

HOME TOUR

Divine Dining

The dining room is the star of holiday gatherings. Here are some that sparkle a little brighter.

Text and Styling by Charlotte Safawi • Photography by Robert Radifera for Stylish Productions





Pretty Paper

Every home project begins with a source of inspiration. In the case of this elegant dining room, the design story began with the wallpaper. The textured vinyl wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries, aptly called “Blossom,” depicts blooming magnolia branches in an artful pattern and muted palette.

“We instantly fell in love with the wallpaper,” says Jennifer Riffle of Brook Taylor Interiors, a design business she shares with her mother, Ellen Roberts. “We liked the quiet color scheme — soft cream, grays, a hint of green — and the elegance of the pattern.”

“The lighter background also gave the room an airier feel,” Roberts adds, noting the space’s smaller paned windows.

The homeowners, a family of five, unanimously

agreed on the special wall-paper pattern and colorways, allowing it to anchor the remaining dining room décor. Besides a dark wood Baker sideboard that came from the homeowners’ former house, every piece of the dining room is newly acquired.

“We pulled the soft greenish-silver color from the wall covering to select the silk fabric we used in the window treatments,” Riffle says of the sumptuous floor-to-ceiling curtains that hang from acrylic, gold-accented rods. “The embroidered tape trim definitely gives them a finishing touch.”

The dining table — extra-long to accommodate friends and family — came next. The custom walnut piece, which complements the warm wood sideboard, is flanked by armed host and hostess dining chairs styled in a textured chenille with nailhead trim, as well as side chairs that are upholstered in a silvery-gray viscose-cotton textile. Each chair is finished in the same chalky gray-wood tone.

“The dining room is one of the first rooms people see when they enter the home, so all the special touches really add that polish,” says Roberts.

Additional enhancements include a raised-pattern geometric rug that grounds the space, a curved-back button-tufted bench that furnishes the alcove, and a striking crystal-and-gilt chandelier, a contemporary take on the classic tiered wedding cake-style chandelier.

“We were also able to have the ceiling painted in a high-gloss custom color,” adds Riffle. “It was worth the time and the mess, and really gave the room a finished look.”



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Spruced Up

"The dining room is a bit of an odd space and very visible in our house, which was both fun and daunting when we decided to redesign it," recalls homeowner Carolyn Wethington.

Wethington's quasi-hexagonal dining room sits in the middle of an open floor plan, with two columns and three wall openings staggered on one side.

The Arlington resident, along with her husband,

Bryan, and two daughters, enlisted trusted friend, neighbor, and designer Erin Tripodi to help reimagine the space with fresh design and added storage.

"It has an interesting layout, so having the space feel cohesive was important," Tripodi says.

The first step toward achieving the desired outcome was to install a custom-cut wool area rug in soft antelope print. The next was paint.

"The room was originally painted in Benjamin Moore's Blue Spruce, with white moldings and a white ceiling," says Tripodi, noting the preexist-

ing color the homeowners loved. "We decided to flip the paint color to the trim, paneling, and ceiling, creating an option for using wallpaper."

As a tribute to Bryan's mother, an artist with a penchant for Asian art, the family selected a beautiful chinoiserie wallpaper from Thibaut featuring soft ivories, powder blues, and silvery sages.

"The dining room's palette also ties in to the rest of the home, which has a preppy coastal feel with lots of blues and natural elements," adds Tripodi. "But [this] is more saturated and moodier."

To address the additional storage requests, Tripodi designed a custom wood-top cabinet to conceal a wine and beverage fridge.

"We painted its doors in the same color and finish as [the] dining room's woodwork so it melts into the paneling," Tripodi says. "We also selected a blue sideboard, with rattan doors, to hold dishware, while further complementing the room's palette and design."

Other pieces that have been added include an oval table with a pedestal base, which allows those seated in the upholstered chairs plenty of legroom, and a sculptural glass-and-brass chandelier that doesn't compete with the wallpaper.

"The dining room should be the room where you have dinner parties and stay up too late with friends," Tripodi says. "The color palette and elegant furnishings now reflect that and create that mood."

Echoing that sentiment, Wethington now calls the room "the place where we are proud to host family and friends."

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Chinoiserie Chic

"When we first moved into our home, the dining room was a blank slate with dull white walls," says homeowner Catherine Abramson, who lives with her husband, Michael, and two young children.

Referred to by a family friend, interior designer Katy Anderson wholeheartedly embraced the project, striving to incorporate the homeowners' family heirlooms — the dining table, side chairs, and sideboard — into a reinvigorated design.

"The existing furnishings were beautiful, but the room felt empty and incomplete," recalls Anderson. "The bonus, from a design standpoint, was the sideboard has an Asian influence, and the homeowners had a collection of blue-and-white ginger jars. These quickly became the basis for the overall décor and vibe of the room."

The chinoiserie influence first came into play when purchasing and upholstering new high-backed host and hostess chairs. The fabric's Asian-influenced print quickly became the room's palette, one highlighted by ivory ground, raspberry pagodas and blossoms, pale blues, soft greens, and a raspberry hue pulled directly from the side chairs' cut-velvet seats.

"The added wallpaper, with its whimsical branch

design, complemented both the host and hostess chairs' landscape pattern and the homeowners' love for chartreuse," says Anderson.

Meanwhile, an elegant gilt chandelier, with floral-shaped crystals, works with the wallpaper's botanical theme without visually crowding the space.

"The chandelier is often the first place your eye travels, so we were fortunate that our client was ready to splurge for this fixture," adds Anderson. "It is airy and light, yet still has a rich 'glam' factor for special occasions."

Tall curtain panels with a blue-and-white geometric tape — a design inspired by the ginger jars — add further polish and dress up the windows.

"The introduction of chartreuse emboldened us to go further with the blues," says Anderson, referencing the room's abstract art and blue lacquered bamboo mirror that rests over the sideboard.

Other finishing touches include a bold, black-bordered sisal rug that echoes the iron curtain rod, a pair of fluted gilt-metal standing lamps for the sideboard, and a traveling bar cart.

"Of course, we use the dining room for hosting family and friends for special occasions, but I also love looking at it throughout the day," Abramson says. "Its simple elegance is refreshing and uplifting." ▲