



TUDOR
REVIVAL
BIRMINGHAM
ALABAMA

Curb Appeal

Gas Lanterns

Add them for character and romantic charm.

Shaped Boxwoods

Soften your entry with symmetrically placed planters.

Flagstone Pavers

Intersperse them with grass for a fresh look.

Personal Statement

An interior designer plays up history with a dash of fresh style for modern living.



This Photo Homeowner and interior designer Tammy Connor added a window seat—a cozy place to read and a convenient place to put on shoes. **Opposite** Tammy refreshed the colors on the facade, changing the brown window trim to cream. “The Tudor look was so heavy. This was a good way to lighten it up,” she says.



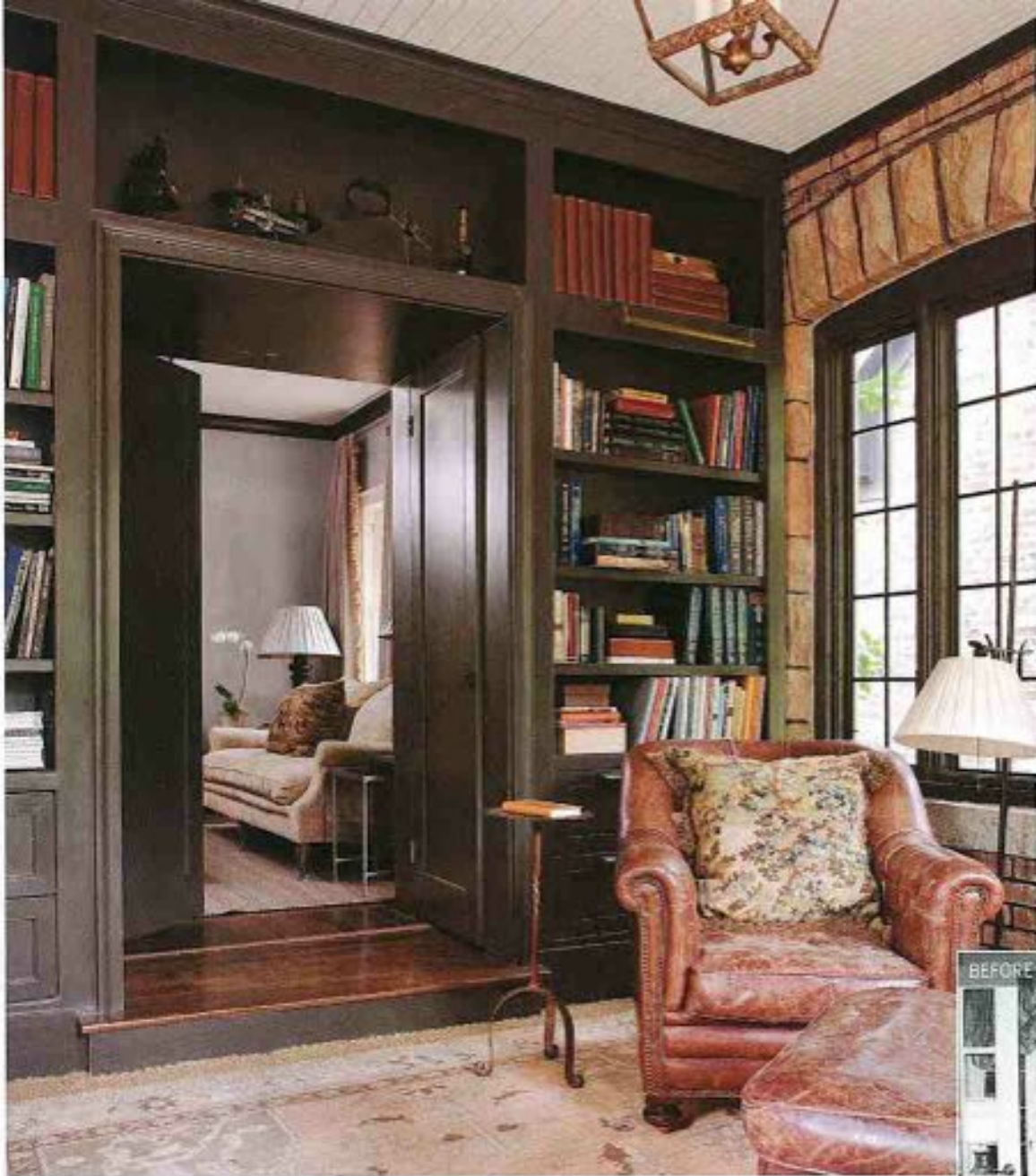


Above A pair of matching cabinets frames a focal point on the living room's rear wall. "The cabinets added much-needed height and reflect the light from the bank of windows opposite the seating area," Tammy says. "They help to keep the dark spaces light." **Opposite** To soften the casing of a bookshelf, Tammy arched the top, replaced the cabinet doors, and filled the shelves with her collection of leather and velvet books plus English creamware.

A

Alabama-based interior designer Tammy Connor grew up in a Birmingham neighborhood known for its classic 1920s homes. Though she left the city for school and started her business in Charleston, South Carolina, life changes brought her back to her Alabama roots—and sentiment drew her to this 1926 Tudor. "I remembered visiting the house as a child," Tammy says, adding that it was among her favorites in the neighborhood. When it went on the market, she and husband Geoff bought it and began its gentle transformation.

"I didn't want to change the appeal of the house, but I did want to freshen it and update it for today's lifestyle," she says. The house had great bones to work with, but Tammy's first task was to repair and update existing



surfaces. "The differences I made are subtle," she says. "The only way most people know we renovated the house is if we tell them. It's mostly icing-on-the-cake kinds of stuff."

With a delicate touch, Tammy set out to breathe new life into the tired facade, mechanical systems, and interiors. "We replaced the hardwood floors, had the interior stone sandblasted back to its natural state, and replaced electrical and plumbing systems," she says.

