



# THE FINE ART OF REFRESHMENT

Breathing new life into an elegant Cherry Hills transitional home.

Story by BRUCE ABELS Photography by SUSIE BRENNER

WHEN ASKED TO describe refreshing a Cherry Hills home that had been beautifully remodeled a decade earlier, Devon Tobin, co-founder of Duet Design Group, cleverly likened it to “giving the home a botox treatment; a few pulls here, some smoothing there.” The goal was to inject lightness and playfulness into

the home in ways one wouldn’t expect or believe could work—yet do—without undoing what was very well done. It starts with planning the space, understanding its scale, and searching for where symmetry can be bridged to create more dimension in the space.

Furniture, fixtures, rugs, and so on are all

⌘ *Living Room* To break the symmetry of a very traditional wainscoted wall, the highly saturated, unexpected abstracts by Soicher Marin (What Dreams I-VI) are uniquely hung on the wainscoting itself. This frees the art to speak individually and as a set. The existing chairs were reupholstered with Otto Velvet by Ackerman & Sons. The pillow fabric is Grey/Green Velvet Ancient Tartan from Kravet-Mulberry Home. The brass Anita floor lamps with ceramic shades are from Il Fanale.

about form, function, textures, and patterns, and it takes an expert eye and unique sensibility to bring it all together. Unless you’re a designer or an architect, you don’t look at a chair and feel joy, excitement, or elation. But art is a game-changer in interior design. “Art allows us to push the limits of the architectural or interior style »





of a home,” says Tobin. “It’s the one aspect of any space that evokes actual emotion.”

Duet added trim, supervised a complete repainting, and reconfigured and/or redesigned almost every room to be more functional and enjoyable, including the living room, family room, and master bedroom. Repainting proved to be the biggest challenge, due to the home’s abundance of fine detail and trim, as well as owners who lived there throughout an eight-week painting marathon. “After 10 years, a fresh coat of paint can make a home feel totally new,” Tobin notes. To avoid that painting-the-whole-house hassle, she suggests repainting a couple of rooms at a time every few years. »

“During a **QUARANTINE**, there shouldn’t be a room in your house you don’t use.” — DEVON TOBIN,  
CO-FOUNDER OF DUET DESIGN GROUP



▮ *Family Room* Over the mantle is a 4K QLED Smart TV from Samsung. It displays fine art when it’s off. Yes, that’s plaid on the chairs. “Plaid is crazy playful and kind of wild,” but in this case, it’s more about color than pattern—used almost as a neutral palette to highlight the fireplace and embroidered draperies. Distressed leather, suede, and chenille help tone it all down. The existing chairs were reupholstered by Ackerman & Sons in Hutton Plaid and Salmon from Cowtan & Tout.

« *Gallery Wall* Here, the wainscoting delineates the various pieces. The existing black-and-white photos prompted use of a similarly themed Soicher Marin piece. The four vintage, pressed flower pieces create texture. The black-and-white abstract rounds out the assemblage. “It’s a great demonstration of not getting stuck in a box.” How do we know this all works? “Because I say it works,” laughs Tobin. “The client loves it!”



“Our homes are a place where we can **SUBSIDE, READ, WORK, RELAX**—if rooms are not functional and set up to accommodate those functions, then we’ve failed as designers.”

— DEVON TOBIN, CO-FOUNDER OF DUET DESIGN GROUP



⌘ *Primary Suite* The owners' retreat is a study in calm, including a seating area that is actually used. The existing armchairs were brought from another room and centered within the window rather than facing into the room. The Aztec Custom sheepskin rug, Highland House Mathien ottoman covered in Pindler Verano Rosemary fabric and trimmed with playful Samuel & Sons Positano tassels, and existing nightstands come together to create a very inviting spot. The Modern History wrought iron king bed breaks up and adds depth to the space and anchors the height of the room to the floor. Though large, the bed is not heavy, taking up volume without much mass. ❖

INTERIOR DESIGN & BUILDER  
DUET DESIGN GROUP  
DUETDESIGNGROUP.COM  
303.783.9327