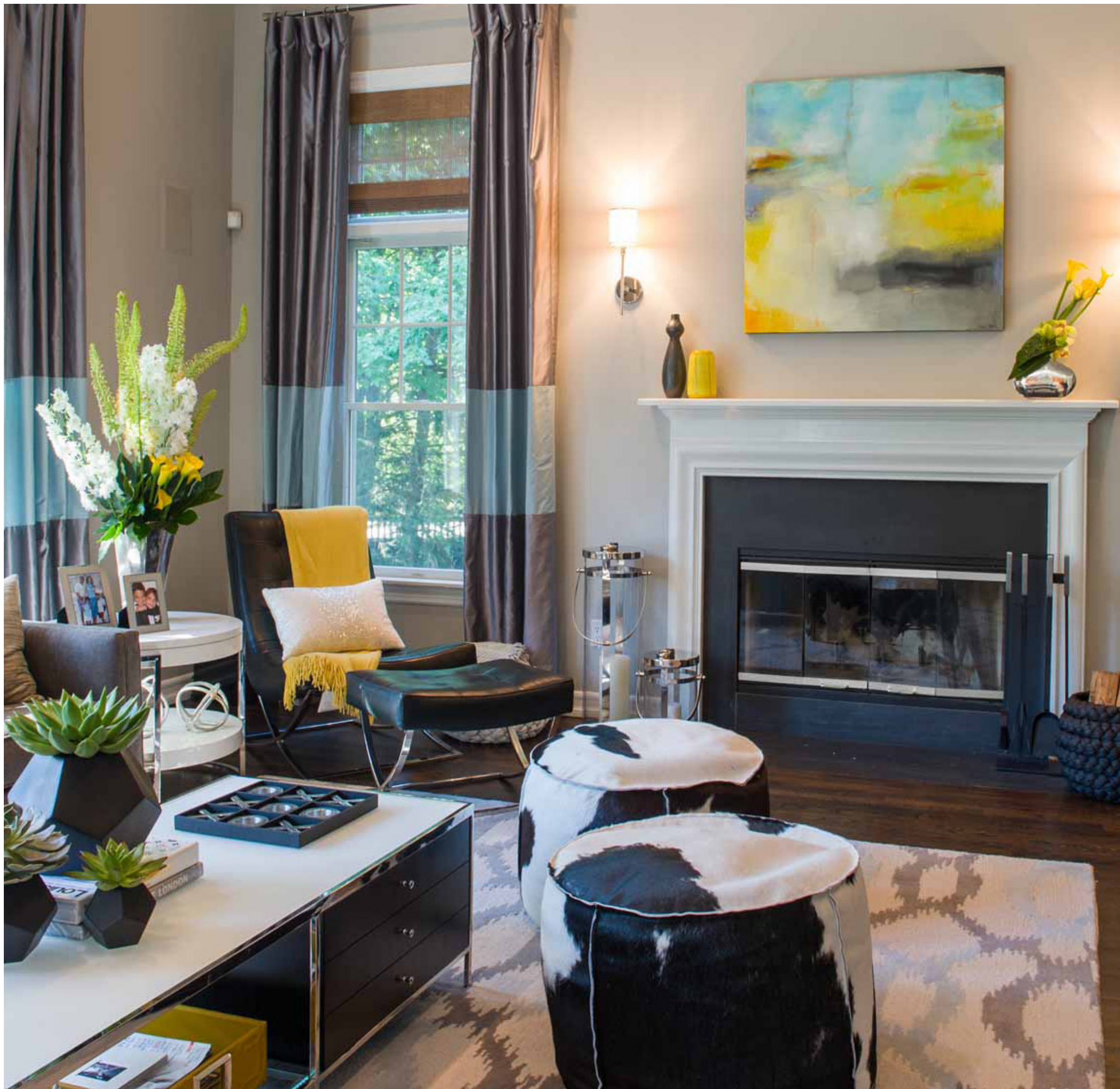


THOROUGHLY MODERN MAKEOVER

ONE TRADITIONAL COLONIAL-STYLE HOME PLUS ONE CONTEMPORARY REDO EQUALS THE PERFECT LIVING SPACE FOR A YOUNG FAMILY.

