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LUXURY HOMES - FINE INTERIOR DESIGN & FURNISHINGS

Designing An Elegant Home

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Bold Makeover

Colorful And Eclectic Home



LATE WINTER



FAMILY-FRIENDLY DESIGN

Durability With Style

INTERIOR DESIGN Deborah Weiner, IFDA, Designing Solutions, Silver Spring, MD



ABOVE: In the living room, Weiner reupholstered the sofa with a durable coral fabric and installed low-voltage lighting to accentuate her clients' artwork.

greatest part of their budgets on "the things you sit and stand on: upholstery, area rugs and carpet." In general, she prefers heavy natural fibers that are easy to clean and resist stress, like textured, berber and sisal-style carpets that trap stains on the surface. She also uses custom rugs with plenty of color and pattern. Likewise for upholstery, she favors tightly woven, heavyweight natural fibers like wool or cotton. Ditto the color and pattern.

In her clients' living room, she stripped their cream sofa, which was relatively new, and replaced the upholstery with a heavyweight coral cotton from Lee Jofa. She also installed a chandelier above

When families design their dream homes, they often don't take into account the impact children will have on their fine upholstery, carpets and priceless antiques. Family-friendly interior designer Deborah Weiner was well prepared to stress the importance of durable, kid-resistant furnishings when her clients moved into their second home in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Most of the furniture from their old house, including a cream-colored sofa and upholstered dining room chairs, was less than presentable due to the wear and tear of the couple's two small children.

They selected Weiner for her common-sense approach to creating comfortable, stylish interiors that can withstand the test of time—and a constant whirl of play dates and dinner parties. Weiner designed a three-story addition to the home as well as extensive renovations to the kitchen and master bedroom with an eye toward making the space fit the family's busy lifestyle.

"My overall philosophy is that you should be able to have company and with a minimal amount of care have the room ready for the next time you entertain," says Weiner. "Low maintenance and high durability are key." She recommends that her clients invest the



ABOVE: A wool rug in bold colors plays off the fabric Weiner selected for her clients' dining room chairs.



ABOVE: Weiner recommended a highly textured rug and natural fabrics in the family room.

the main seating area and low-voltage lighting around the periphery of the room to illumine bookshelves and artwork. "Lighting is the most overlooked element in most homes," she says. "The number-one problem I encounter in rooms is a lack of adequate lighting. It's like investing in a great painting and never framing it." Weiner prefers overhead lights as opposed to floor and table lamps, which have a high incidence of breakage in homes with children afoot.

In the dining room, Weiner reupholstered the family's dining room chairs and paired them with a colorful, custom area rug from New River Artisans. "The rug is 100 percent wool and extremely durable. It's so heavily knit that dirt just stays on the surface," says Weiner. "It's also reversible so if one side looks like it's ready for the dry cleaner, my client can just flip it over." To keep the rug even more maintenance-free, Weiner had its fringe removed prior to placing it in the home.

The family room, which connects the living room and dining room, boasts a neutral wool- and nylon-blend area rug that is highly textured and resistant to stains. In addition to the room's pine furniture, Weiner utilized her clients' former dining room table—an antique drop-leaf—as an accent piece behind the new love seat since it was too delicate to be "up to the challenge" of being the family's main dining table.

Weiner tapped into an active network of local artisans to accessorize her clients' home. An oil painting by Dan Kessler and three prints by

Betty MacDonald grace their family room walls, while a Shaker felt wall hanging from rural Pennsylvania hangs above the coral sofa in the living room.

Elsewhere in the home, Weiner added plenty of style while economizing on space. Off the master bedroom, she turned a former attic into a home office with sky lights. And she turned the guest bathroom into a "tiny jewel box" in lilac decorated with linen faux painting on the walls and whimsical ivy tile.

The mother of three, Weiner developed her family-focused design niche by way of personal experience. "When I did my own home, I chose the very best things I could afford," she recalls. "Then I had kids. I had to redo everything with

an eye toward how things held up."

She now directs this hard-earned knowledge to her clientele. "Families are looking for style. But you can't live like your home is a museum."



ABOVE: Extensive renovations were made to achieve this light and airy master bedroom.