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The Bold and the Beautiful

With daring colors and patterns, a dated Cape enters a new phase with a pleasing mix of styles.

BY JENNIFER CARMICHAEL

After more than 30 years in their Avon home, Brigitte and Bob Worgaftuk didn't see a need to relocate or downsize like many of their counterparts. But they wanted a change. They were tired of the interior's dated design, especially Brigitte, who would be spending a lot more time at home after retiring as an obstetrician-gynecologist and launching a home-based travel business, BW Travel Design. With Bob still working as a financial adviser and older children living nearby, they wanted to live in their 4,800-square-foot Cape Cod-style house for many more years.

"I started asking friends for recommendations for designers, but most of them had done their own home design," Brigitte says. "And when I started looking online at local designers' portfolios, nothing appealed to me. It was all very nice, but I didn't see anything different. So, I took a chance and went to HomeAdvisors' website, plugged in information, and Design by the Jonathans was one of the interior design firms that popped up."

After seeing the New Haven-based Design by the Jonathans' online portfolio, Brigitte found what she was looking for—something new, bolder and within a more contemporary realm. Soon, owner and lead designer Jonathan Gordon came to the house for an initial consultation.

As Gordon does with every client, he walked around the house, looking at the whole home. He likes to see what people have in their spaces and what they love. Armed with his iPad during the tour, he showed Brigitte pictures of different rooms, asking, "Do you like this style?" or "How about this look?" At the end, Brigitte says he looked at her and said, "Well, now I know your style. You're mid-century modern."

"That was news to me," laughs Brigitte, who couldn't wait for Gordon to get started giving their home a fresh, new look. Built in the mid-'80s, the house has seen some redecorating over the years. But, for the most part, Brigitte says it had been more than 20 years since they had really done anything since buying the house in 1989. Except for the basement and two bedrooms, the entire home would be redesigned.

Gordon completed measurements, initial plans and 3D renderings, going back and forth a couple of times with Brigitte to make sure he got the design right. His overall goal was



That burnt orange sofa? Not only does it hearken back to the groovy '70s, but it also had a big impact on the home's new design and decor. Designer Jonathan Gordon pulled the tone for a **pumpkin wall color**, and complemented the orange with blues and greens (seen in the rug above and the foyer wall color), plus copper (fireplace hood), brass and golds (kitchen and foyer fixtures). Speaking of the kitchen, **the counter-top is rainforest green quartzite** that ties into the overall color scheme.





"Brigitte would ask, 'Is this really going to work?' and I told her, 'If you find something that you love, then my job is to make sure that it does work. And, if it simply won't, then I need to tell you that.'"



to bring energy and warmth to their spaces. While no walls were torn down, it was a complete renovation nonetheless, prompting the Worgaftiks to rent an apartment. The year-long process included five bathroom renovations (three full, two half-baths), a kitchen facelift, removing carpeting and installing wood flooring, new lighting, new window treatments, and new furniture, while also reupholstering and using some of what they already owned.

"They wanted to keep the burnt orange sofa, which they had just bought recently," notes Gordon, who designed wall units in the family room to open up the space for display and visual interest. "A lot came from that sofa. We pulled the tone from the sofa to the wall. And to complement the orange, we played with blues and greens along with copper, brass and golds."

The new "pumpkin" wall color in the family room makes the space warm and inviting, though Brigitte admits she was "a little scared." Not used to bold color on the walls, she was out of her comfort zone. But with Gordon's reassurance, she went with pumpkin not only in the family room, but on a kitchen wall too. The stone veneer on the family room's fireplace was added to what was originally just brick. Gordon also added a copper hood wrap to make the fireplace a true centerpiece and tie in with the pumpkin hues.

Six days of shopping and making decisions, which Brigitte says would have been overwhelming on her own, was made fun thanks to Gordon's guidance. Among the many shops Gordon and Brigitte ventured to included a stone supplier on Long Island to choose the kitchen countertop—a striking rainforest green quartzite. And they spent an entire day at Connecticut Lighting Centers' Hartford location, selecting decorative lighting. Fixtures were chosen to "complement and escalate" their locations, Gordon says, often softening and providing organic feels to overall structured spaces. Visually interesting lighting is seen in the foyer, dining room, kitchen and other spots.

"It was really collaborative, working there together on trying to figure out what the lighting was going to look like," says Gordon, who also strategically added new recessed lighting throughout the entire home. "Brigitte would ask, 'Is this really going to work?' and I told her, 'If you find something that you love, then my job is to make sure that it does work. And, if it simply won't, then I need to tell you that.'"

On the other side of the family room's fireplace wall, the living room features modern abstract geometric wallpaper which replaces



The master bath saw massive changes, including swapped locations for the vanity and shower. While gold touches pop up in the fixtures, the color palette is more subdued than other areas, contributing to a serene, spa-like vibe. There's still plenty of visual interest, though, with five types of tile playing off each other.

(opposite page) The Worgaftiks are fond of orange, with the bold color taking center stage in the family and dining rooms. Of the dining room's sparkling chandelier, designer Gordon says it "is a much more organic form overall, which carries from the living room's central fixtures. These rooms are very structured, so these fixtures add a softer edge to the spaces."



The living room's fireplace wall is where things get really interesting. Modern abstract geometric wallpaper replaces what was an off-white wall, intended to act as a "bridge" between the home's traditional and more contemporary design aesthetics.



what was previously an off-white wall. Specifically chosen to blend the traditional aspect of the home with the more updated aesthetic, Gordon says, "It was a bridge of sorts." Rugs, sofas and chairs throughout were chosen to coordinate with the wall's patterned statement, but not overshadow it.

The kitchen received a facelift in terms of color and design. Existing cabinetry was painted a soft, warm gray with new brushed brass hardware, while a brown mosaic hexagon backsplash complements the multi-colored quartzite countertop. New appliances include a microwave, cooktop, hood, dishwasher and beverage fridge. Wood flooring replaces tile, extending into the kitchen from the living and dining rooms. And Vanilla Ice Cream by Benjamin Moore offers a slight peachy tone.

In the master bedroom, which also previously had off-white walls and muted colors, Gordon played with warm whites, taupes and grays. "It's every shade you might imagine in a brandy cream," he says. "It's all there. There's an incredible softness to it."

A complete gut renovation took place in the master bathroom. Here, Gordon reconfigured the functionality of the space, switching the location of the vanity and shower. And to create a spa-like environment, five different tile types, all selected from Tile America, work seamlessly together.

"If you are going to go through the effort of doing something like this, you really have to love it," says Gordon, adding that the project didn't end up being one particular style, instead falling into mid-century modern meets Art Deco meets contemporary. "And we have to make sure that we are creating a space that our clients are going to love. Otherwise, we aren't doing our job."

For Brigitte, it was a job well done. "If we were renovating to sell, we would have played it safe. But we were doing this for us. And when it was all done, it was really like having a brand-new home." ■