

In the living room, the TV fades into a niche covered in charcoal wallpaper—squaring homeowner Nicole Duggan's desire for a both stylish and family-friendly space. Designer Heather Peterson streamlined the space by removing the built-in bookcases that had flanked the fireplace and then building out the fireplace section to accommodate the TV. A soapstone surround and copper magnets detailing the gas insert nod to homeowner Rory Duggan's more traditional style.



ALL THE Right Moves

*He likes traditional and masculine.
She's more modern and glam.
Blending their two styles transforms a
1980s Mendota Heights house into a
home that works for the whole family.*

BY JODY GARLOCK ||| PHOTOGRAPHS BY SPACECRAFTING

IN THE DUGGAN HOUSEHOLD, things can get a little competitive on football Sundays when the Vikings play the Packers. The family faces off on the two sofas in their Mendota Heights living room, with the TV angled down and out on the fireplace wall for prime viewing. Dad Rory and 10-year-old son Oliver bleed purple and gold and can usually cajole Lael, 8, to join their side if they let her cheer and dance. (She performed at a few games as part of the Vikings' Junior Cheer program but is largely football-indifferent). Mom Nicole is firmly Team Packers, having grown up in Wisconsin. "We're a split household," Rory says. "Before we had kids, Nicole and I would need to watch the Viking/Packer games in separate rooms to keep things civil. Now we watch the games together, and there is definitely some good-natured ribbing, but no one gets upset if their team loses."

The couple found a similar middle ground and harmony when remodeling their 1980s brick rambler. Rory, an attorney, is traditional and classic, with a love of Craftsman style. Nicole is more modern and likes things glamorous, even a little beachy. Enter Rory's big sis, designer Heather Peterson, to serve as a sort of referee. "The challenge was to blend their two styles—or to at least bring them closer together," Peterson says.

When the Duggans purchased the house during a hot seller's market, they had already missed out on six other properties. So they snapped this one up a day before it went on the market despite its choppy floorplan and abundance of golden oak and brass. "It was definitely full-on '80s," Rory says.



“We all liked the idea of warm wood cabinetry,” Peterson says. The rift-sawn white oak they landed on has the beachy look Nicole likes, while the raised pyramid detailing on some of the doors reflects Rory’s Craftsman spirit. Cabinets are scribed to the ceiling, reflecting the home’s streamlined architectural detailing. The statement Lewis chandelier is from Hudson Valley Lighting.

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After living in it for about six months, they were ready to update the kitchen. But when Peterson took a more critical look at the layout, the project evolved into moving the kitchen to the other side of the public spaces—sacrificing the formal dining room and knocking down walls to create a more open flow conducive to family living. “I knew what we did in the first phase of the project would set the tone for the whole house,” Peterson says.

The kitchen’s rift-sawn oak cabinetry has a light look, without the busy grain. Detailing on it, as well as on interior doors, veers toward Rory’s preferred Craftsman style. Satin-finish brass, in hardware and statement-making light fixtures, brings in Nicole’s glam. The irony of those choices isn’t lost on Peterson. “I definitely had a moment where I realized we were taking out a bunch of oak and brass and bringing in ... a bunch of oak and brass,” she says.

The airy and streamlined look established in the kitchen carried throughout the house in the subsequent phases, balanced by traditional materials like the soapstone fireplace surround in the living room and marble floors in bathrooms. Removing built-in bookcases flanking the fireplace stripped off another ’80s feature, and there are no longer crown moldings in any rooms. “I felt we were finding the right simplicity of detail that represents both of their tastes,” Peterson says.

The balance continues with the décor. In the living room, Rory got his large-screen TV, while Nicole got her pretty with curtains and upholstered furniture. They share a passion for art and found prime places for their favorite pieces. Rory was even on board with the raspberry sofa that sidles up to the table in the dining area—a comfy alternative to chairs—and the bright green wallpaper in the master bath. “They collaborated against me,” he jokes. “But it was easy for me because I knew that Heather and Nicole both have fabulous taste.”

