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English Country Charm

Tennessee-based interior designer Eric Ross of Eric Ross Interiors shares expert style tips as he renovates this cozy cottage in Brentwood, Tennessee, with English country charm.

EXCERPTED FROM *ENDURING SOUTHERN HOMES*
BY ERIC ROSS

More than 15 years ago, a prospective client came to the design studio. Eric Ross was running at the time for another designer and asked him to help her with a whole-house renovation. "We met the next week and began renovations of her kitchen and bathrooms, as well as developing design schemes for the living areas and bedrooms so they would coordinate with the new finishes we were selecting," Eric says. They completed the project in less than six weeks and the client was thrilled with the outcome. But that's not the end of the story. They have redecorated that house three times in the years since! "You know what they say: the third time's the charm," Eric says.

Eric and the homeowner have complementary tastes, and they work together during the installation of the new rooms. "She has a fantastic eye and is such a help that I lean on her as a design assistant when installing her rooms," Eric says. "I'll say, 'This table could use a small stack of boxes,' and she'll run to her storage stash of treasures and return with 10 to choose from! Her attic is better than any gift shop I've ever been to."



INTERIOR DESIGNER ERIC ROSS

With a background in custom furnishings and a penchant for traditional fabrics and antiques, Eric Ross creates dynamic home interiors that blend comfortable Southern living with timeless style. Eric has been decorating rooms all his life, but professionally for more than 20 years. In 2009, he began his firm, working with clients in

Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, and places beyond. Celebrating more than 10 years in business, Eric Ross Interiors creates lush rooms that reflect the passions and preoccupations of Eric's clients. Eric lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife, Ruthann, their daughter, Julianne, and their Cavalier King Charles spaniels, Prince Darby and Dixie.







Layering gives the home a sense of history—the homeowner's history. "Look around your home for objects that resonate with you and buy more that will complement them," Eric says. "A perfectly placed collection is the mark of a genuinely sophisticated home."



All three versions of the home were enchanting and endearing in their various iterations. The first one featured rich, bright colors. The second version focused on reupholstering fabrics and rugs to fit within the wall finishes. This current version was a complete reimagining of the rooms, using quieter, neutral color palettes with subtle notes of color so the house has a fresher feel.

The homeowner has an amazing collection of upholstery and wood furniture that have been either recovered, restored, or painted to make the pieces look older or more expensive. "It's always fun to take a piece someone has had for many years and reimagine it with a different finish or patina and place it somewhere

new in the house so it looks completely fresh in a new environment," Eric says.

The house has 8-foot ceilings, which can cast some dreary shadows. To counteract this, Eric chose a shimmery wallcovering in the foyer in a silver grasscloth to brighten up the small space. This neutral color also made it easy to create various color schemes for the attached rooms. He also replaced the client's Wilton-style floral stair runner with a black-and-cream leopard print. "My adoration for animal prints is well documented, and with the black handrail that we painted 15 years ago, the little bit of black in the leopard carpet added a contemporary, of-the-moment feel," Eric says.



The first room seen from the foyer is the living room. It has always had a small camelback sofa, but the arrangement of furniture has changed several times. This time, the sofa lives in front of a chinoiserie-inspired floor screen that doubles as art. They upholstered all the furniture in a menagerie of neutrals, with nailhead details to add texture and interest. The window treatments and pillows sport a large-scale floral print fabric in watercolor pastels.

Open to the living room, the formal dining room is now clad in wood paneling that is painted a linen white, which is almost the color of an undercooked biscuit. The color changes from pale gray to a dried parchment as the sunlight changes.

"The client's wonderful collection of blue-and-white Chinese export porcelain prompted the color scheme for this room," Eric says. "To tie in the blue, we selected a French knot-style embroidered curtain in cream with touches of blue and covered the dining chair seats in a newer version of a gold-and-cream flame stitch to complement."

For the host chairs, they splurged on a linen-and-silk lampas fabric depicting two sailors and punctuated the elegant lines of the chairs with a mini flange in plaid. The room is scattered with other blue and white, which is a lovely counterpoint to the large equine portrait over the buffet.

One room they did not need to update on this third







rendition of the family home is the sunroom, which they added almost five years ago and which the family uses most. The room continues the cream color palette but injects apple green to bring the outdoors inside.

