

Modern Family

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Decade after decade, generation after generation, this Bloomfield Hills home has sailed through a plethora of design waves. See how this modern family put their stamp on this beautiful 1950s colonial.

TIMELESS FORESIGHT

In order to be a successful interior designer, it's critical to see beyond the present to bring a new vision to life. Sissy Yellen of Bloomfield Hills-based Sissy Yellen Living was tapped to use her visionary skills to modernize a lovely 1950s-era traditional colonial that was stuck in the '90s. The homeowners—a family of four with two young sons—loved the Bloomfield Hills home's "perfect location" and architectural style, but they wanted to infuse it with some vibrant New York flair.

Yellen says that her intentions were to offer each member of the family a space to call their own and to give the home timeless appeal. "My goal was to give the home another 30 years," she says. "You need to delicately balance your wants and needs with the reality, utility, and functionality of the future." The designer explains, "For example, older hardwood floors have such character and patina," she elaborates. "It's common and sometimes easier to replace them with engineered wood, but choosing to keep the original flooring and not waste the material, was a responsible decision by the homeowners."



The Sunroom is bright, airy, and thoughtfully appointed for a young family.

THE SUNROOM

With floor-to-ceiling windows, the living room was quickly dubbed “The Sunroom.” Yellen wanted the room to feel bright and offer multiple seating areas, each with a different view of the beautiful backyard. A daybed and drapery are upholstered in the lightest fabrics as they are the most decorative and touched the least, while workhorse pieces like the navy sectional sofa and off-white chairs are dressed in heavier, more durable fabrics for greater wear. When the designer was asked how white furniture could withstand two small children, she answers with two words: “performance fibers.” Yellen advises that this fabric is easy to clean and doesn’t require professional care for minor spills or sticky fingers.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Decoroom drapery hardware, fabric, and construction; Schumacher pillow material; Flooring Design rug; Joanne Ledbetter Designs lounge chairs, Alexandra June coffee table books.



The foyer exemplifies timeless elegance with its classic millwork and checkered marble floor.

FORMAL INTRODUCTION

“The foyer sets a formal tone leading into the dining room,” Yellen says. The designer balances original and new elements to give the space a seamless, modern feel. Some of the original features include the door casing and crown millwork, as well as the stair spindles and handrail. The older flooring was torn out and replaced with marble tiles in a checkerboard pattern. “To keep things interesting and give the space a bit of a modern edge, we introduced a second pattern through the stairway runner,” Yellen says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: CAI Designs chandelier and dining table.



A white backdrop gives this formal dining room free reign to accessorize according to any occasion or whim.

CLEAN SLATE

“The goal in the dining room was to have a flexible, all-season color palette that can be accessorized according to the occasion,” the designer says. The neutral base also allows the homeowner’s colorful china collection to shine. “We incorporated brass and acrylic finishes throughout the home to give it a relevant, updated feel,” she adds.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: **Decoroom** drapery construction and hardware; **Schumacher** drapery fabric and trim; **CAI Designs** chandelier and dining table.

With only one window supplying natural light in the kitchen, Yellen says keeping the space light and airy was essential. Bright white cabinetry and counters were layered with contrasting details like brass hardware and a marble tile backsplash with bone inlay.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Decoroom window shade construction; Schumacher window shade fabric; City Lights Detroit light fixtures; Beaver Tile and Stone backsplash.





A marble tile backsplash with bone inlay is positioned above the range, and quartz countertops were added for their high-performance quality.

KITCHEN REVIVAL

“We repositioned the appliances in the kitchen and installed huge, 30-inch refrigerator and freezer towers that flank each side of the range,” Yellen explains. An apron-front sink looks out into the yard, and the designer extended the island so that seating could be added for a quick bite to eat.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: **City Lights Detroit** sconces and pendants; **Beaver Tile and Stone** backsplash.



The long, narrow kitchen leads into the popular breakfast room.



Kitchen BEFORE

FAMILY FAVORITE

The long, narrow kitchen leads into the breakfast room—another light-filled space—where the family spends a lot of time. Yellen took care to select high-performance fabrics for chairs, cushions, and ottomans. “There are multiple seating arrangements for various tasks or to simply relax and watch television,” the designer says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: City Lights Detroit sconces and pendant lights; Beaver Tile and Stone backsplash; Flooring Design rug; CAI Designs dining table and chairs, lounge chairs, ottoman, and banquette; Designer Furniture Services + Fabrics ottoman fabric; Pindler chair and banquette fabrics.



The breakfast room is an ideal space for the family to gather, eat, or simply watch television.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: City Lights Detroit sconces; Flooring Design rug; CAI Designs dining table and chairs, lounge chairs, ottoman, and banquette; Designer Furniture Services + Fabrics ottoman and pillow fabric; Pindler chair and banquette fabrics.

The formal living room offers multiple conversation spaces for gatherings or listening to music.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: **Decoroom** drapery and window shade construction and hardware; **Schumacher** drapery and window shade fabric; **Alexandra June** coffee table books.



IT'S PERSONAL

The formal living room offers ample seating for conversation or to enjoy a tune from the piano nestled in the corner. “The ceilings are a bit lower, so we opted for a light fixture that doesn’t hang too low, but spreads across the ceiling,” the designer clarifies. The focal points in the space include the light fixture as well as floral-patterned window treatments, coordinating pillows, and photography.

The homeowners’ personalities enrich the space with artwork by British photographer David Yarrow, and “is a nod to their sports affiliation as Detroiters as well as their worldly perspective,” Yellen explains. “One of the owners collects coffee table books, each reflecting a personal connection to cities she’s visited, Olympians she admires as a former Olympic athlete, and her favorite artists. They’re not just props, they’re a true reflection of her life and experiences.”



