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# Luxe Redux

*Designer Talli Roberts uncovers the hidden potential in a dream home in Asheville's Ramble community*

WRITTEN BY JOANNE O'SULLIVAN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID DIETRICH

The location was perfect. The size was just right. When the family—relocating from Florida—found the traditional home in The Ramble community in Asheville, they knew it was loaded with potential that just hadn't been realized yet. A few cosmetic changes would transform the new property into a family home as comfortable as the one they were leaving behind.

On second thought, maybe just a few more updates, with some changes that were a little more substantive. The home really had to make sense for the couple's three kids and dog. A more personal feel with inviting outdoor spaces would go a long way toward achieving that, so the family called on local experts, including Talli Roberts of Allard + Roberts Interior Design, to help transform the home.

When all was said and done, the house had been almost completely re-envisioned, from the exterior stucco and brick veneer—



**HIGHS & LOWS** To meet the homeowners' desire for coziness, the design and construction team dramatically altered the living room, which previously had a vaulted ceiling. Installing a low ceiling allowed for the addition of a library upstairs, while folding doors opened up the space to the outdoor living room. Patterns are at play throughout, including on the dining room ceiling.



now painted in a classic monochrome—to the stylish custom bar area in the kitchen. This Ramble renovation was “an exercise in neutrals, patterns, and texture,” Roberts says, bringing a contemporary but informal feel to the home. Barely recognizable from its previous look, it has a timeless quality that required a skilled eye and a top-notch team to unlock its potential.

For some, a soaring ceiling adds a feeling of expansiveness. But for this family, the goal was quite the opposite: they wanted

a cozy feeling in the common spaces on the ground floor, where the family would spend most of their time together. The vaulted ceiling in the living room felt more like a wasted space, working against the sense of intimacy the family was hoping for. Roberts and her team reimagined it with a clever solution: installing a lower ceiling of bleached walnut in the living room and kitchen, unifying the two rooms, and adding texture. This addition—not without its technical challenges—was so



*"I love mixing steel, wood, and stone inside and outside of a home. It's the perfect mix of finishes for the WNC lifestyle."*

—TALLI ROBERTS







**REPEAT AFTER ME** Pattern and texture play a role in the kitchen's quartzite island countertop and backsplash as well as the white oak cabinetry, and also in the geometric tile mosaic in the powder room (far right). Roberts says subtle pattern repetition can be used to unify the look of an entire home. Above, the library that was created above the living room

effective it allowed for the creation of a new room upstairs, a library. "We made two rooms out of one," says Roberts. The new upstairs library also met one of the

family's design needs: the custom built-ins in the library allow for a colorful presentation of cherished family memories and antique photos.







**INSIDE OUT** Accessed via folding doors from the living and kitchen area, the outdoor living room is an oasis overlooking the pool and back patio. The fireplace received an overhaul; stone was replaced with white-painted bricks and new cement mantles.

With the unifying ceiling design (and the same flooring through the two rooms), the opportunity to explore pattern emerged. Roberts made use of it in the delicate natural veins of gray in the quartzite island countertop and backsplash and the simple geometric pattern on the custom white oak cabinetry. The lines of the black cabinets behind the kitchen bar feature simple geometric shapes as well. In the powder room (just off the kitchen), 12 x 12-inch tiles arranged in a playful yet sophisticated mosaic extend the motif, along with the walnut legs and crisscrossed wood base of the custom vanity.

Roberts calls the ceiling in the dining room her “design baby,” a ribbed beam design extending that simple geometric motif. Rather than a detached, untouchable room for special occasions, the formal dining space was intended for “meals and memories with loved ones”—a warm and

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*“[The girls] had a blast going over wallpaper and fabric selections. When it came time to go over carpeting, they kicked off their shoes and tested all the samples!”*

—THE HOMEOWNER

intimate space with “moody” lighting and wall texture. Like upholstery in other areas of the house, the chairs here are stain-treated to keep them family friendly.

Involving the family was more than just theoretical. Roberts traveled to Florida to visit their home in advance of the relocation to determine the furniture they’d bring and get the input of the daughters.

“They had a blast going over wallpaper and fabric selections,” says the homeowner. “When it came time to go over carpeting, they kicked off their shoes and tested all the samples!” Each decided what she wanted to bring and shared her dreams for the new house, resulting in a unique look for each of the bedrooms: butter yellow with custom open shelves, a sophisticated



**SLEEP TIGHT** Roberts worked with the daughters to select color palettes and furnishings. In one room, a wallpapered accent wall and window seat make for a cozy nook. In another, a brightly patterned silk scarf Roberts found on a trip to Mexico turned out to be a perfect complement to the window treatments.

pale palette, and a show-stopping purple-accented window seat. “It was a joy working with Talli and her crew. They really listen to what one wants and needs,” says the homeowner.

Roberts didn’t just consult with the family. The whole process involved a team of professionals and was “very collaborative,” she says. The renovation





**BED, BATH & BEYOND** The master suite is awash in soft neutral tones. The master bathroom received an overhaul, including new cabinetry, countertops, bathtub, and window treatments. And the custom closet is a dream.

crew included Steve Hammett of M.S. Hammett Construction, Eric Daffron on architecture, and Asheville's Square Peg for carpentry including the ceilings. Roberts commissioned work from North Carolina makers whenever possible, including many of the upholstered pieces and

accents such as the pillows in the master bedroom. Rugs were sourced locally from Togar and Textura. Much of the original artwork in the home comes from WNC galleries including Haen Gallery and Blue Spiral 1, with paintings by Asheville artist Wendy Whitson in the bedroom and



Ed Nash in the library and living room.

The master suite was transformed into a quiet oasis. While the floor in the master bathroom stayed put (one of the few features that did), the cabinetry was replaced and the elegant sheers frame an inviting freestanding tub.

The renovation didn't end at the back wall of the house. In fact, it included it. Bifold doors in the living room open onto an outdoor living room, creating a seamless transition between the two, encouraging indoor-outdoor air flow. The geometric lines incorporated into the outdoor chimney echo the ones indoors, with dark,





**PRIVATE OASIS** The lower-level rec room is a spot for relaxing, with multiple seating areas and a bar and window that opens up to the pool. Just outside is a covered outdoor dining area (top), with a bluestone patio, pool, and spa beyond.

monochromatic panels and horizontal mantels punctuating white brickwork. The ceiling fan (made from exterior-rated wood) and outdoor fireplace make this a year-round covered porch. This cozy but stylish gathering place overlooks the newly added pool and spa area, with its bluestone patio and clusters of comfortable seating. On the pool level, there's a covered outdoor dining area, where a custom table with bench and armless chair seating is ideal for gatherings. There's also access to a casual lower-level bar/rec room area that echoes the neutral tones and attention to texture seen elsewhere in the home.

The house represents what Roberts says are the defining features of what she loves in home design in the mountains



these days. "It's the mix of textures and finishes," she says. "I love mixing steel, wood, and stone inside and outside of a home. It's the perfect mix of finishes for the WNC lifestyle." All that potential was present in the home, just waiting to be discovered.

## RESOURCES

**Interior Design:** Allard + Roberts Interior Design  
**Architect:** Eric Daffron  
**Construction:** M.S. Hammett Construction  
**Ceilings & Carpentry:** Square Peg  
**Countertops & Cabinetry:** Keystone Kitchen & Bath  
**Tile:** Horizons Tile  
**Lighting & Sound:** Crowne Audio  
**Window Treatments:** Blinds and Designs  
**Hearth & Mantle:** Hardcore Concrete  
**Custom Kitchen Hood:** The Heirloom Companies