



the bold & the beautiful

A DESIGNER USES LOTS OF COLOR TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO AN OLD HOUSE.

by ERICA FINAMORE

Jessica Milburn surrounded the stone fireplace in her 9- and 10-year-old daughters' room with a dreamy cotton-candy pink.

TO BUY: Emerald Interior Acrylic Latex Paint in Oleander (for similar), \$81.50 per gallon; sherwin-williams.com.



The cabinets go all the way to the ceiling, emphasizing the room's height.

jESSICA MILBURN does not shy away from color. In fact, the cofounder of the design firm North and Madison in Bellwood, Illinois, believes every room needs it. When she and her family moved into their early 19th-century Chicago-area home in June 2020, she (and her design partner, Robin Flaherty) aimed to find a balance between her love of bold hues and the house's character. "I wanted to capture the home's old soul but put a spin on it," Jessica says. She kept the architectural details, antique windows, and period fireplaces but gave the rooms vivid color treatments. "Don't be afraid of embracing color in an old home," she says. "It will make it come to life."

kitchen

The coffered ceiling made the kitchen (previous page) feel fussy, so Jessica modernized the look with a satiny black island and hood, plus clean white cabinets with sleek hardware. An up-to-the-ceiling backsplash of powder blue tiles captures light from around the room to offset the adorable, but small, antique window. Inspiration for the color trio came from the veining in the island's dolomite countertop. "I like things to feel vibrant, but I also want them to feel calming," she says. "Blue is one of my calming colors."

TO BUY: Emerald Interior Acrylic Latex Paint in Caviar (for similar), \$81.50 per gallon; sherwin-williams.com. Seaport Tapacio 2" x 10" Polished Ceramic Wall Tile, \$9 per sq. ft.; tilebar.com.



POWDER ROOM

"A powder room should always have a bit of unexpectedness," Jessica says. Here, it's the oversize, graphic wallpaper print.

TO BUY: Cranes Wallpaper, \$273 for 2 rolls; miltonandking.com.

dining room

Jessica faced that same coffered ceiling in the dining room, so she used color to turn the stately vibe into a playful one. Every inch from the baseboards to the ceiling got a high-gloss seafoam paint job. "It's definitely an experience when you walk in here with all this color," she says. "But the shade is still calming and approachable." Since the dining room is next to the living room, Jessica spent a lot of time comparing swatches to make sure this green and the blue in the living room looked good together. She limited the dining furniture and accessories to a palette of pink and white for a color-blocked effect. "The pink and green just harmonize so well together," she says. "By keeping the other colors subtle, it lets that green really stand out."

TO BUY: Valspar Signature Paint in Valley Haze (for similar), from \$41 per gallon; lowes.com.



LIVING ROOM

Martin Van Buren was likely president when this house was built, and though the living room had been updated several times, it still felt stodgy thanks to well-worn textured wallpaper. To save time and money, Jessica decided against tearing down the paper and instead painted right over it, using a gray-blue in a satin finish. The texture stays visible through the paint, and the windows are naked (no shades, no blinds) to let in lots of light. The trim and baseboards are the same blue but in a high-gloss finish. And everything above the picture rail was painted white, to contrast with the door and window frames.

TO BUY: Emerald Interior Acrylic Latex Paint in Secure Blue (for similar), \$83.50 per gallon; sherwin-williams.com.



KIDS' ROOM

A coat of green paint makes the sloped ceiling in Jessica's 4- and 6-year-old daughters' bedroom feel higher, while a floral wallpaper emphasizes the room's cool dormer window. The ochre bedding matches tiny flowers in the wall print and nicely contrasts with the paint.

TO BUY: Valspar Signature Paint in Aquatic Mist (for similar), \$44 per gallon; lowes.com. Charlie Wallpaper, \$118 per roll; anthropologie.com.

primary bedroom & bathroom

The transformation of this room started at the top: "What's the point of having beams if they're not going to pop?" Jessica says. So she painted them black and brought in an ornate spindle bed frame to echo those dark tones. Jessica leaned into the odd shape of the room by creating two statement walls—one with Moroccan-inspired wallpaper, the other with jade green paint. The same paint, along with matching green subway tiles (set vertically), adorns an en suite bathroom.



TO BUY: Emerald Interior Acrylic Latex Paint in Kendal Green (for similar), \$83.50 per gallon; sherwin-williams.com. Sarah Sherman Samuel Moroccan Wallpaper Mural, \$188; luluandgeorgia.com.