

Charlotte

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# HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®

## *Chic Havens*

***PLUS:***  
NATURAL SELECTION

COLOR CRUSH:  
FRESH FERN

Smith's renovation of the one-time ranch took a cramped, choppy floorplan and drastically opened it up, so there were backyard views from every room in the home. This dramatic two-story window in the family room makes it feel like you're outdoors even when inside, which was a high priority for the homeowners.



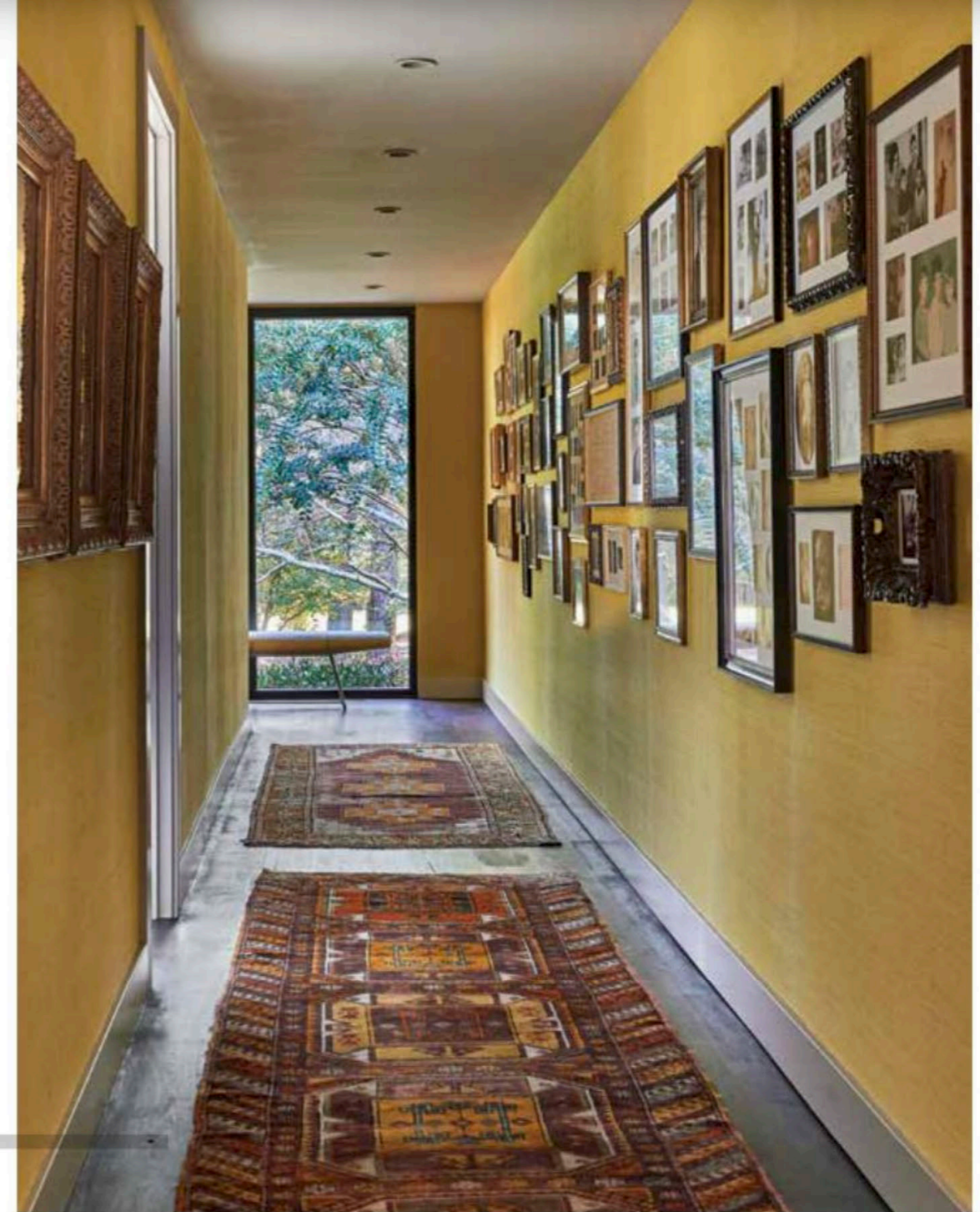
# INSIDE *OUT*

ONE ROCK HILL FAMILY FINDS THE  
PERFECT OPEN SPACE FOR THEIR MODERN  
MASTERPIECE ON A BUCOLIC EIGHTY ACRES.

