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# A S T Y L I S H



AFTER PREVIOUSLY COLLABORATING ON SEVERAL ONE-OFF SPACES, HOMEOWNER ASHLEY ELLIS AND DESIGNER **LISA HENDERSON** REUNITED FOR A WHOLE-HOME REFRESH.

# R E U N I O N



**previous spread:** (from left) In the living room, a green sofa upholstered in Marvic Textiles is adorned with pillows in Penny Morrison and Carolina Irving Textiles. A high-gloss ceiling creates an open feel, while a Stark rug styled with an Oushak rug from Joey Saab and coffee table from Fabulous Things Ltd. add layers. Draperies by Langton Textiles and Penny Morrison lampshades bring pattern to play. Homeowner Ashley Ellis' love of blue informed the color palette for the entire house, down to the tiniest details—like these displayed books and the abundance of blue-and-white china and ginger jars seen throughout. "I love a traditional home, but fresh—not Grandma's traditional," she says. "I want it to be a home where people want to come in and sit down." **this spread:** (from left) The Ellises purchased their Preston Hollow home in 2021. The dining room proved to be an important space, as it sits in the middle of the house and can be seen from many other rooms. "It was a real focal point and had to be addressed and executed properly," says designer Lisa Henderson. Like in the living room, a high-gloss ceiling reflects light. The Coleen & Company light fixture was carried over from the Ellises' previous home, where it had been painted to match an old wallpaper. Conversely, in the Ellises' new home, it became the basis for choosing wallpaper: a chinoiserie-inspired print by Schumacher. The Kravet draperies echo the soft blue tones, and a Stark rug warms up the homeowners' traditional dining set. A landscape by Elizabeth Sage brings a touch of contemporary to the classic space.

It seems fitting that Ashley Ellis first met Lisa Henderson at the playground of their children's preschool, as the Ellises would go on to hire the interior designer to outfit a family-friendly home for them—twice.

Their initial happenstance meeting turned into a slow but steady professional partnership. "In our old home, we had a bathroom that needed to be remodeled, and I connected with her at first over that, and then that turned into the dining room and a few other little rooms here and there," says Ellis.

When the Ellises purchased their new home in 2021, Ellis called Henderson immediately to do a walk-through. "We wanted to warm the home up and make it feel more comfortable and inviting," Ellis says.

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Though the home's existing aesthetic was contemporary, the floor plan was traditional—creating a prime opportunity for Henderson to turn the Ellises' dreams into reality. They started with paint and wallpaper selections—Ellis expressed her love of a blue-and-green color story—and together, began assessing the family's needs.

With two young boys ages 9 and 11, the Ellises wanted a house where their sons could have friends over but that didn't compromise on style. "Ashley is the only girl in the house, so we were trying to make it as pretty as possible for her but still comfortable for all the boys, as well, to keep everyone happy," says Henderson.

One selling point was the openness of the house—many spaces can be seen from other rooms, allowing for visual interest as well as safety. "While the children are playing outside in the pool or on the trampoline, I can see them from all angles," Ellis says. Though the kitchen needed very little structural work, Ellis and Henderson opted to nix the modern white-and-gray color palette for something a little more fun.

"I wanted something with depth that added to the home, since you can see it from the family room," Ellis says. The robin's egg blue cabinets, complete with new hardware, provide a talking point anytime the home has visitors. "Everyone is always commenting on the cabinets," she adds.

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**opposite page:** Though the kitchen was previously gray and white, Ellis knew she wanted a change. New cabinet pulls and a beautiful robin's egg blue paint provided the dimension she was seeking. Bistro-style counter stools from Serena & Lily continue the blue theme. **this page:** (from top) With large chairs by Kingsley Bates and decorative garden stools from Acquisitions, the covered patio offers a comfortable place for family and friends to kick back and relax. "The children eat a lot of meals out there with their friends, coming and going from the pool," Ellis says. The glass vases on the table in the breakfast room are from Brendan Bass. The bar looks completely different than when the Ellis family first purchased the home. Before, it was bedecked in a contemporary look—complete with black and gray mirrored tile and a gong. Now it boasts a softer feel, with Colefax & Fowler wallpaper, a Serena & Lily bistro chair, a light fixture by Vaughn, and a novelty art piece the homeowners found on a trip to New Orleans.





## PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT

When outfitting your space, let your lifestyle—not design “rules”—lead the way.

One key to creating a cozy home is being honest with yourself about how you'll use the space. The Ellis family first put their piano in the front living room, but Ashley had a hunch that it might not be the best usage for their family. She asked her oldest son, now 11, if he intended to keep playing the piano; he had just taken up choir and was exploring other instruments. When he asked to take a break, she made a quick pivot. “I had started playing a lot more mahjong and just pulling out a folding table and putting it in my entry,” she says. “I told Lisa I wanted to use my front room.” The result is a space the family can use for their own game nights—Monopoly, Risk, and Settlers of Catan are all favorites for the family of four—as well as for entertaining.

### opposite page:

Surrounded by pink Acquisitions chairs covered in Marvic Textiles fabric, this Villa & House game table sees constant use. “We will play Monopoly over an entire weekend,” says Ellis. Henderson also included a topper from her collaboration with Fenwick Fields.

### this page:

In the entryway, a large, open space provided Henderson with lots of room to play. A rich blue console table by Society Social adds a pop of color, while photography by Anouk Krantz provides depth and visual interest. Though the artist is known for Western photography, this shot of a South Carolina marshland reminded Ellis of her native New Orleans. “This felt reminiscent of the South to her,” says Henderson. A stool upholstered in Carolina Irving fabric and a Visual Comfort lamp with Fermoie shades round out the space.

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*“I love a traditional home, but fresh—not Grandma’s traditional.”*

—HOMEOWNER  
ASHLEY ELLIS

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Like with the kitchen, the dining room can be seen from many other points within the home. A high-gloss ceiling reflects light and creates a glow from within. To maintain the traditional feel, Ellis and Henderson opted to keep her classic dining set but freshen it up with a chinoiserie-inspired Schumacher wallpaper. A Stark sisal rug and a Coleen & Company light fixture give the room a relaxed feel. The space also provides an opportunity for the Ellises to build their contemporary art collection. “I try to encourage not putting all of the super-traditional furniture in one room, but spreading it out and pairing it with newer items,” Henderson explains. “We didn’t want grand with grand.”

Henderson took that traditional but relaxed approach to the family room, too, so that it would best suit the Ellises’ needs. Where a piano once stood now sits a card table, enjoyed by the family as well as Ellis’ mahjong friends. “It’s always set up, and we’re always using it,” says Ellis.

That usability reflects the choices throughout home—a place where boys can run and play or where family members can chill out with loved ones. “Every room is so multifunctional, from the kitchen to the family room to the den,” says Ellis. “We want that to continue while the boys grow.” **D**

**opposite page:** A custom upholstered headboard in Quadrille fabric steals the show in the primary bedroom. “I’ve always wanted an upholstered bed,” says Ellis. “Lisa showed me pictures of this fabric, and I said, ‘I trust you.’ It came in, and we loved it.” Finished with Leontine Linens bedding, the bed is flanked by Society Social nightstands and Visual Comfort lamps with custom shades. Chairs from the homeowners’ previous residence were refinished in Quadrille fabric. The French landscape above the bed was found at Round Top. The blue vase on the nightstand is from Brendan Bass. **this page:** In spaces like powder baths, Henderson loves to use pieces from her friend Natalie Erwin, like this mirror from the artist’s line, Fleur. “We say every house needs one of her designs,” Henderson says. “They’re just cheerful.” Martyn Lawrence Bullard wallpaper, Circa Lighting sconces with custom shades, and fixtures by Waterworks complete the happy space. “I honestly tell people the powder bath is one of my favorite rooms in the entire home,” Ellis says.

