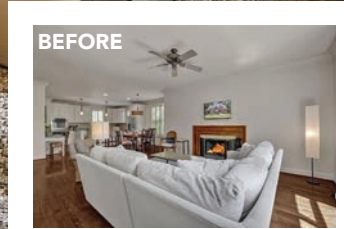


# COMING OF AGE

TIME FOR AN UPDATE! RIVER BROOK DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION TRANSFORMED THIS 30-YEAR-OLD VESTAVIA HILLS HOME WITH FRESH STYLE AND STRATEGIC DESIGN MOVES.

*Text by PAIGE TOWNLEY | Photography by LAUREY GLENN*



**BEFORE**  
A slip-covered linen sofa and linen chairs take the place of a sectional sofa. Before, the furniture blocked the window and didn't allow a natural entry to the seating space. For cohesiveness throughout the open living and kitchen area and adjoining rooms, the designer opted for seagrass rugs and the same linen drapery. To create dimension in the linear space, walls were recessed on either side of the fireplace, and the wood surround was replaced with granite.



BEFORE



Removing the window, relocating the sink, and moving the range to the exterior wall allowed for improved functionality. New cabinetry, marble countertops, and an updated backsplash elevate the white kitchen.



ABOVE: A new breakfast nook with banquette, a small round table, and stools covered in the Graffito pattern by Kelly Wearstler fills a former void between the kitchen and family room. The cowhide rug underneath is ultra kid-friendly since it repels water. The lantern hanging above the white-washed round table is the Morris Lantern by Visual Comfort, which brings in a classic yet sophisticated feel to the space.



The console dining table and brown velvet dining chairs continue the contemporary design. Artwork by Colleen Leach hangs on either side of the double window.

While some things get better with age, this Vestavia Hills home was definitely not living up to that adage. In fact, the house was increasingly showing its maturity with dated features like living room columns, standard 1990's floor tile, and original cabinets. But the things that were working couldn't be overlooked, at least by one couple making the move from Texas to Birmingham. They saw through the stale design to the good bones and spacious

floorplan. The key was finding someone else with the same ability to see past the uninspiring and untouched interior to what could be—a well-designed space for a growing family. Luckily, they knew which design firm could give the home the facelift it needed—River Brook Design & Construction. “I have always loved Leigh Misso’s taste,” says the homeowner. “We knew the house had so much potential. It was obvious it had been well taken care of. It just needed updating, and Leigh and her

team really brought it to life.” While the transformation didn't include any floorplan changes—the home already had great flow—it did involve a complete gut of the interior, along with tiny tweaks to better utilize the existing space. To start, Leigh and her team removed the traditional columns that sat awkwardly between the foyer and formal living room. They also reconfigured the kitchen, rearranging windows to better utilize the

space and bringing in a bigger island to create a much needed focal point. With the overhaul of the home's architecture complete, the renovation continued with a new aesthetic for the space. Leigh put her expertise to work in creating a design plan that spoke to the two very different styles of the homeowners. “Her vibe is much more traditional, while his is more modern and masculine,” she says. “That meant finding ways to marry the two



BEFORE

New cabinets and marble tile, along with new fixtures, replaced dated, stock materials. Opening the far wall allowed room to add a shower and tub. Accessories include a ceramic garden stool, Turkish Oushak rug, and 19th-century French chair.



*“From the flow to every little design detail, it all works together perfectly. It feels like this was how it was supposed to be.”*

—the homeowner

aesthetics, which is always fun.”

The designer started by keeping the basic color palette of the home neutral, painting every room except the powder bath and foyer Benjamin Moore’s Cloud Cover. She then put special emphasis on sourcing furnishings that would bring each style into the room without feeling out of place. In the formal living room, which leans more modern with the straight lines of the high-back sofa, block wood coffee table, and bold Colleen Leach artwork, she pulled in 19th-century French antique chairs to balance

the aesthetic. “Well-placed antiques help create a curated feel and add unique character that will never go out of style,” Leigh says. “I always encourage clients to invest in a quality, one-of-a-kind piece. Plus, the value of a great antique appreciates over time.”

In the kitchen, she chose classic elements such as unlacquered brass and Danby marble but then incorporated the waterfall edge on the island to add a more modern feel. Leigh also blended both styles in the island pendants, which are traditional in style but made modern

thanks to the frosted glass globes. In the same vein, contemporary shaker cabinets complement timeless flat-faced cabinets.

Leigh went heavy with both classic and cozy elements in the bedroom by adding cedar beams in the ceiling and incorporating neutral bedding and made-to-look-antique bedside tables. Pops of modern appear in the bedside lamps and the wicker chairs at the foot of the bed. “Everything Leigh did works together perfectly to create our ultimate dream home,” says the homeowner. “There isn’t a room in this house that I don’t love.”

**RESOURCES:**

**Designer, architect, builder:** River Brook Design & Construction  
**Interiors & furnishings:** River Brook Interiors  
**Cabinets:** The Refinery Custom Cabinets  
**Hardware:** Brandino Brass  
**Appliances:** AllSouth Appliance  
**Kitchen countertops and granite mantel:** Surface One  
**Lighting:** Mayer Lighting  
**Bathroom tile:** Fixtures & Finishes  
**Paint colors—kitchen cabinets:** Benjamin Moore Cloud Cover



Leigh and her team removed a 1990s arched window and added cedar beams and a new, oversized lantern. They draped the wall behind the bed to tie into the window draperies. The soothing and serene color palette features neutral tones and soft blue bed pillows.