



OPPOSITE In the living room of this historic home, sleek custom settees flank a rustic Senufo African daybed, which was repurposed into a wonderfully weathered coffee table. Meanwhile, the subtle diamond pattern on the woven rug plays off the harlequin treatment on the entryway floor (pictured on this page).

DESIGN, Lisa Tharp, lisatharp.com; custom **SETTEES**, Lisa Tharp.

HISTORIC HARMONY

With its modern muted palette and eclectic mix of styles and finishes, this classical old home proves sophistication is all in the details.

TEXT CHARLOTTE SAFAVI | PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL J. LEE



Once in a while, hitting the refresh button on a period home pays off, creating a sublime one for a new era.

Such was the case when Boston-based designer Lisa Tharp transformed a circa-1830 New England governor's summer house into a contemporary year-round home for a young family.

"The homeowners wanted to write their own story here and create a casual comfortable gathering place for family and friends, just as the governor had done more than a century ago," says Lisa of the 6,300-square-foot five-bedroom Greek Revival house.

As is true of many older homes, the structure had almost tripled in size over the years with various renovations, including a large two-storey addition. Fortunately, the



THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE, BOTTOM

From the oversized lantern-style pendant light in the hallway to the gilded chandelier in the dining room, designer Lisa Tharp proves again and again that lighting can indeed act as the jewellery of a room. She lets the pieces shine and decorates minimally around them, keeping this section of the hallway bare and the dining table and chairs simple and unadorned.

Custom **DINING TABLE**, Lisa Tharp; **CHANDELIER**, Debbie Mathews Antiques and Designs; **Grey Swirls ARTWORK**, Briggs Edward Solomon.

The family room is clean-lined and comfortable thanks to a sleek sofa, deep-seated armchairs and a plush oversized ottoman. Off to one side, textural woven pendant lights define a cozy reading nook featuring the essentials: a wingback chair, a cushy toss cushion and a warm throw.

SOFA, Cisco Brothers; leather **ARMCHAIR**, Oly; custom **OTTOMAN**, Lisa Tharp; wooden **SIDE TABLE**, Blaxsand.



house's historic core – which boasts a grand entryway and a double parlour that now serves as separate living and dining rooms – retained its architectural integrity and character throughout the makeovers.

"The original structure is beautifully proportioned and classical," says Lisa. "My job was to marry the subsequent additions in style and form and then furnish the entire house." So she added historical character through millwork and built-ins, gave the kitchen a significant upgrade, refreshed the interior with warm white paint and layered in artistic flourishes, such as the stencilled flooring in the entryway, for old-world charm. "This floor pattern sets the home's inviting tone and neutral palette," says Lisa of the harlequin design. "It was a way to add some fun to the formal entryway and punch it up with a bold treatment. It really epitomizes what we did here: create a formal structure, yet inject moments of levity appropriate for a young family. It instantly makes the home feel welcoming and approachable."

This fun mood extends from the entryway flooring to the sculptural furnishings that were set against the home's white envelope. "Though I selected sophisticated clean-lined furniture, I kept everyday family use in mind," says the designer, who combined custom pieces, European antiques, global finds, contemporary art and modern silhouettes. "Much of the seating is upholstered in soft outdoor fabrics." →

The kitchen's existing white Shaker-style cabinetry and dark soapstone countertops were kept intact because they work with the home's refreshed light palette punctuated by black. Replacing a hefty hearth, the streamlined stainless steel range hood lets the new Neolith marble backsplash shine.



FAR LEFT Flanking the range hood, architectural photography makes a style statement: The pieces are enlarged details taken on the property.

ARTWORK, Michael J. Lee Photography.

LEFT Lisa designed a built-in double desk for the children's study, where they can do homework, colour and craft side by side.

DESK CHAIR, 2B Mod.

A low-slung settee in an outdoor fabric is an elegant complement to the antique dining table in the kitchen's eat-in area. The pendant light, from the early 20th century, is mixed with Mid-Century Modern Bertioia chairs for layered appeal.

Custom **SETTEE**, Lisa Tharp; **SETTEE FABRIC**, Link Outdoor; **DINING CHAIRS**, Metro Retro Furniture.



THE SECRETS TO STYLING WITH NEUTRALS

Designer Lisa Tharp's top tips for mastering the muted look.

- 1** Use a full range of subdued hues, balancing warm and cool undertones.
- 2** Add texture! Interest lies in the juxtaposition of rough finishes with polished and smooth ones.
- 3** Imbue sparkle and shine via metal, glass and crystal.
- 4** Choose sculptural furnishings with pleasing silhouettes to add artful interest.
- 5** Mix different styles and eras for a sophisticated aesthetic.
- 6** Complete each room with great art, living flora and something unexpected and personal to you.

Ultimately, it's the mix that makes the design interesting. For the dining room, Lisa designed a sturdy marble-and-walnut table that she paired with vintage French dining chairs by designer Jean-Michel Frank. "I balanced opposites – which is what makes these spaces work," says Lisa of her measured approach to this home's neutral decor. "Light balances dark, warm balances cool, texture balances smooth, antique balances modern, and so on. There's an almost imperceptible harmony one experiences in a room that is perfectly in balance." And this renovated historic home, which has been so artfully reimagined for the 21st century, is the perfect example of pitch-perfect harmony.