"The views from this room are outstanding, and I created several different zones where they can be enjoyed," Eric says. On one end of the room is a desk to be used as a workstation with space for a laptop; it can double as a small bar for prepping drinks. The center of the room is the lounging area, with a large cast-limestone fireplace on one side and a wall of cabinetry on the other, housing the TV. On the far end, a small bistro table is a lovely spot for morning coffee or a light lunch. When there are just two to dine, it makes a nice alternative to the large formal dining room or casual kitchen. "I do love to squeeze in extra places to eat if I can in a floor plan, because these become special places a client wouldn't utilize otherwise," he says. "And the vista to the yard is particularly splendid from this table."





The kitchen they designed 17 years ago was still functioning well for the family—a testament to classic style. “All we did this time was clean up the accessories by removing some random vignette displays of toleware and using only cream as our color palette for collectibles,” Eric says. “We kept the wallcovering, window treatments, chandelier, and furniture. We retained the custom-painted cabinets from the original design for a personalized touch. By simplifying the arrangement of accessories and pulling into service the client’s collection of creamware from various storage places in the home, they made the kitchen look current.”

This home has a delightful outdoor space just beyond the kitchen. Its proximity makes the outdoor dining area one of the most used areas for family gatherings. For this space, they changed the outdoor curtains from a solid celadon to a brown-and-beige awning striped fabric on the horizontal for an edgier vibe. A natural teak dining table was paired with outdoor rush-and-iron chairs. Mixing materials keeps the outdoor dining space from feeling too new.





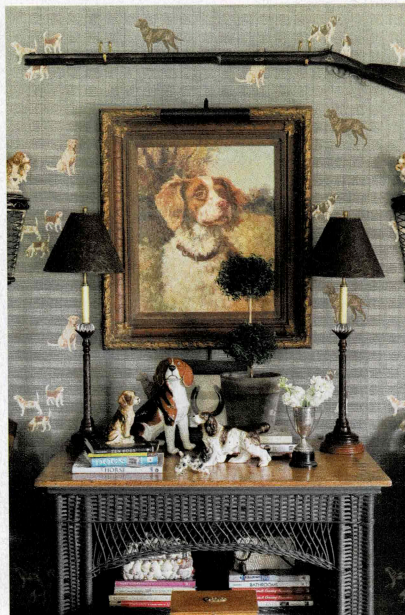
To help the room feel collected over time, Eric enjoys mixing materials—especially in outdoor areas. "Using all the same woven wicker or iron or teak feels like the room was purchased new and not collected over time," Eric says. "On the other hand, a layered effect of different materials creates a laid-back look, which is especially desirable for an outdoor room."



Another great space they found was the TV lounge. This room holds the largest TV in the house for sports watching and time with extended family.

The family has a love affair with dogs. "We installed a wallcovering many years ago with a dog motif, which we decided to keep with our refresh, but opted to change the dark-stained poplar trim to a painted gray," Eric says. This, along with installing new carpet in a light oatmeal wool, modernized the feel of the room. This room is a testament to the power of curating the right accessories and was a joy for Eric to decorate with his client's many dog collectibles. He even filled a glass container with dog biscuits for the grand-dogs.

(Opposite) "The mix of paisley with other fabrics gives a sense of ease in the master bedroom," Eric says.





The master bedroom was the last room to update, and they really splurged on beautiful carpet and fabrics. “The room is compact in size and has a small fireplace to the side. The furniture placement in this space has always been difficult, but this time, it was even more challenging because the client wanted a king-size bed,” Eric says. “I found delicate bedside chests that let us gain space for a larger bed. We also went with a wicker chair because seeing through it makes it seem smaller than it is.” The mix of embroidered textiles and fabrics printed in India completed the quiet color scheme.

Without a doubt, the reimagining of this family home was a treat to design and decorate. By looking for lighter fabrics and finishes and incorporating timeless heirlooms from the client’s personal collection, the home feels like it’s been this way for many years. **C**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EVIN KREHBIEL

ENDURING SOUTHERN HOMES

Enter a world of interiors steeped in the heritage and romance of the South. Within these pages are stories of a dozen homes that reveal a rich layering of fabrics, wallpapers, rugs, antiques, and furnishings combined in a refined Southern aesthetic. Blue-and-white porcelain, mixing fabrics on furniture, statement print curtains, artistic wall groupings, and tasteful displays of homeowners’ personal collectibles star among Eric Ross’s signature look.

From antebellum, colonial, and estate residences to new-build family homes and condominiums, Eric enlivens spaces that could be otherwise nondescript. The styles of these homes run the gamut from French and equestrian with a Southern touch to modern farmhouse. To secure a copy of your very own, visit ericrossinteriors.com.

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