

HOME & DESIGN

FALL *flair*

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Mayor Muriel Bowser



Calm Vibe

Designer Tracy Morris fashions tranquil spaces for working and unwinding in her newly constructed McLean home

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Photography by GREG POWERS



In the living room, antique-gold side tables from Arteriors and a textural painting by Joelle Somero invigorate pieces from Morris' existing collection.



A Visual Comfort chandelier, available through Circa Lighting, crowns a Universal Furniture table in the dining room (above). The designer discovered the architectural prints years ago at an estate sale and snagged the transitional-style rug at Green Front Furniture. Morris poses at her front door (opposite), painted Benjamin Moore's Narragansett Green.



Tracy Morris knows her way around a color fan deck. The designer often lends her paint-hue prowess to spec-home builders seeking palettes with broad appeal. In a happy twist of fate, one such collaboration ultimately led her and husband Justin Li to a new abode of their own, as well as a spacious studio for her expanding team.

In 2018, Artisan Builders enlisted Morris to select exterior and interior paint colors for three speculative houses under construction in McLean. A year later, Morris and Li decided they'd outgrown their

townhouse and began searching for larger digs with greater office-space potential. Morris recalled the earlier consult and reached out to Artisan. The trio of homes had just been listed for sale—and the couple acted quickly.

"I selected the colors for the houses before I had any idea we were going to buy here," recounts the designer. "I put the love and care into them that I would have put into my own home—and here we are."

Architect James McDonald conceived all three residences, tucked into an enclave near downtown McLean, with an eye toward balancing present-day space programming with enduring street presence. Morris and Li claimed the model boasting a 3,000-square-foot lower level, ideal for the design

Architecture: **James McDonald**, James McDonald Associate Architects, Great Falls, Virginia.

Interior Design: **Tracy Morris**, Tracy Morris Design, McLean, Virginia. Kitchen & Owners' Bath Design: **J. Paul Lobkovich** and **Lisa Antonelli**, senior designer, Lobkovich Kitchen Designs, Tysons, Virginia. Builder: Artisan Builders, McLean, Virginia.

Landscape Design: **Charles Owen**, Fine Landscapes, Ltd., Sterling, Virginia.



studio. The main floor's wide entry hall opens to the dining room on the left and the living room on the right. The kitchen, breakfast area and family room flow across the back, and the owners' suite sits to the far right. Upstairs are two guest bedrooms and an office for Li, a co-founder of Qore Performance, a hydration-solutions manufacturer.

McDonald imbued the exterior with what he deems "a modern farmhouse/updated Craftsman feel." He achieved a board-and-batten look with fiber-cement siding; natural-stone accents and a gracious front porch heighten the aura. "The plan size and layout are really geared to today's living," he explains. "The exterior styling, though, has a timeless feel while offering the cleaner lines that people are looking for."

The distinctive styling continues inside. Architectural details such as coffered ceilings and wide-plank, engineered-wood floors align perfectly with Morris' "traditional-with-a-twist" aesthetic. Covering most walls throughout, Benjamin Moore's Tapestry Beige



Over the kitchen island (above and opposite, top), Morris hung a Visual Comfort drum pendant from Circa Lighting. In the breakfast area, she mixed chairs from her previous home; the handcrafted side chairs, an updated take on the classic Wishbone design, sport a limed-oak finish. The family room's fireplace wall (opposite, bottom) juxtaposes natural stone with sleek, linear styling. For the paver patio (left), Morris chose seating from Summer Classics; a table and chairs from Sutherland Furniture occupy the dining zone.



provides a versatile backdrop. “It’s a neutral that goes with anything,” says Morris, who serves on the paint brand’s 16-member designer alliance.

That assertion proved true, as many furnishings from the couple’s townhouse transitioned seamlessly. In the living room, for example, the designer started with their existing sofa, chairs and coffee table, then “mixed them up with new side tables and art,” she relates. “This house came together so easily. I was able to take a piece from here and a piece from there because the colors all worked together.”

Morris’ approach and aesthetic come into full view in the dining room. A painted cabinet originally purchased to store office supplies became a serving buffet after the move. The designer recently installed a Phillip Jeffries wall covering, with gold studs forming shimmery stripes on a taupe, tweed ground. “I’m very big on texture,” she states. “This house is calm and down-to-earth, with touches of extravagance. And that really is me in a nutshell.”

During construction, Artisan Builders tapped

kitchen and bath designer J. Paul Lobkovich to conjure the home’s kitchen and owners’ bath. A standout feature in what he calls the “refined, modern-farmhouse” kitchen is a dark-stained frame setting off one section of creamy, painted cabinetry. “The intermix of textured, stained wood and smooth, painted wood is the key element of the kitchen’s personality,” he notes. “Warming it up with a wood frame makes the design more interesting and modern.”

Morris frequently hosts her parents, who live nearby, for meals in the everyday dining area. A walnut-topped table from Universal Furniture accommodates the group and mixed chair styles keep the mood casual. The overall goal, explains Morris, was “to create a warm, nurturing, comfortable place to be.”

The family room fits the bill. A sectional sofa from CR Laine encourages lounging; a washed Oushak rug feels soft underfoot. Beside the stone fireplace, a French door leads to a backyard oasis designed by Fine Landscapes.



In the owners’ suite (these pages), a bed from Lee Industries and bench from Cisco Brothers Furniture anchor the furniture plan. Roman shades, fabricated in a textured sheer from Calvin Fabrics, control sunlight. An Oushak rug softens the bathroom’s marble-tiled floor (opposite).

“This house is calm and down-to-earth, with touches of extravagance.”

—TRACY MORRIS

An avid gardener, Morris escapes outdoors often. Inside, she relishes quiet moments in a sunny seating area in her bedroom. To create this favorite hide-away, she positioned two swivel-glider chairs from Lee Industries in front of a large window. “It’s a good spot to just breathe for a minute,” she reveals. The design maven adorned the linen-covered chairs with velvet pillows in a blueberry shade that she is admittedly “obsessed with.”

The couple’s bathroom, boasting a Mirabelle tub, offers additional opportunities to unwind. After purchasing the house, Morris worked with Lobkovich to tweak the original design, replacing two separate vanities with a single unit. She also added signature touches such as a statement pendant from The Urban Electric Co. As she notes, “Life is so much easier when you have function that looks good.”

Functionality abounds on the home’s lower level. The Tracy Morris Design studio comprises office space for the designer and four employees, as well as a library, conference room, kitchenette and warehousing-storage area.

With Morris’ vision realized, the home meets the wide-ranging needs of its entrepreneurial owners. “It really fits our lifestyle well,” the designer declares. “It’s functional but calming and restful too.” ■

SOURCES OF NOTE

Dining Room Chandelier, Kitchen Lighting & Family Room Lamps: visualcomfortlightinglights.com through circaighting.com. Kitchen Backsplash, Bathroom Flooring & Tile: architecturalceramics.com. Kitchen & Bath Fixtures & Bedroom Fan: fergusonshowrooms.com. For a complete list of resources, see homeanddesign.com.



Morris’ design studio features team-member workstations and plenty of shelving for project binders and resources. Two repurposed kitchen islands, positioned back-to-back, offer additional work surfaces with storage underneath. Morris enjoys a private office (not pictured).