She also made adjustments to accommodate the flexibility and connectivity needed by a 21st-century family. The original sunroom now gets more use as a study, and the paint on its terra-cotta floor went by the wayside in favor of the original brick and stone. French doors had separated the room from the den, but new cabinets (which have doors integrated into

Above Custom bookcases wrap the door frame leading from the study to the den. Swinging panel doors replaced a wide single door and fold in to the casings for a clean opening. **Opposite** Tammy's fondness for details is evident in the dining room, where she designed the slipcovers for the dining chairs. The Fortuny chandelier is a souvenir purchased in Venice.



Voice of Experience

When planning built-in shelving, make sure to allow enough depth and height for the objects you wish to store and display. If your shelving will house media equipment, remember that flat-panel TV bases can require 12 inches or more of depth, as do large items such as

art books, atlases, and vinyl records. Shelf height is less critical if you're installing adjustable shelving. If you go with fixed shelving, you'll need to be more precise in your measuring and planning. With adjustable shelves, you'll have more flexibility as your needs evolve.





their design) offer practical storage. In fact, built-in cabinets and bookcases throughout made a huge difference. "Custom cabinetry was a very important part of the renovation," Tammy says. "This house has so many nooks and sloped ceilings. It was worth every penny to have good, functional, aesthetically pleasing cabinetry that works."

Tweaks also included removing oddities added over the years, including a deep cabinet that oddly jutted into the kitchen from a bay window. Even though it provided some storage, it was more cumbersome than practical, so Tammy removed it to provide a spot for a breakfast table and chairs.

The home's original entry offered little more than a pass-through from the front porch to the living room. Tammy added a new cubby for keys and other miscellaneous items and a charming window seat inside the home's original arched doorway. Other minimal changes that made huge aesthetic impact: lighter trimwork inside and out, and strategically placed task lighting in the kitchen.