WRITTEN BY CAROL BIALKOWSKI • PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHAUN DING



Furnishings and accessories crafted from chrome, glass and lacquered wood help to create the clean, contemporary look requested by the client. (Note the oversized polished chrome hurricanes to the left of the fireplace.) Even the black ceramic vases and their succulent occupants add to the modern design scheme.

Fresh. Modern. Clean lines. That's the look her clients wanted to achieve when they hired interior designer Lara Michelle to revamp their newly purchased Colonial-style home in Irvington. "They don't like 'fussy.' The design had to be sleek and contemporary," says Michelle, owner of Westchester-based Lara Michelle Beautiful Interiors, Inc. It also needed to be appropriately beautiful and "dressy" for adult get-togethers yet equally comfortable for a family with two young children.

The solution? Gray. "We chose darker fabric for the sofas in the family room because it doesn't show a lot of stains," she notes. "The sofa fabric is also very durable and kid-friendly; it's a heavy woven chenille that will last a long time." For a touch of whimsy, and to create more seating options, Michelle added two "cow poufs," which "the kids love. They sit on them when they watch TV."

One thing her client loves is the sunlight streaming through the large windows in the family room. "She didn't want to block any light coming in," says Michelle. As a result, the dark charcoal gray and blue panels are purely decorative—they don't close—and the natural woven wood shades are never lowered. "The panels are there to soften the edges, add color and finish off the room."

Yellow, which complements the blue in the panels and the patterned rug, adds another pop of color. "I feel like the brighter the color, the less you should use," she advises. "And if you get tired of the color, it's easy to change out."

To achieve the "fresh, contemporary look" requested by her client, Michelle introduced metal to the space—a black leather chair and ottoman with a polished chrome base and accent tables with "clean lines" in polished chrome, glass and lacquered wood. The gleaming metal also can be seen in the graceful arc lamp and oversized hurricanes near the fireplace. Shiny mercury glass vases sit atop the square side table; even the metal tic-tac-toe game and black ceramic vases on the coffee table have a modern feel.

The kitchen also was part of the project. Since the wood cabinets were in "very good condition," and



"Even a large sum of money just goes so far for a renovation," says Michelle. "So you have to make choices." One important decision her clients made was to keep their kitchen cabinets and put their dollars toward a custom island, which serves as a food prep area as well as a gathering place during parties. The powder room, on the other hand, was gutted and transformed into a modern space.

staying within budget was a consideration, Michelle simply changed the knobs. "We also kept the granite countertops, even though it wasn't the owners' first choice, because it was so expensive to replace them." Instead, they chose to invest in a custom-designed island with a sleek Caesarstone top. "It's very popular now because it's virtually indestructible," Michelle points out. "It won't stain or chip, and it looks beautiful in a modern kitchen." For the backsplash, Michelle selected glass mosaic tile in gray and blue tones to coordinate with the family room. And the floor now features porcelain tile in an oversized (12-inch by 24-inch) rectangular shape and "staggered" layout.

Unlike the kitchen, there was no saving the "very '80s" powder room. It was gutted. To create visual interest in the small space, Michelle created an accent wall of gray porcelain tile with a ribbed stripe, "set so that the stripes alternate vertically and horizontally." On the floor are oversized (24-inch by 24-inch) gray porcelain tiles that resemble slate, but "don't have the maintenance of real stone." The traditional pedestal sink was replaced with a contemporary angular style with a heavy wood base, where a decorative yellow tray picks up the accent color of the family room.

The homeowners were "so happy with the way the project turned out," says Michelle, that they've moved on to making over the dining room and formal living room.