIY projects, made the mirror seen over the bed.



Serenity abounds in the primary bedroom and bath. Japanese wraps, that once belonged to Rubinson's grandmother and had previously been folded and stored on a shelf, were transformed into a screen that brings color and visual interest to the room while also evoking fond memories. The adjoining bath was fully functional and had an appealing layout but needed a style update. Rubinson revived the room with a floating tub, framed mirrors, and a light neutral palette—elements that will appear timeless for years to come.