

contemporary CANVAS



Paola McDonald used a palette of deep blue and white to embellish the sunroom, where a medallion pattern by York Wallcoverings adorns the ceiling. Hanging rattan egg chairs bring the outdoors in.

Designer Paola McDonald marries soothing shades with a modern aesthetic to enliven a Northern Virginia home

BY JULIE SANDERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG TINIUS

In a newly built development in Herndon, the rows of attractive, neo-Colonial-style homes tend to resemble one another, with brick and clapboard siding and porches out front. However, despite the similarities in look and layout, the interiors of one house definitely stand out. It belongs to Srikanth and Bindi Mandava, who are justly proud of their home. “Even neighbors who’ve been in the house three or four times still comment on it,” observes Bindi.

Of course, some credit for the creation of the signature look belongs to the couple, who had a distinct vision from the start of what they wanted. But as both will attest, they couldn’t have done it without designer Paola McDonald, who immediately understood their needs and wishes.

The Mandavas and their two daughters had been living in a townhouse in Herndon when they decided they were ready for a larger, more spacious residence, and opted for new construction. They liked the idea of a new home with untouched interiors, so they left everything from the townhouse behind to begin afresh. “It was a blank canvas and they were ready to start from scratch, so it was enjoyable for me,” says McDonald, who was hired to design the main floor while the owners were still in the contract stage of the

INTERIOR DESIGN: PAOLA McDONALD, Creative Elegance Interiors, Haymarket, Virginia.

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In the family room (right), a Bassett sectional offers plenty of seating. At the far end of the room (bottom, right), a faux concrete treatment surrounds the fireplace. A modern take on a wingback chair (above) occupies one corner of the room.



buying process. “They knew what kind of aesthetic they wanted and I was able to take it from there.”

While the home’s exterior and architectural details are traditional, its layout is not. To the left of the two-story entry, a small living room welcomes visitors. A curved staircase hugs the wall to the right of the front door and a hallway angles past the living room, leading to a large open-plan family room, kitchen and sunroom.

The couple leaned towards a contemporary, uncluttered look, which suited the home’s non-traditional floor plan. “We wanted to walk into our home and feel peaceful,” says Srikanth, who is a management consultant. With McDonald’s help, he and his wife, a software engineer who works from home, chose a palette of cool greens and blues “for a relaxed sensibility.” The designer then selected modern furniture, art and accessories, juxtaposing them against the soothing backdrop. “I chose modern elements that speak to the traditional so that they could work with the style of the house,” she says.

In the entry, a modern crystal chandelier from ET2 cascades from the two-story ceiling. McDonald employed a mix of price points to achieve the look she and



her clients were after while staying within their prescribed budget. “One of the things I do is try to give clients certain pieces to focus on, that are an investment,” she explains. “The most important pieces should have value.”

In the living room, a sofa from Vanguard is flanked by Barcelona chairs.

Because the Mandavas wanted to use the room for entertaining, furniture is arranged in several groupings. “The living room is quite functional. It provides conversation space though it’s not a big room,” says Srikanth. The walls are painted in Benjamin Moore’s Beach Glass.

A luminous shade of green (Benjamin

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Moore's Misted Green) in the dining room conveys a sense of harmony. The space is anchored by a colorful, abstract rug by Jaipur and an Italian-made custom table from Modloft with a zebrawood frame and black-glass surface. Dining chairs from Bassett Furniture are covered in fabric from Tapestry. To keep the small room uncluttered, McDonald furnished it sparingly with only the dining table and chairs and a small console. Surfaces are adorned only with a handful of textured ceramic pieces. "Since the dining room is not huge, keeping it simple made it feel bigger," she explains.

In the spacious family room, walls painted in Benjamin Moore's Beacon Gray balance the dark-stained cabinetry in the adjoining kitchen. McDonald designed the mantel over the fireplace at the far end of the room, and commissioned Michele Mayberry of Special FX Studio to create a



A colorful rug by Jaipur and art from Uttermost unify the dining room (top and right), furnished with a custom Italian table, chairs from Bassett and a sideboard (above) from Modloft.



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faux concrete wall surface in light blue to add interest to the room.

Just off the kitchen, the sunroom—the family’s favorite space in the home—introduces saturated blue tones to the soft palette with upholstered furniture from Bassett and a ceiling wallpapered in a medallion pattern from York Wallcoverings. McDonald suspended rattan egg chairs from the ceiling “to bring a little of the outside in,” she explains. A hand-woven jute rug by Jaipur covers the floor.

Throughout the house, the sense of serenity and the harmonious color palette have been enhanced by artwork. Large, abstract pieces, mainly from the online art dealer Uttermost, adorn the walls of every room; each piece reflects the colors in the room.

“I chose the artwork as a means to add dimension,” McDonald says. “It gives the spaces a focal point, adding texture and depth.” ❖

Photographer Greg Tinius is based in Waterford, Virginia.



The front entry opens into the living room (top), and showcases a glass-and-chrome table from Home Decorators Collection paired with a mirror by Arteriors (above) and a round, glass-topped table from Modloft (left).