

Boston

# home

## *Summer Escapes*

OUTDOOR LIVING / NORTH SHORE / NEW HAMPSHIRE

BOSTONMAGAZINE.COM SUMMER 2018

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# GRAY AREA

*Interior designer Dee Elms revamps a Back Bay condo for a family of five.*

BY ANDREA TIMPANO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL J. LEE

The family relaxes in the kitchen, which includes a custom built-in banquette and a plush blue sectional.

**DESPITE BEING FIRMLY** rooted in the suburbs, a Lexington couple dreamed of moving to Boston when their three kids left for college. As luck would have it, the opportunity to relocate arose much sooner than they planned: This 3,100-square-foot Back Bay townhouse, fresh off a developer-led renovation, hit the market while their youngest was in fifth grade. Purchasing it to use as a second home until their last child left the nest, the couple hired interior designer Dee Elms to infuse their new space with some much-needed personality. “When we first came in, it was very vanilla,” says the principal of Elms Interior Design. “I saw opportunity after opportunity.”

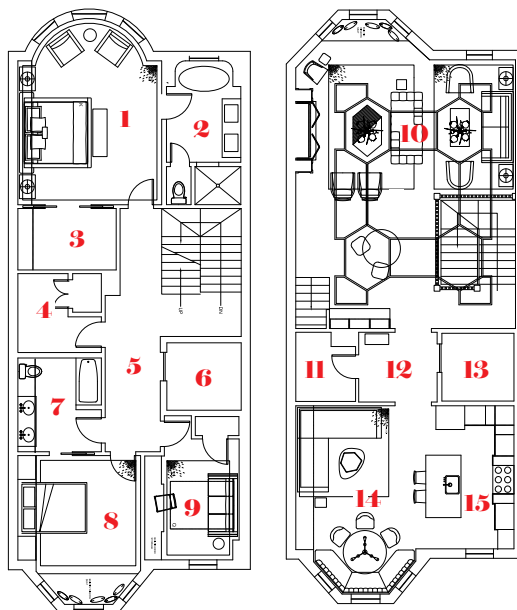


## COME TOGETHER... OR NOT

Creating spaces where the family could congregate—or spend time apart—was critical to Elms’s design. Featuring a custom tête-à-tête, a pair of silk-velvet swivel chairs, and new trim work on the ceiling, an expansive living area offers plenty of room for group hang-outs. A private den with polished-nickel sconces and a sleepover-ready pullout sofa, meanwhile, makes a cozy retreat.

## CONSIDER THE DETAILS

When the couple first purchased the home, the kitchen felt uninspired with plain white cabinetry, standard-issue tile, and a humdrum island. To liven things up, Elms repainted the cabinets with Benjamin Moore’s “London Fog” and added brass hardware. She also replaced the backsplash with glass tile laid in a chevron pattern, and updated the island (refinished in Benjamin Moore’s “French Beret” blue) with a new front panel and a marble top.



### FIRST FLOOR

- 1 MASTER BEDROOM
- 2 MASTER BATHROOM
- 3 CLOSET
- 4 LAUNDRY ROOM
- 5 HALL
- 6 ELEVATOR
- 7 BATHROOM
- 8 BEDROOM
- 9 BEDROOM

### SECOND FLOOR

- 10 LIVING ROOM
- 11 POWDER ROOM
- 12 FOYER
- 13 ELEVATOR
- 14 DINING ROOM
- 15 KITCHEN



## ADD TEXTURE

Elms believes that “good design is all about texture.” In this house, that translates to graphic wallcoverings in nearly every room, including the kids’ bath. “It has a young feel to it, and I thought it was wild and fun,” the interior designer says of Stark’s “Paria Canyon.” “You get wrapped up in the wave.”

## PICK A COLOR

A cohesive color palette, evident in the home’s luxe furnishings and finishes, unites the common areas and the bedrooms. “We always start by presenting fabrics to the clients,” Elms says. “[The wife] was really drawn to grays, silvers, and creams.”

## USE EVERY INCH

To make the most of the home’s square footage, Elms designed custom window seats (or, in the case of the kitchen, a built-in banquette) for the unit’s large bays. This proved particularly helpful in the kids’ bedroom, where the window seat—spacious enough to serve as an extra bed—boasts drawers for extra storage.



## CONTRACTOR

JW CONSTRUCTION

## INTERIOR DESIGNER

ELMS INTERIOR DESIGN