

Horse Sense

Deborah Martin begins
with a painting
and ends with beautiful design

Photography by Ric Marder Imagery



In taking a large-format oil painting depicting wild horses to the second appointment with this Belle Terre homeowner, Deborah Martin of Deborah Martin Designs took a big chance on the client liking the art as much as she did. The old adage about the biggest risk bringing the biggest reward came to life when the homeowner exclaimed at seeing the painting that she not



only loves horses but formerly rode. The painting served as the springboard for the family room's makeover strategy that would include additional seating as well as a new fireplace surround and mantle over which Deborah hung a second oil painting, a serene landscape.



a clever space to stash items in keeping the room tidy but additional seating as well. A beautiful hand-embossed brass and black wood tray takes the mess out of serving.

Coordinating textured stripe and herringbone patterned fabrics were chosen for the custom upholstered pieces and ensure a smart look is not sacrificed for rugged durability. Nail-head trim on the chairs and ottoman goes a step further in ensuring a cohesive look. Pillows in three different patterns continue the earthy palette.

Custom-finish occasional furniture includes two round lamp tables and a rectangular side table serving the pair of recliners. Stately antique bronze finish lamps with cream linen shades add to the recessed lighting in the room's beautiful tray ceiling. A large media unit anchors a seventy-inch flat-screen television and provides ample storage for sophisticated audiovisual components.

Deborah used a long runner and a round area rug in the foyer to bring the family room's color palette into the next two spaces she would address in the home's three room makeover. The sage, cashew, bark and raisin colors found in these are repeated in the correspondingly patterned living room and dining room rugs. Consistent with a growing trend toward more casual living, this young Belle Terre couple yearned for a less formal living room in which to relax and entertain. To this end, a free-standing marble top bar with brown leather barstools was placed in front of an existing bar cabinet in the living room.

A second entertainment space was established in the living room around a mink velvet curved sofa and two large upholstered chairs. The skillful mix of five fabric patterns keeps the



Additional inspiration came from the room's large and richly-hued patterned area rug. A pair of large and surprisingly elegant tufted recliners was chosen to complement an existing leather sofa and loveseat. Where most recliners are normally skirted to hide the mechanism, these sport elegant turned legs and offer no clue to the comfort feature of these chairs. In lieu of a conventional cocktail table, a large square storage ottoman is a practical alternative affording not just



room fresh and interesting. An oval glass cocktail table whose hand-forged steel base repeats the scrolling of the metal wine bar follows the curve of the conversation sofa for effortless movement. Black embroidered floral Priscilla panels with trim-enhanced swags and jabots dress the room's windows without

obscuring the view of the home's lovely entrance. Herons and water birds are featured in the living room's wall art as well as in a bronze sculpture on the bar. To the homeowners' accessories in the freestanding wall unit, Deborah added ceramic lidded boxes in varying shapes and sizes, a soapstone sculpture,

greenery and books.

Open to the living room, the dining room features a large mahogany table and chairs, a sideboard and two-piece china cabinet. In completing the room, Deborah designed a board-mounted Kingston valance with decorative tassel trim over a pair of panels in a stripe pattern that plays off the colors of the area rug. An exquisite oil painting over the sideboard features a sce-

nic European harbor. Its rich russet tones are repeated in a ceramic pedestal urn and vase. A custom floral in a crystal pedestal bowl and a pair of brass candlesticks complete the accessories for a finished yet airy feel. For this busy family of seven, carefree living trumps formality while quality furnishings, fine art and unique accessories lend a manor feel to this large and beautifully-appointed home. ■