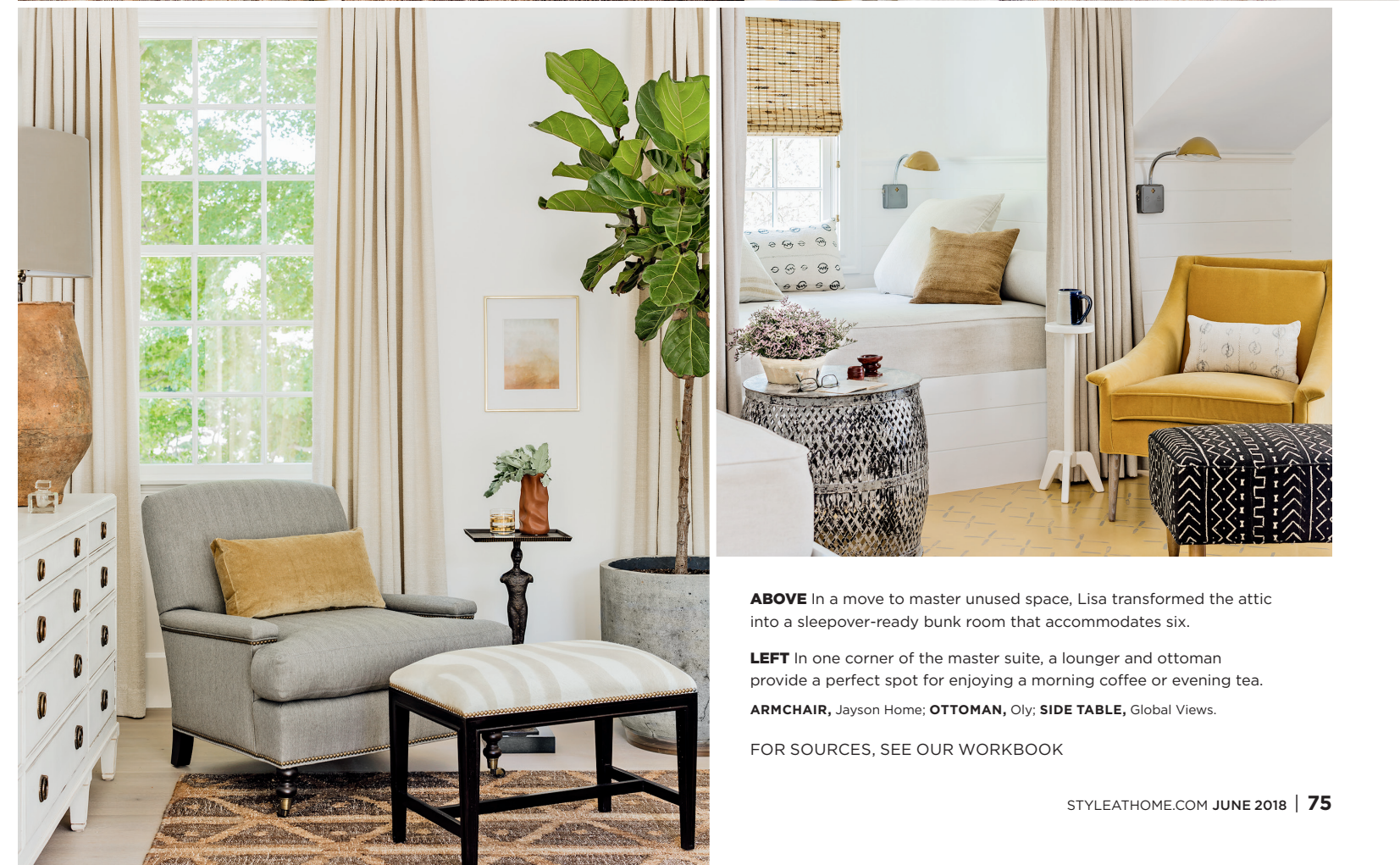
In addition to homework and crafts, the children's study is also intended for family games and Lego projects, so plush armchairs pull up to a large round table that seats the whole family. Old wine racks were installed as clever wall art.

TABLE, English Farmhouse Furniture.



Custom millwork makes for a stately feature wall behind the headboard in the master bedroom. Dainty Art Deco-look nightstands with tapered legs add a shapely feminine appeal, while the mirror-ball pendant light provides a touch of sparkle and glamour.

PENDANT LIGHT, ABC Carpet & Home; black and white **ARTWORK**, Lisa Tharp.



ABOVE In a move to master unused space, Lisa transformed the attic into a sleepover-ready bunk room that accommodates six.

LEFT In one corner of the master suite, a lounge and ottoman provide a perfect spot for enjoying a morning coffee or evening tea.

ARMCHAIR, Jayson Home; **OTTOMAN**, Oly; **SIDE TABLE**, Global Views.

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