

KITCHEN+BATH HOME

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TRENDS!

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CHEF AT HOME

KEVIN
GILLESPIE'S
MOD RANCH
MAKEOVER

19
WAYS TO
TURN YOUR
BATHROOM
INTO A SPA

POLISHED

TO

PERFECTION

A DECATUR
TOWNHOUSE
GETS A COLORFUL
MAKEOVER

By LISA MOWRY

Photography by JEFF HERR



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HOUSE GOALS: ROOMS SO BRIGHT AND AIRY THAT LIGHT fixtures are selected more for aesthetics than function. That was what architect Ili Hidalgo-Nilsson was looking for when she stumbled upon a spacious 1990s townhouse. Owner of award-winning Terracotta Design/Build, Ili appreciated the potential of the corner unit's 12-foot-tall ceilings and many windows. "Most days I don't need to turn on lights until nighttime," says the Decatur resident.

Ili also realized the abode was just the right size for her and her 14-year-old daughter, Isabela. "I was able to check all the boxes: charming neighborhood, good schools, close to work, no landscaping to worry about, and a lot of volume inside."

Ili gutted the original kitchen and ran cabinetry to the ceiling. A wall of high-gloss navy cabinetry "grounds the kitchen," she says, and adds dimension to the pale-gray island and perimeter cabinets. Appliances are by Thermador.



Ili was planning to buy a single-family home until she came across this corner-unit townhouse with tall ceilings and lots of windows.



Ili painted the bar area's existing cabinets a shiny light lavender-gray, then added glass doors and a mirrored backsplash. The light fixture was a bargain find at Cost Plus World Market.



As a renovation expert, Ili knew all sorts of tricks for freshening up the dated interiors—none more dramatic than painting all walls and trim with high-gloss paint. Every single surface has a sheen, which accentuates natural light and makes the whole house glow.

The Georgia Tech grad is a designer as well as an architect, and her style is classically modern. However, having grown up in Puerto Rico, she loves to infuse her home with references to her heritage. A woven rug in her office is high style but resembles casual versions seen on Caribbean porches. In the kitchen, concrete tile in a geometric navy-and-white design adds a coastal vibe. “The tile backsplash is the first thing I see when I come down the stairs,” says Ili. “It looks like Puerto Rico and feels like home.”

She also explored a more exuberant color palette than she'd used in previous residences. “I decided with this house that I really

FURNISHINGS WERE PARED DOWN TO HER FAVORITES—A MIX OF ANTIQUES AND CONTEMPORARY PIECES.

A previous sunroom was repurposed as the dining area. Here, a Saarinen dining table is joined by chairs reupholstered in ivory leather. At left: Ili composed a large gallery wall with meaningful items, including a vintage map of the Caribbean and a drawing by her father.





Ili modernized the staircase with glossy white paint and a simplified railing. She added trim throughout the house, including museum trim around this painting. The acacia wood console with a marble top is by CB2.

A Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams sofa and blush chairs from Lee Industries anchor the living room, this page and opposite. A light fixture from Stilnovo adds drama. The tapestry was Ili's grandfather's.

wanted to have fun with color," Ili says. Her favorite blues make dramatic appearances in the kitchen and master bath. In other rooms, shades of raspberry and lavender accent a subtle palette of light gray and white.

Ili's mantra in redoing the house was "edit, edit, edit." She removed columns and archways, cherry kitchen cabinets, ornate lighting, and other elements that interfered with her goal of simple elegance. The hardwood floors, formerly honey-colored, were stripped and restained a refined gray. Even furnishings were pared down to her favorites—a mix of antiques and contemporary pieces.

The remodel also offered Ili an opportunity to show friends and clients the impact of high-gloss paint, something she'd been wanting to do for a while. "This house definitely has a hint of glam," says Ili. More than a hint, we'd say.





A spacious bedroom (a holdover “from the era of the large master suites,” quips Ili) allows for a tranquil sitting area. A faded Oushak rug and furry benches from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams provide texture. The pillow is from Designers Guild. “The room is sort of girly, I must admit,” says Ili.



The master bath design began with the ocean art from Wisteria, prominently displayed so Ili can enjoy it from all angles. The composition’s deep blue inspired striking cabinets (shiny, of course). A wooden ledge near the tub allows her to prop up her iPad.



Bird prints in the master bedroom’s seating area, left, were bought for 50 cents each at a store’s close-out event, but gold frames made them look more sophisticated.

Ili’s stylish office is in the former dining room. A glossy gray ceiling and white lacquered furniture from West Elm are joined by raspberry accents: X-benches and Jonathan Adler lamps on the console.