The compromise and collaboration is a 1980s home that’s a perfect fit for the 2020s family. It’s not too Nicole, and not too Rory. “It’s us,” Nicole says. ■



UTILITY PLAYER

A bonus of moving the kitchen: It opened up space for a much-used laundry/mudroom (right) near the door to the attached garage. The sliding barn-style door, custom-built by the contractor, features a geometric design that plays off the pattern of the basement stair railing near the kitchen. The wooden enclosure gives the washer and dryer a finished look and creates a handy space for folding clothes. Thibaut’s Daintree wallpaper in Pearl, available through AJ Maison at IMS, nods to Nicole’s love of nature.



The gray island and the cabinetry housing the pantry, fridge, and bar are both painted in Sherwin-Williams’s Escape Gray, breaking up the wood flooring and other cabinetry. Hardware mixes satin-finish brass pulls and burnished knobs.



ARTFUL ENDEAVOR

The couple loves waking up to a view of this painting (right), which caught Rory's eye on a March Madness trip to Las Vegas. Thinking it might work in the master bedroom's sitting area, he texted photos of it to Nicole and Heather to get their input. A vintage lamp provides another pop of color.

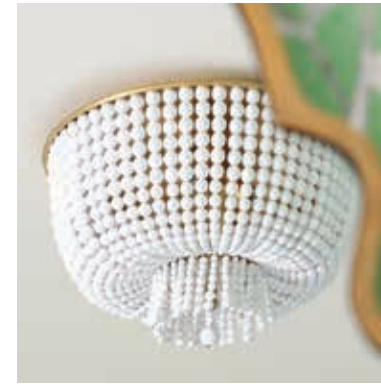
QUIET TIME

Grass cloth creates a textural backdrop in the master bedroom, designed to resemble a boutique hotel room. "We wanted a retreat from the craziness our lives can have," Rory says. A statement coconut shell chandelier from Serena and Lily (below) adds a bit of glam and reflects one of Peterson's mantras: "Buy killer light fixtures," she says.



NATURAL ATTRACTION

In the master bath, a bold statement wallpaper, Chinois Palais in Lettuce by Schumacher, plays off the view out the large window behind the soaking tub. "I love bringing the outdoors in," Nicole says. Adds Peterson, "It was a matter of finding a wallpaper everybody was excited about and loved—knowing we didn't need to stay married to it forever." The designer's strategy: Keep the more permanent items classic and neutral, then add personality with accessories, including the white beaded flush mount (top right) from Circa Lighting.



"My plan was that all the permanent things were going to be utterly classic and neutral, then we'd bring the personality with wallpaper, lighting, and mirrors."

—DESIGNER HEATHER PETERSON



“She’s like a bright little flower, and her room is a reflection of that,” Nicole says of Lael and her pastel bedroom, where the walls are painted in Benjamin Moore’s Beach Plum. The couple let Lael choose colors and other elements from narrowed-down options—except for the raspberry curtains, which were planned for their previous home.



ANIMAL ATTRACTION

Metallic Kahna wallpaper by Anna French ups the fun in the hall bath (above), used primarily by the kids. “I love a print that feels whimsical but isn’t too ‘kid,’” Peterson says. “The metallic makes this sophisticated, and there is a global vibe that speaks to other elements in the overall house scheme.” The bamboo mirror, she says, hints at a beachy resort hotel. The more permanent features, including a vanity from Wayfair, are neutral to give the design longevity.

FAMILY MATTERS

“I like pretty, but things also need function,” says Nicole (right, with husband Rory and their kids, Lael and Oliver—and mini poodle Sally). The living room, which opens to the front entry, is up to that challenge with two upholstered sofas and a lightweight metal coffee table that can be scooted around for playing games or to gain extra floor space. Vintage accent chairs from H&B Gallery in Minneapolis, reupholstered in a herringbone fabric, can also be easily moved. The oversized art was a 10th anniversary gift from Rory to Nicole.

“The light fixtures are the jewelry

in this house and an opportunity to bring a little bit of glitz and glamour in a contained way.”

—HEATHER PETERSON



INTERIOR DESIGN: Heather Peterson, Heather Peterson Design; heatherpetersondesign.com // **CONTRACTOR** (BATHROOM): Craft Construction; craftconstructionmn.com