TEXT BY **BLAKE MILLER** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DUSTIN PECK**



Benson balanced the earthy tones of the stonework and the Phillip Jeffries grasscloth with a colorful DUNBAR Chesterfield tufted sofa in teal Schumacher velvet and the pair of swivel chairs, also in a Schumacher fabric, fabricated by vanCollier. The Eames lounge chair, Serge Mouille scone, and photograph by Slim Aarons provide a midcentury-modern aesthetic. OPPOSITE: A carefully curated gallery wall of family photographs lines the Phillip Jeffries grasscloth-covered hallway



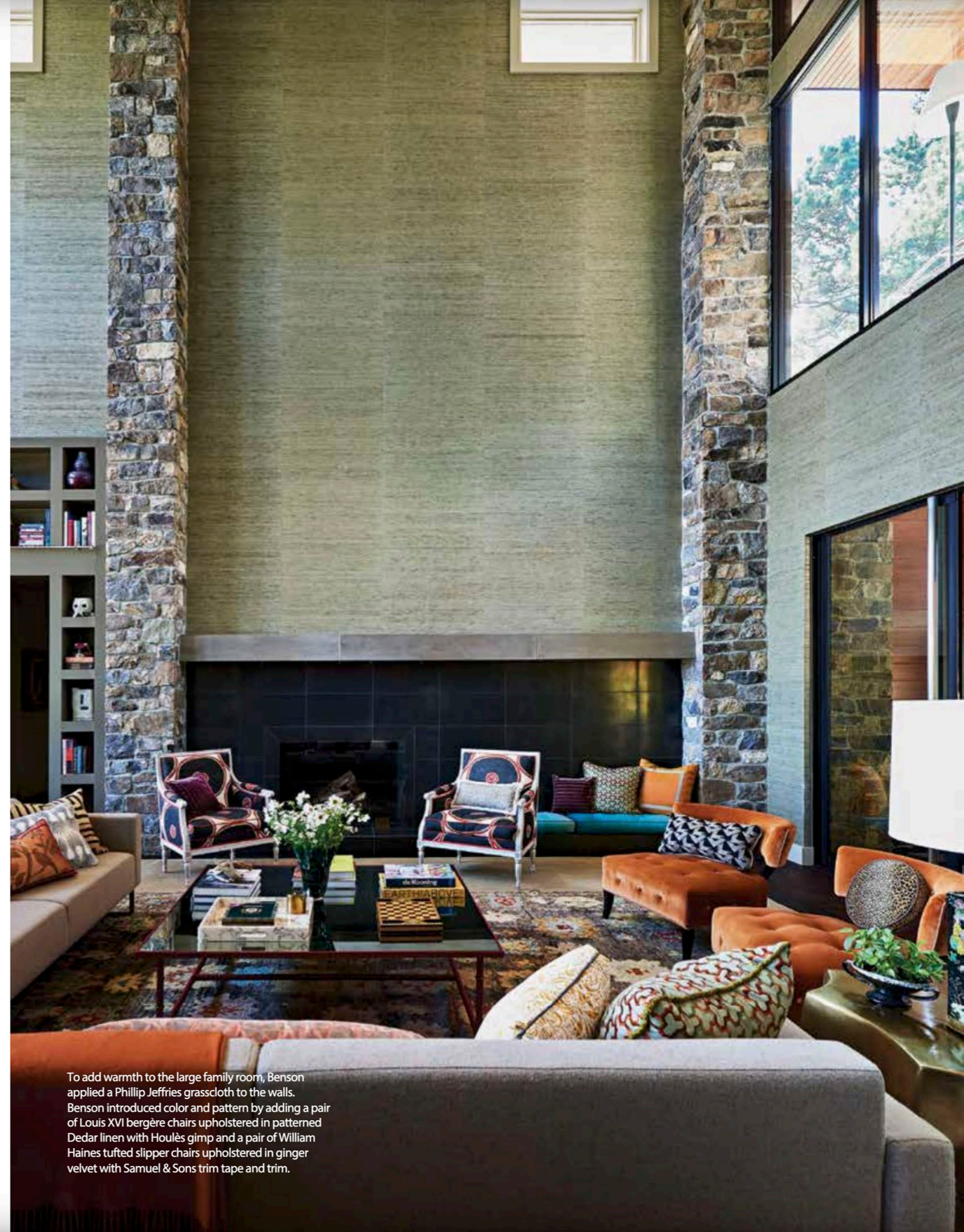
ELIZABETH CRIPPEN AND HER HUSBAND, MICHAEL, WERE ready for a change. The couple and their two kids had lived in and around Rock Hill, South Carolina, for thirteen years. “But we just wanted more space, more privacy, more room to do whatever we wanted,” Crippen says. And so the couple commenced their search for acreage where they could build a home, host larger gatherings with friends, let their kids and dogs roam free outdoors, and raise horses. “We truly wanted a retreat,” she says. “Michael and I are both entrepreneurs and have very demanding schedules, not to mention our kids’ activities and family life. We wanted our home to feel like we could just play all weekend and relax here and not worry about anything.”

