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Aerin Lauder

A DAY IN THE LIFE

TRADITIONAL HOME

July/August 2016

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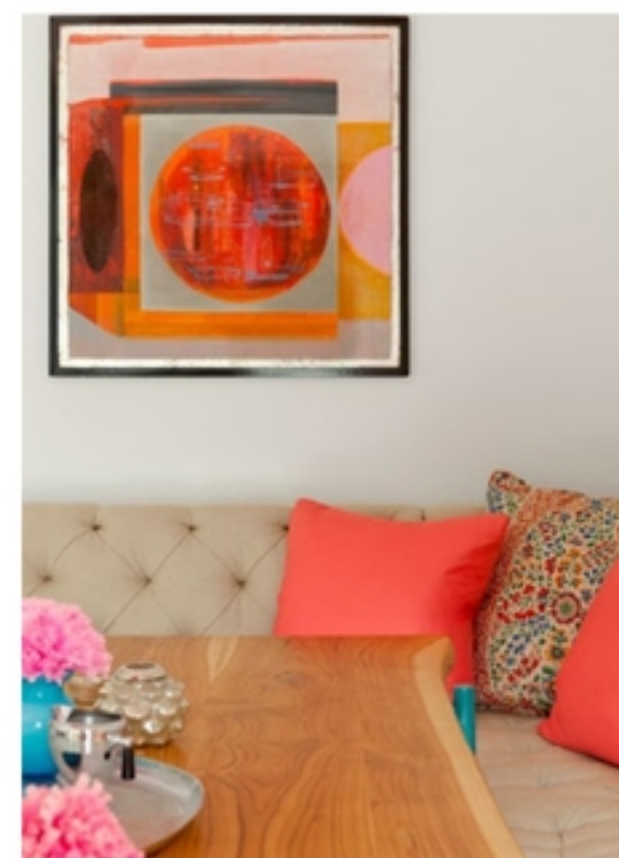
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Traditional style, Hill Country antiques, and juice-sipping kiddos achieve harmony in an Austin home shaped by designer Meredith Ellis.



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Our Readers' Choice-winning designer Kevin Walsh lightens up a historic house in Little Rock, Arkansas, to reflect the vibrant family who lives there.



Beantown Beauty

Smart design strategies give a Boston townhouse family-friendly function to go with its drop-dead-gorgeous looks.

Written by Sally Finder Weepie Photography by Eric Roth





new traditional
KRISTINE IRVING

Great interior design is more than skin deep, Kristine Irving says. That's why her firm, Koo de Kir Architectural Interiors, looks at the home as a whole. "It's about where the walls go, not just what goes on the walls," she says. "I see what's in clients' heads, what's in their souls, to learn how they want to live."

That's exactly how things played out with a five-story Boston townhouse bought by a young couple who decided to live there for two years before working with Irving on a renovation plan. "They wanted to see how they adapted to vertical living," Irving says. "Time in the house gave them a strong vision of how they wanted to live here with their young son."

Topping their wish list was more light. To get it, Irving opened the back of

the house with modern steel windows and reimagined the chopped-up floor plan that didn't jibe with a modern family.

Out went all the interior walls on the kitchen level, where the cooking zone now connects to a dining nook and sociable family room. One floor up, a dated arrangement of two rooms separated by pocket doors got the boot, as Irving carved out zones tailored to the family's lifestyle.

Front parlor Furniture in this space, set up for both quiet family time and for entertaining, is scaled to suit the skinny, 12-foot-wide room. Couture tailoring details on furniture and intriguing textures lend casual elegance.

Preceding pages Designer Kristine Irving made the rear parlor a convivial place for the family to watch movies and play games.







Exterior The circa-1895 Boston townhouse keeps its history while welcoming modern living.
Family room Irving evicted an original marble fireplace to give the couple what they wanted here: a spot for contemporary family gathering, cozied up to a fireplace set in floor-to-ceiling limestone cladding. “It’s this family’s symbol of home,” Irving says. Built-ins supply storage and display space without impeding the flow of traffic or light.



“The couple love reading the newspaper together on Sunday morning,” she says. To facilitate that, she set up a reading nest for two in the front parlor’s bay window. It opens to a conversation area centered on a fireplace that’s original to the house. And there’s no need for trips downstairs to the kitchen. Irving slipped a wet bar into a parlor wall. “It’s a really cool space for entertaining,” she says.

In the now-airy rear parlor, often host to

game night, chic metal windows are twice as tall as the original wood-frame numbers. But no worries on movie night: Irving included blackout shades.

She also devised clever ways to add needed storage with built-in shelves, drawers, and cabinets.

Irving even found room for a sophisticated bath in a sliver of space behind the bar. “I wanted it to be a cool, fun room—and not feel like you’re locked in a closet,” she says. Slim fixtures and

smile-provoking wallpaper do the trick.

A flight up from the public areas, the master bedroom, Irving says, “was more of a decorating project than an architectural endeavor.” She emphasized texture over color, with grass-cloth wallpaper and lots of layers atop the walnut bed. “It’s a space to unfold into and relax. It works with all the other things to give this family a home they can be happy in for a long, long time.”





tips of the trade

Kristine Irving knows Boston. She got her education at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design—and wasn't afraid to open a retail home accessories store during her freshman year. Her firm, Koo de Kir Architectural Interiors, has been a city staple since 2011 and has given her an enviable background in designing for multilevel townhouse living. Here are her tips.

Sneak in storage. By recessing bookshelves, a desk, or a television into a wall, you incorporate needed storage without taking up precious floor space or blocking light.

Open things up. Remove unneeded interior walls so rooms—and you—can breathe.

Keep a tight palette. With an open floor plan and a small space, it's best to edit. Neutrals let a room live large; textures layer in interest.

Scale down furniture. You need enough pieces for friendly conversation areas. But keep your choices svelte—no bulky space-stealers allowed.

Bar Cocktails anyone? They're just a step away from the party, in a built-in cabinet that can be hidden in a flash behind a sleek folding door.



Kitchen White cabinets, marble surfaces, and European white oak floors make the kitchen feel light and airy—as does a new 14-foot steel window system. A few splashes of black, including a stained island and matte-black lighting, echo the window grid and layer in dark sophistication.

Nook A corner by the banquette is coated in magnetic chalkboard paint. “That hidden little spot gives the family a place where they—especially the 7-year-old—can go a little crazy,” Irving says.





Bedroom A quiet color scheme keeps the vibe serene, but texture and graphic elements ensure it's far from boring. "I piled pattern on top of pattern," Irving says. "It gives softness and warmth to a contemporary room." **Bath** Cheeky blowfish-motif wallpaper lightens the mood in a tiny room. An expanse of sleek black paneling, which includes a handy integrated shelf, makes the slim sink feel anchored. Above, a mirror conceals a medicine cabinet.