With the bones in place, Tammy began work on the interior scheme. Playing to her fondness for textures and neutrals, she devised a plan that would complement the architecture and underscore the home's timeless design. "My goal was understated elegance that is very inviting," Tammy

Above Tammy redressed the kitchen with beaded board on the walls, which visually breaks up the expanses of plaster throughout the house. **Left** In the breakfast nook, Tammy created a cozy dining space with a blend of fabrics, textures, and antiques. **Opposite** Distressed furniture pieces and rustic framed prints create a casual feel around this petite table arrangement in the kitchen.

*"My goal was understated elegance
that is very inviting."*

Homeowner and interior designer Tammy Connor





Ideas for Outdoor Living

Revamp landscaping in a style that reflects the elegance and ease of interior living spaces.

Soften slopes with plants. From the home's back door, the incline leading to the pool, *right*, was planted with plenty of classic, charming perennials.

Put paths to use. With inspiration drawn from old-world gardens, a graceful allée of trees, *below right*, leads from house to swimming pool. Varying textures underfoot—railroad ties, pea gravel, mulch—remind you that you're outside.

Swap sidewalk for pavers. The original driveway and entrance were replaced with a parking area and bluestone pavers leading to the front door, *above*. The design is more casual but still very much in sync with the home's architecture.

Create separations between outside "rooms." A wrought-iron fence, *opposite*, divides the pool and pool house from the yard's dining area. The fence tops a gentle terrace overflowing with blooms and shrubs.







says, "I think the interiors really work with the exterior architecture. Scale was especially critical because Tudor is a heavy look."

For example, to balance dominant features such as the heavily textured plaster walls, stone fireplace, and stone walls in the former sunroom, Tammy chose large furnishings and created distinctive focal points. In the living room, matching cabinets with antiqued mirrored doors offer height as well as a comfortable niche for a high-back sofa. Armchairs are ample, and a wood-topped iron coffee table adds weight. The kitchen, too, got lighter and brighter, with new glass doors in the butler's pantry, fresh countertops and backsplash in marble, and painted wood paneling.

Arrangements are mostly symmetrical with just enough skew to keep things interesting. On the mantel, Tammy displays her favorite piece of artwork: an unframed painting of an old man. It's the first of what she hopes is a collection of art that will create a "wall of wisdom," she says.

Tammy also looks for one-of-a-kind furnishings with gorgeous lines, artisanship, and texture. "I combine custom pieces with clean-lined antiques for a blended, unpredictable look. I always focus on the overall feel of a space," she says.

But beauty comes first. And since she often spends her days as an interior designer surrounded by pattern and color, her home is a retreat that is very much soothing and serene. "The antiques I purchase are quite fine but not necessarily formal." Tailored upholstery adds "a look that's comfortably elegant—not too serious, not too fussy, and not too casual," she says. "It's a restful environment suited to the way I like to live."

Above Tammy showcases her collection of intaglios on her bedroom wall. Though the relics are small, they gain presence mounted on antique Italian wedding documents and set off by chocolate-brown matting in white frames. **Below** An antique bureau fits neatly under an eave—just one of the many architectural reminders throughout the home.



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The Plans, Before & After

Homeowner and interior designer Tammy Connor's goal for the 1926 Tudor Revival was to update it for modern living yet maintain historical integrity. Without having to move walls, Tammy focused on aesthetics, changing the trim package and retrofitting the home with cabinets and a laundry room while redressing outdoor living spaces.

BEFORE

Unclaimed attic space became an ideal place for expansion of the master bedroom's closet and laundry.

An awkward and bulky built-in cabinet dominated the bay window in the kitchen. Removing it opened up space for the Connors' breakfast table and chairs.

In the entry, the homeowners envisioned a built-in window seat and small cabinet to stash keys and phones.



AFTER

New built-ins in the nursery provide functional and display storage.

Within the existing footprint, the kitchen got an infusion of style, including marble countertops, beaded-board wainscoting, and new lighting.

French doors once separated these two rooms, which now have an open transition flanked by double-sided built-in storage units that anchor each room.

2,800 square feet



INTERIOR DESIGN: TAMMY CONNOR

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE: JOHN GOLIHTLY WILSON