Living Room BEFORE



Living Room AFTER

Special touches such as a lion photograph by famed photographer David Yarrow and interesting coffee table books personalize the space.



AVAILABLE AT MDC: Decoroom drapery and window shade construction and hardware; **Schumacher** drapery and window shade fabric; **Alexandra June** coffee table books.



The powder room mirrors design elements found throughout the home.



Powder Room BEFORE

COMMON THEME

Yellen completely renovated the powder room, replacing everything to maintain harmony with the foyer and overall balance of the home. “This space aligns with the traditional checkerboard marble flooring, modern plumbing, and light fixtures,” she explains. Thoughtful details extend to the little ones as well—a sleek Lucite step stool sits at the base of the sink. “I strive to make everything both functional and beautiful,” she adds.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Schumacher wallpaper;
CAI Designs sconces.



The owner's home office features sports memorabilia that illustrate his hometown connection.

HOME OFFICE HOME RUN

Yellen set out to design a sophisticated home office that features the owner's sports collection in an understated way. While much of the memorabilia has a monochromatic color scheme, the designer pulled out a touch of green for the interior paint which frames the space and makes the artwork stand out.

"The books on the shelf aren't just filler," Yellen notes regarding the homeowner who is an avid reader. "They vary in subject, so to make them more visually appealing, I flip the spine of the book to the back of the shelf to give a uniform appearance. It's a little trick that I have."

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Gunnar Olivier Design Farrow & Ball interior paint; **City Lights Detroit** table lamps; **CAI Designs** sofa.



The eldest son's room has plenty of space to grow with its classic motifs and playful accessories.



Yellen incorporated youthful elements like beloved stuffed animals and pieces that are nods to family history.

ONE TO GROW ON

The eldest child's room has a mix of lighthearted and mature décor that offers years of longevity. For example, “the painting of the horse is more serious and the knobs on the dresser are playful, and we incorporated some of his stuffed animals to make the space more youthful,” Yellen says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: City Lights Detroit lamp and light fixture; Decoroom window covering construction; Schumacher window covering fabric; Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils custom lamp shade, bedding, and chair fabrics.





The youngest child's room is filled with his favorite toys and just a fraction of his book collection.

READ THE ROOM

The designer says that her starting point in the youngest child's room was the equestrian motif wallpaper. "The child is fun and full of energy, so I wanted his room to be sophisticated and playful," she says. The floorplan allowed seating, storage, and floor space to play. Personal elements include Dachshund stuffed animals that represent family pets, and the blue tufted ottoman was passed down from his older sibling. "What you see on the bookshelf is one-one hundredth of his book collection," Yellen says. "He's a big book lover."

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils wallpaper; Decoroom window covering construction; Schumacher window covering fabric; City Lights Detroit ceiling-mount light fixture.



The serene primary bedroom has a clean palette that is warmed with plush fabrics and floor coverings.



The primary bedroom is a balance of traditional and contemporary décor with a modern bed frame and classic bedside tables.

CLEAN AND SERENE

The primary bedroom, with its serene atmosphere and clean color palette, is a mix of modern pieces with traditional accents. “I wanted the space to be cohesive with the rest of the house and to have a light and airy feel with classic accents like the dark nightstands,” Yellen says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: **Decoroom** drapery and window shade construction and hardware; **Designer Furniture Services + Fabrics** drapery panels and window shade fabrics, **CAI Designs** nightstands and bench; **Schumacher** bench fabric; **Alexandra June** books.



The central positioning of the tub creates a graceful focal point when you enter the en suite.



After a full renovation, the primary bathroom includes a bevy of modern conveniences and is a natural complement to the bedroom.

PERFECT COMPLEMENT

“The homeowners wanted the primary bathroom to aesthetically mirror the bedroom,” Yellen explains. “So, the color palette is similar and there are repeated elements like brass fixtures as well as white, gray, and soft beige. It feels like an extension of the bedroom and not just another room.” The space was renovated to replace an oversized deck tub with a free-standing bathtub and a large shower. The room was reformatted to include a modern, private water closet, and his and her vanities as well.

“A primary bathroom is a good place to selectively incorporate fine fabrics,” Yellen advises. “The trim on this window shade is made of silk, for example. Whereas the living room has frequent touch points, that isn’t a concern in this bathroom.”

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Decoroom window shade fabrication, Schumacher window shade fabric, trim, and wallpaper; Beaver Tile and Stone flooring tile; City Lights Detroit lighting, CAI Designs wall mirror.



The primary closet offers ample storage and space to display the homeowner's handbag and shoe collections.

GRACEFUL AND GIRLY

A former guest room was converted into a large closet and private space for the lady of the house. Now connected to the primary suite, the room houses a collection of handbags and shoes that are prominently displayed when you enter the space. Yellen took special care to design the closet so that her petite client could easily access anything she needs. "Organization was important, so there are drawers for accessories, sunglasses, etc.," the designer notes. "A make-up vanity for cosmetics was important as well. It's a very girly space." The homeowner concurs. "It's a very comfortable place to spend time," she says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Gunnar Olivier Design Farrow & Ball interior paint; **City Lights Detroit** ceiling light fixture; **Decoroom** chaise and make-up chair upholstery with **Schumacher** chaise and make-up chair fabric.

NEXT GENERATION

“The homeowners had a very distinct vision,” Yellen says. “I took their lead, and the home is a celebration of their upbringing, perspective, and style. I think it’s a lovely family home. Historic homes aren’t easy to renovate or maintain—there’s lots of quirks. With the help of my construction team and architect, we gave the home timeless longevity. It was a privilege to execute that in the best way possible.” When the homeowner was asked how she felt about the final result, she said, “We never want to leave!”