



THE FIREPLACE CHIMNEY was refinished with dyed plaster treated with mineral oil and beeswax to create a metallic industrial feel. Drawing the eye up to the cathedral ceiling is an iron-and-crystal chandelier by Ochre. Underneath it, Vanguard sofas are upholstered with faux white fur and a stone-topped coffee table with turned mahogany legs adds flair.

Makover Derring-Do

Lots of color and a bit of bravado wake up a ho-hum family room

WRITTEN BY JACI CONRY
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL J. LEE

“It’s not my design style to be safe,” says homeowner Brooke Carroll. But seven years ago, when she and her husband and their two kids and two dogs moved into their Hamilton, Massachusetts, home, getting settled was the priority, and the family room paid the price with predictable decor. “It was very traditional,” says Carroll, “with very New England warm colors, a leather sofa, and a safe Oriental rug. It just didn’t feel like me. I love texture, art, and color.”

Craving a design scheme that was edgy, bright, and eclectic, with elements of surprise, she turned to interior designer Ana Donohue, a self-described risk-taker, to help her redefine the space. Donohue, whose firm, Ana Donohue Interiors, is in Melrose, Massachusetts, set out to bring a contemporary feel to the space while keeping it in synch with the architecture of the house, a ranch that had been expanded with Shingle style in mind.

She began by incorporating some of the room’s rustic elements, such as the exposed beams of the cathedral ceiling, into the new aesthetic. But, says Donohue, “I wanted to turn it up by bringing in quirky elements,” and that included lots of color.



HOMEOWNER BROOKE CARROLL was drawn to the green B & B Italia swivel chair with blue stitching for its contemporary vibe. A red powder-coated welded stainless steel sculpture is by German artist Rainer Lagemann.



SUNDAY MORNINGS ARE spent stretched out in the chaise longues by Lee Industries. A fuchsia-and-white shag rug plays off the bright pink grass-cloth wallcovering and adds comfort to the area.

She zeroed in on a lively Jeanne Lorioz oil painting that Carroll bought in Paris. It depicts a woman wearing a polka dot dress and inspired Donohue to sheath one wall with a red-and-white Dedar wallcovering with a polka dot effect.

The fireplace, its river rock surround extending to the ceiling, was too conventional for Carroll's liking, so Donohue transformed it with dyed plaster treated with mineral oil and beeswax to deepen the texture and color. Phillip Jeffries grass cloth in bright pink on the other three walls "has a feminine feel that balances out the ruggedness of the fireplace," says Donohue.

Carroll's stone-topped coffee table with turned mahogany legs was paired with deep Vanguard sofas that Donohue had upholstered in white faux fur. A large animal print rug in midnight blue grounds the space. "I like to do patterns on rugs because it hides stains and nylon is very family-friendly," says Donohue. "It also adds a lot of movement. The pat-



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tern feels energetic and brings a lot of pop to the room.”

Art and accents were selected by Carroll, including two striking black-and-white oil portraits by Philippe Vignal and whimsical large-scale illuminated letters spelling “Love” she found online at Etsy.

“Brooke was a great client, and this was a real collaboration,” says Donohue. “The

A COWHIDE-AND-CHROME CHAIR is paired with forged-bronze and blown-glass ant sculptures crafted by artist Chris Williams of Essex, Massachusetts. The black-and-white oil on canvas is by French artist Philippe Vignal. For playfulness, one wall is sheathed in a Dedar red-and-white wallcovering (FACING PAGE).



more crazy things I brought in, the more she was into it. There's a rugged feel with some of the animal motifs, but the room is playful. It doesn't feel too heavy or serious.”

Carroll couldn't be happier with the outcome.

“I have two kids and two Italian water dogs,” she says. “Though the room might appear not to be lived in, it's very lived in.”

She adds: “My husband let me run with the design, and he's very happy with it too. The only time he put his foot down was when I wanted to put this bold print wallpaper on the ceiling.”

She still has the paper — she's plotting to use it in another room. ■

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