



Top Area Designers Reveal Their Own Favorite Rooms

Text by Melanie McGee Bianchi

Asked about their work, interior designers almost unanimously accent the homeowners who hire them. "It's about the client, not me," is a common refrain. Translation: Design has become much more of a collaborative business. What, then, do they do with their own favorite spaces, compelled by personal vision instead of team effort? *Carolina Home + Garden* caught 15 regional interior designers at home. The discoveries are divulged on the following pages.



PHOTO BY MATT ROSE

**Kathryn Long's
Master Bedroom**
*Ambiance Interiors,
Asheville*

One thinks of Claudette Colbert, curled swan-like in a satin chair, or crimson-lipped

Joan Crawford smothered in a snowy boa. Glamorous white dress and décor defined 1930s Hollywood, and Kathryn Long has revived the color in the light-drenched master bedroom of her Biltmore Lake home.

A big fan of that romantic era, Long was meticulous in her selection of furnishings and fabrics. A bed from a small artisan maker, discovered at the world-renowned North Carolina furniture venue High Point Market, features an unusual headboard: it's upholstered in an eggshell shade and framed in light wood. Simple, crisp window treatments are made from what she describes as "the perfect linen."

But before the trimming could commence, Long had to enact some Crawford-style drama, knocking out part of the wall to lift the space from the doldrums. "The room," she declares, "was dead" when she first purchased the house, built in 2005.

"It faced north, windows all on one side, with gray walls and gray carpet." But their addition of two windows on either side of the bed admits the majestic western glow.

Using a lot of white means playing with light, and Long points out the difference between the too-stark tones of that shade and her preference for its softer gradations. The carpet, she says, "is sandy-colored, a very nice Masland," the walls a mohair shade.

Endearing romantic touches include a dazzling Venetian chandelier and floral throw pillows.



Linda Constable's Kitchen

Ambiance Interiors, Asheville

Way bolder than pink but far less obvious

than red, the unusual color that tops the prep island and counter in Linda Constable's merry kitchen is best pegged as "radish." At least, that's how the designer ventures to describe it; she also confesses that the finish is Formica instead of the trendier granite.

"Formica is not a 'forever' material," she says. But for anyone on a budget, "it's really not a bad way to go." Especially when the hue is this rich and unexpected. It's a fanciful shade, reminiscent of antique roses or, perhaps, the color of the fox's ascot in the Beatrix Potter tale. Painted beadboard — white-ish on the island and wainscoting, darkening to lavender on the ceiling — fulfills the interior theme: pure cottage.

With her husband Blair Jones, Constable renovated the Depression-era North Buncombe home from the studs up. Two small bedrooms were fused into one, a dropped ceiling was revived to its former elevation, and fluorescent lighting was banished for good. The overall goal? "We unmuddled it."

She's been collecting vintage textiles since she was a teenager; retro "just sings to me," says Constable, who in turn sings the praises of the many "wonderful fabrics" available to her through Ambiance Interiors. One pattern, a sage and rose-violet floral, appears in a window valance and in the bar-seat cushions. Original art, including a much-loved pastel drawing by Blair's mother, blooms on the walls.

Such infallible guest traps as ottoman-garnished upholstered chairs make the kitchen more of a lounge than a workroom. "It's very happy in here," concedes Constable.

PHOTO BY MATT ROSE