

# Clues *from the* Coast

**A soothing color palette, an airy floor plan, and classic architectural details breathe a fresh East Coast vibe into this newly constructed Edina home.**


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PHOTOS BY ELIESA JOHNSON



Homeowner Julie Fox (pictured) found inspiration for her home's color palette from the fabric covering her dining room head chairs. "Julie wasn't afraid of color," says interior designer Andrea Surtel.







Fox and her interior designers were on the hunt for a large acrylic coffee table for the living room when Fox found four smaller Jonathan Adler coffee tables to group together. The clear tables let the furniture arrangement look light and bright.

**C**all her thorough—she won't mind. Julie Fox doesn't leave details to chance, especially when it came to designing her dream home. With three newly constructed houses, three remodels, and two renovations under her belt, the homeowner knew exactly how she wanted her new home to accommodate her family in years to come. "I can visualize a project completed before it's even started," she says. Her vision for her Edina residence stemmed from her time spent on the East Coast, where she shares a home with her husband and eight children. "I tried to bring some

of the design elements from Connecticut to the Midwest," she says. "I like traditional architecture, but I also like the modern feel of an open floor plan, and I wanted a place where friends and family could congregate."

Fox worked closely with architect Andrea Swan of Swan Architecture and Kim Krogstad of Elevation Homes to bring her dream home to life. "She was very meticulous," Krogstad says, who worked with Fox on everything from the placement of the appliances to making sure that nearly every room of the house had at least one window. "She had a clear vision and knew what she liked. She trusted her instincts."





"I love windows, so when we designed the house, I said I want windows in every room, which is difficult to do," Fox says. She worked with architect Andrea Swan to incorporate as much natural light as possible, which adds bright airiness to the open-plan kitchen and living room.



Among the design details she loved from her home in Connecticut was the effective use of black paint, which is used on the front door and on the window sashes. "I painted one door in Connecticut and absolutely loved it, so I thought why not try it here?" Fox says. "Black is a neutral color . . . and a black-trimmed window draws your eye in." Fox mimicked the copper gutters of her Connecticut house on her shingle-style home in Edina to boost curb appeal. "I consider [copper gutters] part of the architecture," she says. "It's like a piece of jewelry on the house." A wide wraparound porch is the finishing touch on the exterior. "You cannot underestimate the

value of a wraparound porch," Swan says. "It creates a buffer from the street and helps to define that corner lot."

Using the exterior as a springboard for ideas, the design team from Martha O'Hara Interiors began their design plan for inside. "The exterior was our inspiration," says Andrea Surtel, who teamed with Kelsey Hanson on designing the house. "We wanted to use a lot of soft linens and velvets to keep it really comfy," says Hanson. "Especially with our winter months, Julie wanted it to feel very warm." The blend of Minnesota and the coast is evident in the living room, where a pair of crisp white spindle-back chairs are smartly cushioned





with navy-striped velvet fabric. "It still gives the appearance of a coastal feel with the warm, wintery fabric," Hanson says.

Window draperies were intentionally kept simple. "The windows are your art, drawing you to the outside and to the beautiful greenery," Fox says. "And the draperies were like the frame," Surtel adds.

In every room, Surtel and Hanson worked with Fox to mix fabrics, patterns, and textures for a sophisticated look. Statement-making pieces like art and lighting give the spaces extra personality. "Each room had its own identity—its own pop of unexpected," Surtel says. In the dining room, three handblown glass light fixtures that Fox found while on a trip to London with her husband hang in a row above the wood table. "I was just wandering around an antiques district when I saw these lights from Milan from the '50s," she says.

Adjacent to the dining room, the living room and kitchen were designed with busy kids in mind. "We looked at the flow of the kitchen and how the cabinetry was arranged from a functional



Fox worked with her interior designers to keep the built-in office at the top of the stairs fresh and comfortable. "We wanted a clean and simple spot for the kids to do their homework," says Surtel. "We kept it minimal and punched it up with art by John Gerber from Hickory Chair."



To save on space, the designers chose brass wall-mounted sconces, freeing up surface room on the side tables. Smaller spaces, like this bedroom, don't mean small style: The bold-printed wallpaper is balanced with the large drum ceiling light, and together those details give the room its visual punch.







standpoint,” Krogstad says. “Julie really thought about how her family lives and how the space needed to be set up to be functional for her family.” An oversized island accommodates large family gatherings. The resilient white oak flooring from Belrose & Co. was stained in a distressed, custom charcoal to hide markings from Fox’s two dachshunds, Lola and Ruby.

Thanks to the homeowner’s design eye—“she was excited about all of the

decisions she was making; she just gets it,” Surtel says—finding fabrics that connected rooms on the main floor was easy, especially since Fox wasn’t afraid of color. “We started with the head chairs in the dining room and worked off those,” Surtel says. The Eden Verbena pattern from Romo’s Black Edition line on the chairs led to the unexpected palette combination of lavender and navy the designers used throughout the first-floor rooms. A cus-

tom-painted coral mirror by Bungalow 5 in the mudroom is a pop of happiness entering the back door, while the adjacent pass-through butler’s pantry with Schumacher’s dark Mughal Leaf wallpaper on the ceiling adds another element of surprise. “I don’t think the main floor had one piece of furniture that had beige,” Surtel says.

Color plays an important role in the bedrooms upstairs, too. Surtel and Hanson mixed textures and patterns to





a playfully sophisticated result. A bold leaf-pattern wallpaper by Harlequin inspired the natural and nautical motif of Fox's 20-year-old son's room. In the 16-year-old daughter's room, a mix of turquoise, blues, and greens is fresh and bright. Even the bookshelf that greets guests at the top of the stairs is filled with a colorful assortment of books, framing the hall—and Lillian August mirror—beyond it.

"What I respect about Julie is that

she understands the design process and respects that good planning takes time," Swan says. "Our homes should be a reflection of ourselves, and Julie has extremely good taste."

"I wouldn't make a decision until I knew, yes, that's what I absolutely want. And then I just go with it," Fox says. "It's a process you have to be patient with and take your time. If you rush it, that's when you second-guess yourself." ■

(Above) Amrapali fabric by Designers Guild frames the windows and is a bright contrast to the dark cabinets and ceiling of the adjacent butler's pantry. The Art Deco light fixture by Visual Comfort and Schumacher's dark Mughal Leaf wallpaper on the ceiling gives the space some unexpected character.

(Left) Throughout the design process, the homeowner kept functionality in mind. "As a good design practice, we're always seeking to eliminate as many hallways as possible," says Swan. "Rather than have a hall at the top of the stairs, we appropriated bookshelves and built-in seating for reading and homework."