After finding an existing ranch-style home, the Crippens began their plans to renovate and eventually transform it into

the retreat they’d been envisioning. Not wanting to tear down the existing home, the couple enlisted residential designer Frank Smith to renovate the 1970s French provincial ranch home and design a modern structure that seamlessly tied the outside with the in. “It was a fine house, but all of the rooms were so chopped up,” Crippen says. “You felt really boxed in everywhere you went. No other architect really understood that we wanted the home to feel like we were living outside all the time. Frank understood that I want to be outside even when I’m inside. He sketched out something really quickly on a scratch piece of paper, and Michael and I looked at each other and were like, ‘That’s it.’ I still have that piece of paper today!”

Smith’s design added a second story to the home and maintained an outdoor view from every room, a priority for the Crippens. Smith also utilized cedar, glass, and stone to

The Crippens purchased the live edge wood dining table from Leake Furniture Makers in York, South Carolina. Benson used that as the springboard for the rest of the dining room's design. To balance the organic stone and wood details, Benson added the Italian Murano orange glass chandelier, dining chairs by Artistic Frame swathed in a traditional but colorful Zoffany Pagoda River fabric, and a Stark carpet with red binding.



To add warmth to the large family room, Benson applied a Phillip Jeffries grasscloth to the walls. Benson introduced color and pattern by adding a pair of Louis XVI bergère chairs upholstered in patterned Dedar linen with Houllès gimp and a pair of William Haines tufted slipper chairs upholstered in ginger velvet with Samuel & Sons trim tape and trim.



establish an organic foundation that pulled the outdoors in. “It was like taking each room and changing its identity,” Smith explains.

After living in their modern home for three years, the Crippens were ready to work on the interior design, but they weren’t sure where to start. “After living here for a few years, we pieced together some of the rooms by ourselves, and then I got paralyzed,” Crippen says. “I was afraid to buy anything else because I was scared it wasn’t going to be the right thing. I’m terrified of color and pattern because I don’t know how to mix them. But I knew that I wanted the home to be colorful and fun.” A search on social media led the Crippens to designer Barrie Benson. “Barrie can mix anything and pull it off. And she did.”

