cool summer
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Retro Brilliance

With the help of rising design darling Angie Hranowsky, a young family's downsize to a 1940s charmer in Old Windermere spurs a bold style evolution
PURPLE REIGN

Seven-year-old Ingrid Shelbourne and Stella, the family’s Airedale, in the den just off the kitchen. (Opposite) A deep purple Osborne & Little print offers a mid-century backdrop for a 1960s Neoclassical-style bench. The rug is a long-pile Scandinavian “rya” design that gained popularity in the 1970s.

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Never mind that Angie Hranowsky was only two steps past the front door. “You gotta buy this house,” she said, with equal parts spunk and certainty, to her much-less certain clients, Daphne and Courtney Shelbourne. You’d think Angie was a pushy real estate agent, not one of Metropolis magazine’s “Five Up-and-Coming Designers.”

But Angie understood what the Shelbournes were looking for. In fact, she and Daphne were simpatico from the get-go, a kinship first realized by Daphne when she began noticing the designer’s modern interiors in magazines, including a 2009 feature in Charleston Home. Then she spotted a Domino listing of Angie’s favorite things, and noticed they were also her favorite things (well, minus the Howard Stern Show). Finally—after visiting a friend’s home and marveling at its fearless, fresh eclecticism, and learning that, yes, she had some help, and yes, the designer was Angie Hranowsky—Daphne decided to give her style soul sister a call.

Plus, there was another incentive: Daphne and Courtney’s decision to put their five-bedroom home on the market and

EASY DOES IT

The kitchen had been updated with new cabinetry, hardware, and penny floor tile by previous owners, so Angie and Daphne (shown here, and at bottom left with her husband, Courtney) only added this sunny yellow Manuel Canovas wallpaper and a simple dome pendant light over the sink.

“I love minimalism in a kitchen. No frills and no clutter, just a clean, sunny spot to cook.” —Daphne Shelbourne, homeowner
MIX MASTER

Angie designed a wall of built-in bookshelves to cozy up the living room and added a Madeline Weinrib dhurrie rug, a pair of vintage upholstered chairs she found at ESD, and a marble and bronze-finished coffee table.
GLOBAL MARKET

In the dining room, the lacquered table is a 1970s-era Eban Ford, and the chandelier is 1960s Italian. Angie covered the chairs (note the bronzed legs) in a China Seas silk fabric, and added simple burlap draperies dressed up by a Kelly Wearstler trim.

downsize was the first step in what would become both a lifestyle and a style shift. "Our friends told us we were crazy for trying to sell in this market, that our timing was terrible," says Daphne.

Courtney, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, laughs and adds, "Obviously they were right, but it was beyond a financial decision—I had this epiphany one day: what were we doing, three of us living in this big house? Life is too short to put so much of our time, energy, and resources into a big house. We didn’t feel like we were being good stewards of what God had given us."

And if they were going to slim things down and simplify, Daphne was ready to part with traditional hand-me-down pieces and oversize sofas and chairs in favor of furnishings better suited to her innate, if daring, sensibilities (think big on color, streamlined, and modern).

TRADING SPACES

The Shelbournes set out to find a Mid-century Modern-style house, but as Angie pointed out, such places are hard to come by in the Lowcountry. So at her urging, they headed to Old Windermere—"one of the most beautiful neighborhoods in town," says the designer.

Immediately, the circa-1945 traditional brick number they toured felt right: strong bones; a modest, sensible layout; plentiful windows; an updated professional-grade kitchen; and an attractive price. "It's not modern," Angie said, "but we'll fill it with such cool stuff, it won't matter."

It was during the "cool stuff" round-up that Daphne and Angie were reminded of just how in sync their tastes are. When Daphne showed Angie a wallpaper sample she liked, Angie recognized it as one she'd used on a previous project. And when Daphne
BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

The home's bold palette gives way to softer, muted hues in the master bedroom, where Angie mixed pieces from the Shelbournes' stash, like a painted wooden dresser and a slipcovered armchair (top right), plus a pair of mirrored chests. An antique tapestry found at 17 South hangs behind the headboard.

e-mailed a photo of a light fixture, Angie replied that a similar one was hanging in her own dining room.

What followed were repeat forays to nearby Antiques of South Windermere, where they turned up numerous treasures, including a 1930s Deco mirror for the central hallway, glam enough to hold its own against the

dramatic purple and pink Osborne & Little wallpaper. Other finds were muted Chinese panels now hanging in the den and the perfect "coucha" (daughter Ingrid's term for a couch/sofa hybrid) for Ingrid's killer bedroom—a pink toile palace that is the second-floor pièce de résistance.

Lots of scouring on eBay and at favorite Atlanta and Louisville (Angie's home turf) haunts completed the bold-but-balanced menagerie of contemporary art, vintage finds, and dizzying lighting, all tastefully interspersed with family antiques. Budget played a role, so they made careful choices, like opting for inexpensive burlap drapes gussied up with striking trim for the dining room, and putting textile punch on the master bed linens rather than on pricier curtains. Where possible, pieces from their CT home were brought into play. "I like rooms to look like they've evolved over time," says Hranowsky. "You have to mix it up."

With blues, grays, and lavenders anchoring the walls, a cohesive palette holds the décor together, but each room has its own flavor and function. "Every space is practical—that's one thing I love about it," says Courtney, pointing out that in their former house, they rambled right past rooms they rarely used. Now the family eats in the dining room, reads and relaxes in the living room, and watches movies in the den. As for the kitchen, it's much smaller, but more efficient. "We no longer have a dining bar,
“Ingrid’s room is on the second floor and has all kinds of nooks and angles. I wanted the wallpaper to help these disappear, make the room appear seamless.”

—Angie Hranowsky, interior designer
Angie's Cues on Hues

Vibrant and imaginative color choices are the designer's signature. Her secrets?

Try Surprise Color Combos: The Shelbourne house features shades of purple punctuated with vibrant yellow, orange, and pale pink. “A few years ago, I designed a room with deep plum walls and accents of turquoise and indigo—it was very striking. I like to surprise with color, as well as furnishings, fabric, and artwork.”

Experiment With Bold Accents: Start small and paint big. Select from colors in a fabric or rug, then pop in accent colors with accessories or pillows. To make a splash, change your wall color—“you can always paint over it! I recommend sampling at least two colors, and paint large areas (20 by 30 inches) before you invest. I’ve tried nine similar shades in one room before choosing the right one.”

Look for Standout Hues: Keep your eyes open; look at textiles, nature, books, and magazines. “I’m always inspired by other countries. In India, color is so energetic, it’s as if it almost vibrates. They use pink and turquoise the way we use gray and black. And I fell in love with Mexico’s bold uses of red, blue, and yellow.”

Daphne (left) with interior designer Angie Hranowsky

This 1960s abstract painting offers a vibrant backdrop for a vintage floor lamp and rattan daybed in the living room.