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April 2018

# THINK PINK

WHEN DESIGNER TRACI ZELLER'S CLIENTS  
ASKED FOR MORE COLOR IN THEIR  
SOUTHPARK HOME, SHE DELIVERED.

BY BLAKE MILLER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DUSTIN PECK





**T**raci Zeller was taken by surprise. In all her years as a designer, she could count on one hand the times a client has asked for more fuchsia. “I think it’s happened once!” Zeller says, laughing. “It’s rare that you find empty nesters requesting not only more color, but more raspberry pink.”

But for Wanda and Craig Steinke, the bolder and brighter the hues, the better.

As relatively new art collectors, the Steinkes knew that the pieces they gravitated toward—more modern, with bold brushes of color throughout—would need a neutral canvas so the artwork could take center stage, as well as complementary furnishings that highlighted the artwork rather than competed with it. So when they decided to move to Charlotte permanently from Connecticut, they were immediately drawn to the clean architectural details and all-white setting of their townhome in SouthPark.

“We wanted the foundation layer to complement the kinds of pieces of art we wanted to acquire,” says Wanda Steinke. “And this home was ideal for that.”

The couple enlisted Zeller to help execute their vision of a sophisticated and elegant home that showcases their love of modern artwork. “The home has traditional bones and architectural details to it,” says Zeller. “So our job was to infuse the space with color without it feeling overwhelming.”

It took a trip to Paris for Zeller to really home in on what her clients wanted when they said they wanted “more pink.”

“I was walking through a huge fabric store in Paris, and it was there that my creative wheels really started spinning,” she says. Bold, bright fabrics in varying patterns and textures lined every floor of the store. “I took one look and thought to myself, ‘Now I get it. I know what I need to do.’”

When she returned to the U.S., Zeller found a wildly colorful Christian Lacroix for Design-

ers Guild fabric with large doses of fuchsia and oversize stripes and repeating patterns—she used that as her starting point for the Steinkes’ home. “I knew right when I saw it that Wanda would love it,” she says. To showcase the bold fabric, Zeller had a custom ottoman swathed in the fabric and installed in the center of the family room. Everything else built off that. An adjacent pair of chairs in a navy Wesley Hall fabric with contrasting fuchsia piping balance the color with a neutral hue.

Pops of color are sprinkled throughout the home. And when coupled with the neutral backdrop—an all-white kitchen with classic white subway tiles, white stone counters, and all-white wall colors—they create a clean, modern yet elegant look. Above the kitchen sink is a work of art in itself: a custom oversize Roman shade in a colorful, whimsical butterfly pattern (a Christian Lacroix for Designers Guild fabric). Meanwhile, nearby counter stools, swathed in a vivid lime green vinyl by Designers Guild, provide a complementary pop of color to the otherwise neutral space.

In the dining room, Zeller infused color with the addition of a commissioned piece of work by local artist Windy O’Connor, which is the focal point of the room. “It’s truly a magnificent piece that aligns perfectly with the look Wanda and Craig wanted in their home,” says Zeller. The artwork brings out the tiny flecks of color in the elegant boucle fabric by Manuel Canovas in the side chairs, an element Zeller is especially fond of. “It just feels high fashion and sophisticated,” she says.

The design, says Wanda Steinke, is exactly what she and her husband had envisioned and why she reached out to Zeller initially. “We wanted a blank canvas for us to put our stamp on with the artwork we acquire, so that those more colorful, modern pieces never look out of place in our home,” she says. “And that is exactly what Traci did for us.” **SP**











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The wallpaper in the powder room is by artist Hunt Slonem for Lee Jofa. It's special to homeowner Wanda Steinke because she's long been fond of Slonem's work but hasn't purchased a piece yet.