



DICK AND MARCIA LARSON COMMISSIONED SUMMER THORNTON DESIGN TO REIMAGINE THEIR PORT ROYAL HOME. THORNTON USED A VARIETY OF PATTERNS AND PRINTS IN THE LIVING ROOM AND INCORPORATED A UNIQUE ROSE-COLORED BANISTER.



THE FINE PRINT

INTERIOR DESIGNER SUMMER THORNTON PLIES PROWESS WITH PATTERNS TO EXQUISITE EFFECT IN A ONE-OF-A-KIND NAPLES ABODE

BY MICHELE MEYER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNIE SCHLECHTER

Although she had not previously heard of the lauded Chicago-based maximalist interior designer and author of *Wonderland: Adventures in Decorating*, part-time Wisconsinite Marcia Larson knew she had found a kindred spirit in Summer Thornton when introduced to her work. It was Marcia's daughter who first spotted the designer's redo of an Old Naples residence in a magazine. "She thought it was my kind of style—and she was right," says Marcia.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: THORNTON CREATED A SITTING AREA OFF THE KITCHEN THAT EMBRACES ROSY-BROWN AND GREEN HUES, ECHOING SIMILAR TONES USED IN THE KITCHEN. BELOW: CABINETRY IN AN APPLE GREEN COLOR AND VEINED TRAVERTINE COUNTERTOPS ARE BALANCED BY WICKER SELECTIONS AND A WALLPAPERED CEILING.



“All the homes Thornton does are spectacular. And none of them are alike.”

After wintering for 25 seasons on Sanibel Island, Marcia landed her dream home in the waterfront community of Port Royal: a newly built, 6,000-square-foot residence a block from the beach and within easy distance to Old Naples. She and her husband, Dick, had long fantasized about the move. “Naples is the happiest place on Earth,” she says of the



THE FORMAL DINING ROOM EXUDES ELEMENTS OF A JUNGLE AND BOASTS HAND-PAINTED EDEN WALLPAPER FROM DE GOURNAY. THE MATCHING SHEER CURTAINS COVER A WINDOW, ALLOWING LIGHT IN WITHOUT SACRIFICING CONTINUITY.

city, where the couple had often shopped, dined, and attended social events. “People are so friendly, and there’s so much to do.”

The ultracontemporary home, tucked next to a lake, was the perfect setting for hosting family and friends. Though she had found her home, Dick needed convincing. “He couldn’t handle all the white,” says Marcia of the original decor. She agreed. “We needed to jazz it up, add color, and make it our own.”

Go BOLD

The Larsons commissioned Thornton and Whitney Mersman, Summer Thornton Design’s senior designer, to pump up the pizzazz and turn the neutral space into a bright, welcoming South-west Florida home.

“We love exuberance, and our designs are playful, colorful, and fearless,” says Thornton, who mixed and matched patterned fabrics and wallpaper swatches into design mash-ups. “It’s similar

to great cooking—there’s no specific recipe.”

By covering all surfaces from ceiling to floor with patterns and textures (even wallpapering some doors), the designers transformed cool and spacious neutrality into coziness, creating a home to be lived in and enjoyed—and that is fit for entertaining.

Though at first thrown by the idea of packing in so many prints, Marcia quickly realized from their conversations that the

designers deeply understood the couple. “Besides,” she says, “life’s too short to micromanage.”

Each space has its own identity, yet patterns and pigments flow throughout the home, not hewing to any one hue. Inspired by flamingos, palms, and wicker, Thornton assembled a color palette of apple green, seagrass, rosy browns, and terra-cotta. “They love color, and we love color, but we used a lot of neutrals,” says Thornton. The results



TO CREATE AN INVITING PRIMARY BEDROOM SUITE, THORNTON SELECTED WALLPAPER BY IKSEL IN A WISTERIA PATTERN, ONCE AGAIN BRINGING THE OUTDOORS IN.

are bold yet not brash.

“Most of our challenges were having too much space and bringing it in to be more intimate,” details the designer. “Originally, the kitchen was so big and so white you could get lost in it.” A floor-to-ceiling, glassed-in wine room was converted into a butler’s pantry with rosy travertine counters and custom brass globe pendants.