Having worked on her own modern home, tweaking, adding, and layering over the last twenty years, Benson knew the Crippens’ struggle with designing a modern home. “Your first thought is to

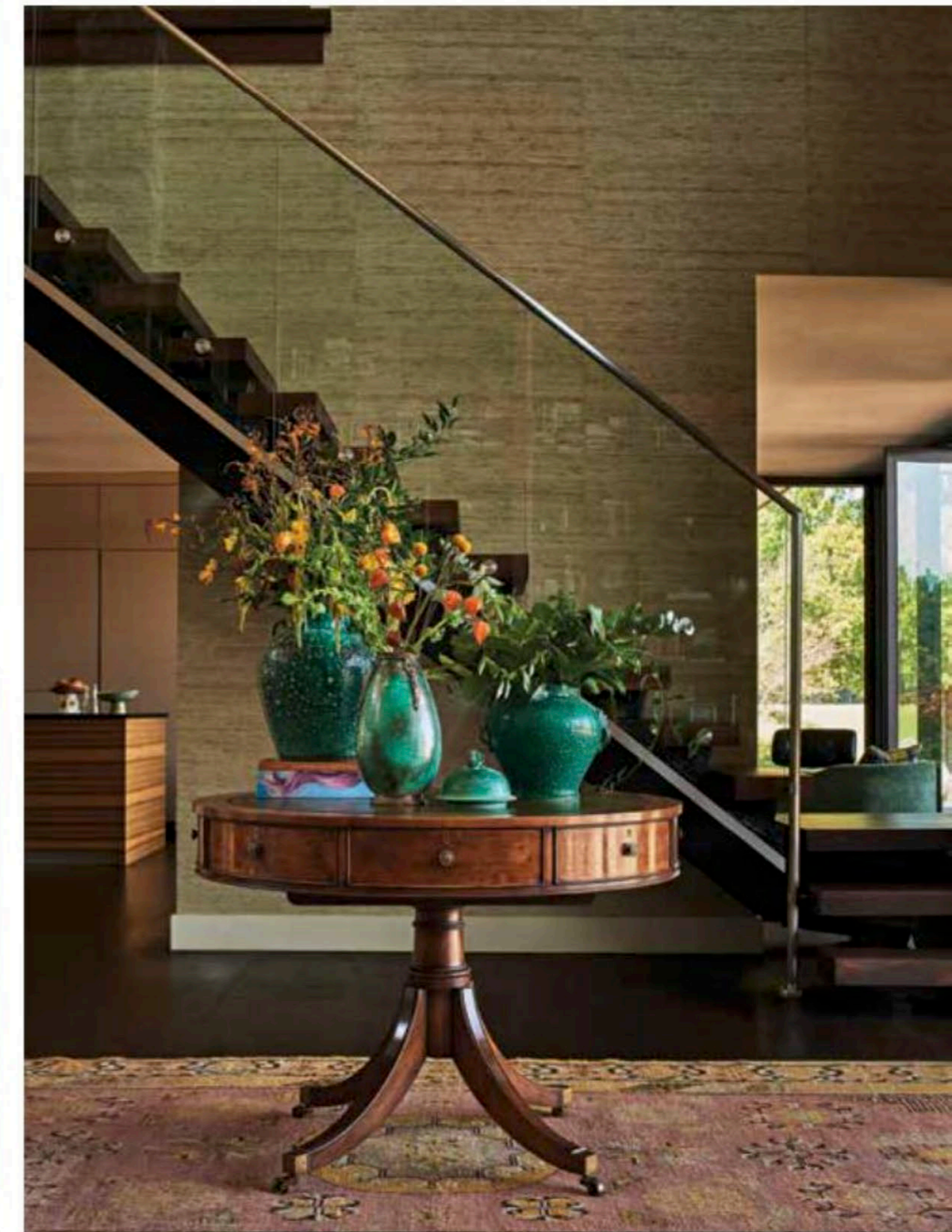
fill it with all modern furniture, which is what they started to do,” Benson says. “It’s tricky for people to figure out how to design the interiors of a seriously modern house. You don’t want it to be strictly cold and modern. The Crippens wanted it to be a warm, inviting, family house, but also modern. And we have to carefully curate that ourselves. It’s not the easiest thing to work out.”

