

## MANSION

## INSIDE STORY

# A Family Home That Conquers Clutter

This North Carolina house includes a pantry that hides the refrigerator, a children's library with built-in homework stations, a craft room for art supplies, charging stations—and even a packing station for travel.



1



2

**GREAT WIDE OPEN 1.** The kitchen is large enough for the kids to ride their scooters. **2.** The three-story home uses a hipped roof to blend in with the street's 1½-story homes. **3.** A petrified wood sink in a bathroom.



3

BY M.K. QUINLAN

**ELIZABETH AND IAN WHITE** were shocked when they discovered they were having twins. When two years later a third baby was on the way, they knew their 2,500-square-foot, 1940s ranch-style home in Charlotte, N.C. wouldn't hold them for long.

Moving was out of the question. They'd fallen in love with Picardy Place, a tree-lined street in the Myers Park area adjacent to the tony Myers Park Country Club. "It's a fun, front yard kind of neighborhood," said Mrs. White, 36, who co-owns, along with her sister, the jewelry and home goods line Twine & Twig. "It's the kind of street where there are five o'clock happy hours every Friday." Instead, in 2010 they enlisted Charlotte-based architect Ruard Veltman to design a new kitchen and a bedroom suite addition. After just a few meetings, the group agreed that to get the square footage and layout they wanted in their forever home, they'd need to start all over.



4

The Whites' lot at 0.2 acre didn't offer room for expansion, so Mr. Veltman stuck with the footprint of the original house and worked upward. The new, 5,000-square-foot, three-story home cost roughly \$900,000 to build and is a modern take on French Colonial, a departure from Charlotte's predominantly Georgian architecture. "Elizabeth moves to the beat of her own drum," said Mr. Veltman. "She always likes to do something just a bit different." The renovation was completed in 2012, six years after the Whites purchased the home for around \$600,000.

Mr. Veltman incorporated a hipped roof—pyramidlike, with all four sides sloping down—to minimize the impact of the third floor, an effort to blend in with the street's traditionally 1½-story homes. "People are overbuilding and the scale is out of whack with these charming neighborhoods," he said. "We're very sensitive to how you present yourself to your neighbors." At the top of



5

the Whites' priority list was a floor plan that accommodated their love of entertaining while combating the chaos that comes with three children.

The entire third floor serves as a playroom and catchall for the children's toys and includes a stage for impromptu concerts and plays. On the second floor, Mrs. White worked with Mr. Veltman to design a children's library that features built-in homework stations and shallow bookshelves that display the books' covers instead of their spines.

A separate craft room on the first floor diverts clutter from the kitchen. It includes a built-in table for art projects, charging stations for the family's digital devices and a set of five 'lockers' that act as a drop spot for backpacks and sports equipment. The great room—a kitchen and family room combined—is large enough to withstand activities that would normally be reserved for the outdoors. "I'm trying to cook and they're doing circles on those scooters," said Mrs. White. "It's just the way it is. It's fun."

The secret to the kitchen is the White's "working pantry," a signature of Mr. Veltman's projects that houses their refrigerator, dry goods and small appliances like the coffee maker. The oven, stovetop and sinks stay in the kitchen. "Celebrate the art of cooking and gathering in your kitchen," said Mr. Veltman, "but all of the other things that you need for a kitchen to work? Let's set those to the side." Mrs. White admits she's gone a tad overboard with the pantry's organization. "I keep everything in glass jars," she said. "I've basically been banned from The Container Store by my husband."

A wall of upholstered cabinetry in the family room offers

## HUNT AND GATHER

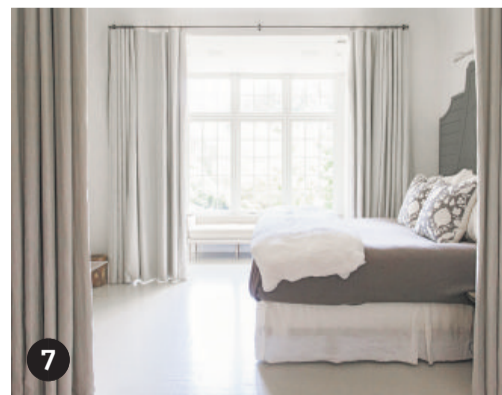
**4.** A collection of cutting boards.

**5.** The dining room and lounge area are decorated with natural elements including tree roots from Vietnam, installed on the wall to resemble tile work.

**6.** An outdoor dining table uses cuts from a dead oak tree as its base. **7.** The master bedroom is intentionally sparse. **8.** A set of 'lockers' act as a drop spot for backpacks and sports equipment.



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a place to toss toys when the Whites are expecting guests. The wall-mounted 55" TV, a necessary evil for a family of five, tucks into its own spot behind upholstered doors when not in use.

Like Mrs. White's jewelry line, the interior of the home is embellished with natural elements and other unique materials from around the globe. A petrified wood sink served as the starting point for their first-floor powder room's design. A chicken coop was repurposed as a pendant light in the craft room, oyster-sticks for sconces in the foyer. "I've always said that I hate going

to a party and seeing three or four people wearing the same outfit," said Mrs. White. "I was adamant about incorporating elements that not everyone else would have."

Three sets of French doors open onto their backyard, a graveled courtyard where they frequently host Lowcountry boils. At the center is a dining table that Mrs. White designed using cuts from a dead oak tree as its base. A beer tap in the bar area, located between the dining room and the working pantry, is a hot spot during frequent parties and is regularly stocked with Stella Artois.

The couple's master bedroom includes nothing but two nightstands, a king bed and a cocoon of drapery that the Whites draw around their bed at night. "Ruard's philosophy is that a bedroom is just to sleep in," said Mrs. White. Their walk-in closet includes special storage for Mrs. White's jewelry and an island designed specifically as a packing station for Mr. White, 37, who travels often for his work in institutional fixed income sales at Bank of America. "We joke now because Ian never has any space on the packing station," said Mrs. White. "I've taken it over."

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