LET IT FLOW

A Persian-inspired wallpaper from Iksel Decorative Arts extends through the kitchen, family

room, and breakfast room. This is thanks to Rich Bauer, one of the talented artisans who works with Thornton. Bauer, owner of PaperFace in Boulder, Colorado, installs wallpaper and fabrics anywhere—coffered ceilings, walls, valances, curtains, and shelves—with no visible seams. Detail-oriented like Thornton, Bauer even covered the family room’s media cabinet and bookcase—including the inside shelves—with a dark green textured paper. “He’s truly an artist,” says Marcia.

Thornton explains that noticeable elements help to define each space. In the kitchen, for example, veins of forest green and gold run through the travertine countertops that rest upon apple green cabinets, while two wicker pendant lights—resembling traditional hats worn by boaters in Thailand—hang high over the island. The breakfast room features an oversize chandelier (composed of multiple metal palm fronds) that anchors the space. Even though Thornton ran many selections past the Larsons, the couple

was blown away by the results. They were especially enraptured by the prints and textures that extended to the ceilings.

The formal dining room complements the home’s diverse color palette. It features hand-painted Eden wallpaper in a colorful jungle print by United Kingdom-based de Gournay; sheer curtains covering the adjacent window match the exact print seamlessly, extending the wall while infusing light into the space. Thornton flaunted her fearlessness in this room with



THOUGH COLOR IS PROFUSE IN THE HOME, NATURAL-BASED TONES, TEXTURES, AND FURNISHINGS WORK TO ENSURE A BALANCED AESTHETIC. ACCORDING TO THORNTON, MOST CHALLENGES INVOLVED MAKING SPACES MORE INTIMATE.





what she calls a “kooky” Laura Gonzalez console table boasting a ketchup-colored top and mustard legs. An opaque milk glass chandelier from Jean-Marc Fray French Antiques of Austin, Texas, hangs overhead. “They both have the scale and drama to stand out against the paper,” says Thornton. Marcia is thrilled with the new dining room, which comfortably fits a custom table large enough to seat 12 people.

The Larsons chose to shed nearly all their furniture, save for two coffee tables, a Tony Duquette console, and Dick’s massive desk. They made no pretense of being art collectors, which would have limited the

designers’ vision. The two unmatched coffee tables are “the stars of the living room,” declares Thornton. Here, a vibrant pink railing in a crisscross pattern, a fun and unexpected design element, outlines the staircase. This replaced a simple glass railing.

To make the ground floor’s primary bedroom suite more intimate, Thornton chose dreamy wisteria-pattern wallpaper from Iksel. Again, Bauer extended the paper to the ceiling and was able to hide the automated blinds behind matching valances. Hand-painted wood and upholstery and other decorative features adorn the four-poster bed by Porte Italia. Instead of night-



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—SUMMER THORNTON

stands, Thornton placed large marble-top chests—in the style of Maison Jansen, a famed Paris decorator from the late 1800s—on either side of the bed.

SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

The main hallway in the home was a “nothing space” that Thornton transformed using natural textures and elements, such as grass cloth on the walls and a console table formed of stiff rope.

Fitting Dick’s burl wood and stainless steel Mezzaluna (half-moon) desk, a vintage piece from the Pace Collection by Leon Rosen, into the office space was a worthwhile challenge for the designer. Marcia’s beloved print from photographer Slim Aarons, *Palm Beach Idyll*, hangs outside



NO DETAIL WAS SPARED IN THE OUTDOOR LIVING AREA, WHICH INCLUDES LANTERN PENDANT LIGHTS, A TILED WALL, AND ROSY-HUED CABINETS, AS WELL AS PRINTS AND FURNITURE THAT COMPLEMENT THE SURROUNDING NATURAL LANDSCAPE.





the formal powder room, where hand-painted de Gournay paper shimmers, as does a Murano glass-trimmed mirror.

Outside, the pool bath became “one of my favorite rooms—a special garden moment,” says Thornton. “I love the terra-cotta

trellis walls, owing to Marcia loving a trellis room she saw elsewhere.” Custom made by Sunbeam Jackie, the outdoor umbrellas are lined with a palm frond print that matches the fabric found on the chaise lounges and chairs. The lanai’s outdoor spaces

include a kitchen, dining area, shaded lounge pool, and numerous seating options, including a few counter stools.

Last December, the Larsons moved into their refurbished residence, where they will live for more than half of each year.

“That will increase more and more,” Marcia says. “We are so happy with everything.” Marcia relays how multiple friends have commented how Thornton really understood and nailed her personality. “Really,” she says, “it was a match made in heaven.” ◀◀