

HOME DESIGN & DECOR

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ONE COUPLE DISCOVERED THE MAGIC OF TRUST WHEN THEY HANDED OVER THE REINS TO DESIGNER REILLY TOWNSEND.

After introducing her clients to the lissé mural wallpapering in their powder room, designer Reilly Townsend wanted to find another space to showcase the delicate, sprawling vines of the lissé. "I often dream about pushing out of their comfort zone, but they trusted I would transform the space just as I did in the powder room. And it did," Townsend says. *Wool vertigo stool, left, and stool of Scalamandré fabric, both from International, purchased at Le Roselli & Associates. Bed fabric: Le Monach.*

IT WAS AN OFFER THEY COULDN'T REFUSE. AFTER LIVING IN THEIR HOME FOR THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS, THE COUPLE WAS APPROACHED ABOUT SELLING THEIR HOME TO AN EAGER FAMILY LOOKING TO PUT DOWN ROOTS. "WE HAD NO INTENTIONS OF MOVING," SAYS THE WIFE OF THEIR WINSTON-SALEM HOME.

After a quick sale, the couple spent the next two years contemplating their next move. "It really put us in limbo for awhile," says the wife. They thought they wanted to build new in Winston-Salem, until their builder Jason Williams at Ron Williams Building Company suggested they look at a home that was about to hit the market. "The windows, the views, the openness, the millwork, the exterior paneling—it checked all the boxes for us," the wife says. "But it was a house, not a home, and it needed major updating."

Having followed Reilly Townsend's work over the years, the couple knew that the designer could curate a design that updated the interiors to the elegantly appointed but ultimately comfortable home they desired. "Reilly is not one of those designers who wants to put her name on every project," explains the wife of their decision to enlist Townsend, a Winston-Salem native. "Designers can put their signatures on a project, but ultimately it needs to feel and look like the client's vision. And Reilly does that so well."

For Townsend, the project was a welcome challenge. "They didn't want to make unnecessary changes and renovations," she explains. "The challenge was trying to find little moments that work better for their lifestyle without undoing things that had already been done well in the home."

Townsend began to address functionality for the couple, who loved the overall kitchen layout, but "as we worked through the design, we realized the formal dining room—while beautiful—wasn't where they'd want to eat most of their meals," explains the designer. "Casual dining was important to their lifestyle, and the kitchen needed to reflect that." Instead of reworking the entire plan, Townsend inset a custom banquette on the living room side of the kitchen island. "The island was generous in scale, so we were able to add this without sacrificing too much counter space, ultimately creating a place where I know they spend a ton of time."

The original architecture plans also called for a library at the front of the home, but the previous owners opted not to add it. "When my client saw those plans, they knew they wanted to add it back to complete the home," says Townsend. "We went back to the drawing board with architect Brandon Ingram to design the interiors. After lacquering their bar, my clients had fallen in love with the finish and wanted to take it further—this room was the perfect place to go all in. The paint color was inspired by the iconic Yellow Room at 39 Brook Street and the yellow silk striped drapery is a nod to it, with a twist, as well."



To add color to the powder room, Townsend painted the trim in a lime-green glaze, wrapped the walls in her "Dolce Immagine, outside" sconces from Scante, and finished it off with a mirror in antique glass for a touch of age. "The wallpaper completely changed the room, creating a really striking moment," she says. **Wallpaper:** Icel Decorative Arts, purchased at Schumacher. **Mirror:** Scante. **Sconces:** Scante. **Britton.**

That step outside the box for her clients spurred the rest of the home's design, which marries old with new throughout. "I like to play with a little tension in the architecture," says Townsend. "If the bones of the house lean one way, I'll often bring in furnishings or details that push in another direction. That mix of old and new, traditional and modern, keeps things feeling layered and more authentic. When everything matches too perfectly, it can feel a little flat. But when you throw in something unexpected, the whole space feels more collected—like it's evolved naturally over time. That's always the sweet spot for me."

Beyond incorporating the couple's existing antiques with more contemporary touches, Townsend's focus was on finishes—lacquering the bar walls, color-drenching the library, swapping out tile in the bathrooms, and layering in wallpaper "wherever I could convince them to!" she laughs.

Though still steeped in traditional lines and finishes, the home feels elevated and a touch modern, and most certainly comfortable for her clients. "The older we've gotten, the more open we are to stepping outside the box," says the wife. "We thoroughly trusted Reilly with everything from lacquering the walls to wallpaper murals, really everything. And it could not have turned out better."