



# *Style* All Her Own

Designer Megan Young's North Carolina home is a lesson in mixing but not matching, buying what you love, and saying "Yes!" to color.

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Megan and Erik Young, with daughter Effie and dog Boomer.

Cocooned in a tiny big-city apartment with her husband, Erik, Megan Young was dreaming of the North Carolina home she didn't yet have. Not surprisingly, Megan's Southern fantasies were full of Technicolor splendor. When a butterfly finally has room to spread her wings, they are as brightly hued as spring.



Megan painted a large canvas to give the entry a splash of contemporary color.

Ready to leave their New York City lifestyle behind for Erik's home state, Megan and Erik chose Pinehurst for its sophisticated, small-town feel. They found a one-level house with plenty of space for 18-month-old Effie to play and for Megan to play out her design ideas. The painted brick exterior is natural and unassuming, but the interior puts a twist on tradition with graphic colors and patterns, frugal finds, well-chosen luxuries, and one-of-a-kind art.

The house is a showcase for Megan, an interior designer, to show clients what she's all about. "Neutrals can be so beautiful, but I am always drawn to bold color because it brings a room to life," Megan says. "Using a variety of colors adds to the sense that furniture and objects have been collected, not just bought for the space."

There's certainly nothing boring about the Young home. In nearly every room, Megan has laid a traditional foundation and jazzed it up with unexpected color combinations. The formal dining room is a prime example.

"I started with the gold-and-orange toile wallpaper. Then I chose the chair fabric," she explains. "I wanted a graphic pattern to contrast with the toile, something casual to balance the fancy." A painting from a local antiques shop and blue silk draperies round out the colorful combo.

"Everyone who comes in here tells me if I had shown them those things separately, they'd have said, 'No way!'" Megan says, laughing.





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you love together,”  
says Megan.

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Megan chose the graphic green-and-white fabric for the chairs as a counterpoint to the formality of the toile wallpaper.

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The formal living room has the same blend of comfort and tradition. Antiques-store finds and high-end fabrics look just right with the natural texture of a sisal rug.

“I had a mood in mind for that room even before we bought the house,” Megan says. “The room developed out of my collecting things I love. That’s how I work on most of my projects. I see what I like for the space as opposed to going in with a set of parameters.”

Megan also isn’t afraid to make changes to the items she buys. Almost every chair in the room was refinished: two armchairs were whitewashed, and the blue velvet chair was gilded.

The sitting and breakfast area just off the bright white kitchen offers a more casual spot for the small family to hang out, but Megan’s penchant for tradition with a twist is still on display. Toile fabric in bright hues on the chairs partners stylishly with a contemporary table from the inexpensive retailer IKEA.



The kitchen’s bright, white cabinets and backsplash allow Megan’s fabric choices in the breakfast area to really shine.



The bright and casual breakfast area is filled with budget-friendly finds from online retailers and antiques stores.

Megan and Erik's bedroom is a great example of putting a sophisticated spin on the basics. The setup is really quite simple—matching side tables and lamps, an area rug, draperies, and a headboard—but the result is stunning.

The room's colors are toned down, but the mix of patterns definitely isn't. An animal-print rug and the floral fabric on the headboard are perfect examples of Megan's "mix, don't match" mind-set. Megan custom-designed the upholstered headboard to get just the right shape and size.

"I wanted to create a more interesting shape than you find from typical online sources," Megan says. "A custom

headboard makes the space if you can't really afford to redecorate the whole room."

Throughout the house, Megan and Erik's art pieces create colorful, contemporary focal points. "For me, it's very personal. I buy what I love. You have to use art boldly and not be afraid that it's not going to match the room. I actually don't think it *should* match the room," Megan says. "It should be the right thing to hang in that space."

Megan says most shops will allow you to take a piece of art home on approval. Look at it in the space before you make a final decision. Megan also is a big proponent of



The formal living room isn't too formal for dogs and children. The natural-fiber area rug stands up to wear and tear.

## *Style Secrets: Notice the Details*

For Megan, upholstery isn't complete until the finishing touches are added. Here are some of her creative uses of trims.



Playful grass green flat gimp balances the richness of the chair's gilt finish and blue silk velvet.



Tailored silk cording punctuates the curvy shape of the bed's custom upholstered headboard.



Green piping and covered buttons made from the curtain fabric adds pop to the bedroom's loveseat.

patience. "You have to hunt for things that are special," she says. "Take your time. Don't buy something just to fill the space. Is it something that when you look at it, you enjoy it? Then it goes in the room."

Her new hometown has helped Megan rediscover her own artistic talents. When she couldn't find the artwork she was looking for in a store, Megan took the projects into her own hands. One of her paintings hangs over an antique bureau in the entryway and another hangs over the dining table in the kitchen.

"I painted a lot in high school, but I hadn't painted in the city for a long time. When we moved down here, I

started again," says Megan. "There's a slower pace here, especially coming from Fifth Avenue and Ninth Street. And there's more room for a studio."

Pinehurst has also helped Megan discover the power of Southern word of mouth. "I was lucky enough to work for some fabulous Southern clients when I first started my firm, and they've been very gracious with their referrals," Megan says.

Along the way, Megan is winning over clients to her "mix but don't match" mind-set. "Put all the things you love together," she says. "That's more chic, and it's the most fun thing to do."

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A custom headboard designed by Megan is the star in the master bedroom (although Boomer the dog has a lot of star quality, too).



