

# De tails.

**Most homeowners can follow the basic tenets of design.** The color scheme and furniture pieces provide the foundation for your home interiors, but what about the details? Whether understated or standout, the structural and finishing details in the following homes showcase the true art of design.



Inspired by her recent visit to Europe, designer Hirsch opted for a Swedish farmhouse aesthetic for the entire home.

# When in Europe

Designer Janie Hirsch Drew from Her Trip Overseas to Design This Atlanta Home

**J**anie Hirsch approached this new project differently than she ever had before. This time, the Atlanta-based designer was going to design the interiors and architectural elements just as she would want them for her very own home. The reason was simple: While other homes she's worked on have been for homeowners, this particular property was a model home for Hedgewood Homes, a builder Hirsch has worked with over the years. "They were truly *laissez faire* about the design," says Hirsch. "So my inspiration was to tap into what was the next style or design that I would want if it were my home."

Having traveled recently to Europe, Hirsch zeroed in on a sophisticated take on a Swedish farmhouse aesthetic that satisfied the self-described Francophile's love for simple but warm and comfortable design. "I'd just been to Paris and wanted to capture that French/Swedish look," she says. "I try to design simply for my clients, but it always has a very classic and tailored feel to it. Not trendy by any means. I like to mix new along with antiques but still have a very classic, timeless feel to it. I like it to feel as though you've inherited some of the pieces in the room. I think this particular project fell into that."

Though the townhome was an end unit, it still lacked considerable light. To maximize the natural sun the home did get and naturally

brighten the spaces, Hirsch opted for a warm, light color palette of grays, creams, yellows, and pale blues. "We really wanted the heart pine floors to have a gray washed look to them, but we couldn't find any stains that could create that look," says Hirsch. Always the problem solver, she utilized gesso—a mixture of plaster of Paris or whiting glue most often used as a base for gilding or painting on wood—to get that sleek, sophisticated gray wash on the floors throughout the home. "The floors truly were the starting point for the entire color palette of the home," she says. From there, Hirsch addressed the paint colors and, again, not quite finding the color and milk paint-like finish she wanted, created her own by cutting a color they liked into one-quarter pigment

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## It's in the Details

Designer Janie Hirsch shares three ways to instantly add personality to an otherwise blank room.

**1 Add Fringe. Or piping. Or decorative tape.** "Simply adding these little things to pillows or draperies can make a huge difference in a room," says Hirsch.

**2 Go Dark.** "Using a dark color in a room creates drama and interest while making the space feel more intimate. It can also be a wonderful backdrop for an art collection when given attention with an art light," says Hirsch.

**3 Raise the Roof.** Or, rather, the ceiling visually. "Raising your window treatments to the ceiling or crown molding will give the appearance of a higher ceiling," says Hirsch. This can add instant drama (and the illusion of more space) to a room.



THIS PAGE FROM TOP: Hirsch applied a mortar-wash of PastelCote to give the fireplace bricks an imperfect yet milky finish in the living room. To create interest to the custom kitchen cabinetry, Hirsch added a white accent to the cabinets' crevices as opposed to the traditional brown. OPPOSITE: The guest room boasts earthy green accents that play off the farmhouse vibe.







“until it got that milky, chalky look to it, which was a nod to the Swedish/French farmhouse aesthetic.”

Then, it was all about the details. In the family room, the builder wanted a fireplace, which would serve as a focal point for the ideal entertaining space; however, Hirsch was tasked with figuring out how to maximize the small size of the room with a functioning masonry fireplace, which would normally eat up a sizeable amount of room. “Instead of having the fireplace protrude, we kept it minimal,” says Hirsch. “But we still wanted it to have texture and character.” To achieve that, it was covered in brick then applied a mortar-wash of Pastelcote to give the bricks an imperfect yet milky finish, similar to the paint on the walls but in the same hue of the room’s crown molding trim.

In the adjacent kitchen, Hirsch custom designed the cabinetry and elevated it to the ceiling to heighten the ceiling. At the top, though, she added beaded glass-pane doors with small lights to highlight seldom-used, artwork-like quality vases, bowls, and crystal. “It was a very intentional design element,” she says. The cabinet finish was of utmost importance, as well, as it would function as a focal point of the open layout of the downstairs. To create something that was in line with the Swedish/French farmhouse aesthetic but still felt elegant and sophisticated, she added a gray glaze to the cabinets. But to keep the cabinetry from looking similar to other homes, she added a white accent to the cabinetry crevices as opposed to a dark brown. “It really brought out the color of the cabinets but in a really subtle way,” she says.

Upstairs in the master bedroom, though, may be the most impressive design detail in the home. Not wanting to use a traditional, upholstered headboard for the bed, Hirsch opted instead to add a permanent frame behind the bed. “I simply couldn’t find a headboard I loved, so I found a frame I fell in love with at my local custom frame shop and went from there,” she explains. The detailed frame was then boxed in and Hirsch had the inside of the frame upholstered with batting and a neutral linen, just as she would a piece of furniture. To complete the look, in lieu of traditional sconces and bedside lamps, she added a pair of petite chandeliers. “That final finish just gave that room the traditional and very symmetrical look we were hoping for,” she says.

All of Hirsch’s tiny design details and elements came together to create a stunning home that feels a lot less like Atlanta and a whole lot more like an elegant Swedish farmhouse. “I love this home,” says Hirsch, “and love the design of it.” ■



THIS PAGE FROM TOP: Slate-gray accents as seen in the armchairs, are the perfect complement to the creamy whites throughout the home. Petite pendant lights add charm to the kitchen. OPPOSITE: A farmhouse table completes the chic, comfortable European look of the home.





# the first step

## Designing a Showstopping Staircase

A staircase is an architectural detail in a two-story home that will always be noticed. Whether you are dressing up an existing staircase or designing your dream version, you'll want to put your best foot forward.

If you want to refresh the staircase in your home, work from the ground up. Carpeted stairs are safer for children. But because this area sees a lot of foot traffic, carpet can make stairs tougher to clean. If you have or are installing hardwood floors, make sure they match the flooring in the entryway and the second floor (or at least provide a smooth transition from one to the other).

Next, look to your banister and pickets. Could they use a coat of paint? If your decor is modern and industrial, consider swapping out wooden pickets for stainless-steel versions. Whatever style you opt for,

make sure it's safe and secure. Tighten any loose pieces and make sure handrails are at a good height for you and your family.

To make sure that your staircase is as safe as possible, invest in quality lighting. You might need a higher wattage in the existing can lights or a new hanging fixture altogether. The bottom of hanging fixtures should be high enough that no one has to worry about bumping their head.

Finally, turn to the walls. If you've updated the staircase, you might also want to repaint the walls for a complete refresh. At the very least, wipe down the walls with a gentle cleaning agent. If you have artwork or family photos hanging along the staircase, check to make sure they are all still in good condition. Photos might fade if this area sees a lot of sun.

If you are designing and installing a new staircase, the sky is the limit! There are so many fantastic architectural options including floating, spiral, arch, or winder in glass, concrete, or wood. 