For Benson, the home was missing one critical piece: the Crippens’ vibrant personalities. “Elizabeth is such a fun person, and they’re such colorful people. I want you to walk into someone’s home and immediately feel their personality,” Benson says. “While the architecture is absolutely stunning, the home didn’t feel like them quite yet. We can bring out the brilliance of our clients in the interiors.”

To soften the interiors, Benson wrapped most of the downstairs living spaces, including the stairway, in a Phillip Jeffries grasscloth, which gave the home immediate warmth. From there, the designer

took some of the homeowners’ existing pieces, such as the pair of Knoll sofas the Crippens had purchased from Design Within Reach, and balanced the clean, modern lines with “traditional finds,” Benson says. “A big part that was missing was the warmth and a little bit of the traditional mix.” Antiques and midcentury-modern pieces coupled with the modern architectural details and furnishings helped to balance the aesthetic while also injecting the colorful personality of the homeowners.

Using the 180-degree view to the back of the home as inspiration for the color palette, Benson incorporated pops of color into every space. In the dining room, a bold orange glass Italian Murano chandelier hangs above a live edge wood table by Leake Furniture Makers in York, South Carolina, creating a stunning combination of organic-meets-contemporary. Swathed in Zoffany Pagoda River fabric, the Artistic Frame dining chairs provide the traditional touch that spaces like the dining room and adjacent kitchen were once missing.



**LEFT:** The Crippens wanted the kitchen to be a large space so everyone could gather around and feel comfortable. Smith designed it with an oversized island to provide enough space to lay out food and drinks and accommodate three people sitting comfortably.

**RIGHT:** Benson loves to balance modern with traditional, so she added the formal hall table and a traditional rug to the Crippens’ grand, modern two-story foyer. The same Phillip Jeffries grasscloth from the main living spaces runs the height of the wall to keep the look seamless.



“I WANT YOU TO WALK INTO SOMEONE’S HOME AND IMMEDIATELY FEEL THEIR PERSONALITY.”

—BARRIE BENSON



The original home was a ranch-style 1970s French provincial home. Smith transformed the dated home into a two-story modern stunner that affords an expansive view of the large front and backyard from every room in the home. **OPPOSITE:** Seamless indoor-outdoor living was a priority for the Crippens, who love to entertain large groups of friends but also relax with their immediate family. Smith designed the martini deck for just that purpose. The Crippens own a company specializing in flooring solutions, so Benson designed a rug pattern on the floor utilizing different concrete stains and colors to create a bold look.

In addition to infusing the home with warmth and personality by using color and pattern, it was equally important to create an outdoor living area that allowed the Crippens to enjoy the space regularly and entertain large groups. The martini deck overlooks the pool and large expanse of the backyard. Michael Crippen runs a company that specializes in restorative and maintenance solutions for all types of surfaces found in commercial and public spaces, so Benson and her team put their creativity to the test using some of the Crippens’ products by installing a rug pattern using different concrete stains and colors. Benson then added supporting pieces to the couple’s existing sofas, such as the teak side table and the bespoke concrete fire table by Restoration Fabrication, as well as the Dedon orange woven lounge chairs and ottoman in Dedon

fabric. “When you look out the back of the house, the pool almost looks like the porch,” Crippen says. “There’s a natural rise in the landscape surrounded by big, tall pine trees with a barn up on the hill. And that view is what we love about this home so much.”

Sometimes Crippen will sit on her back patio, feeling the same gentle breeze that she felt the day she and her husband first looked at the home fifteen years ago. “I remember walking up to the barn with the previous owner before we bought the home, and we sat on a swing together,” Crippen says. “It had the nicest breeze blowing through there. Even in the middle of summer, there’s always a breeze. This is why we bought this house. To get away, to have our own land, to be the place where all kids want to come and stay. We just love it here.” ♦