

# RIGHT AT HOME

Interior designer Andrew Howard and his family just opened the best present: a house of their own in Jacksonville, Florida



**SIGNATURE SHADE**  
The family room introduces Andrew's go-to palette of blue and ivory.





**FAMILY PORTRAIT**  
Katie and Andrew Howard with their sons, Henry (on left) and Jack

### SCALE DOWN

A grand entrance wouldn't have sent the welcoming signal Andrew wanted for the house, so he opted for wide steps laid with antique brick instead, leaving just enough room for a pair of The Magnolia Company's small magnolia trees and two potted 'Blue Point' junipers from The *Southern Living* Plant Collection. Above the door, he hung an extra-long magnolia garland, letting the ends trail all the way down to the floor. Wary of the children's fingerprints, he coated the door with a smudge-repellent lacquer (Benjamin Moore's Graphite, 1603) and clad the exterior with super-durable James Hardie fiber-cement siding.

and sons Jack, 10, and Henry, 7, he made sure to include a whole-house speaker system.

It's just one of the many features he chose for the Cape Cod-style home that he and his wife designed from the ground up. "This wasn't a house that I put together instantly," he says. "I collected these ideas while we waited until we could do it right."

"Right" for the tight-knit Howards meant a design that encourages them to hang out in the same space and offers big doses of color. No room is off-limits to the boys, so Andrew strategically chose tiles, fabrics, and wallcoverings that can stand up to their play without sacrificing any of the design panache he's known for.

After years of dreaming and planning, their home feels special enough that just a light dressing of magnolia garland (from Andrew's favorite Florida purveyor, The Magnolia Company) and potted evergreens is about all they need to get ready for the holiday season. "This keeps it festive without taking away from the decoration of the house," Katie says.

Andrew agrees, "It feels like, as you get older, that magic of Christmas goes away, but we got a bit of that back."

IT'S THE MORNING AFTER THANKSGIVING, and for the Howards, Christmas starts now—not with stringing lights or hunting for the perfect tree (that will happen in a few days) but with *John Denver and the Muppets: A Christmas Together* playing throughout the Jacksonville, Florida, home.

"We listen to holiday music almost to the point of insanity; it's nonstop," interior designer Andrew Howard says of his family's number one seasonal tradition. So when he designed a new home to share with his wife, Katie (a speech therapist),



### HIDDEN FIGURES

In a tongue-in-cheek move, Andrew filled what he calls his man cave primarily with items designed or made by women, like this abstract artwork by Patricia Iglesias.

### LOOK UP

Home to the television that runs the NORAD Santa tracker almost without a break leading up to Christmas, the den is the family's cocoon-like hangout thanks to the lacquered walls (again, "no handprints!" he points out) in a rich Prussian blue, the deep sofa, and a wallpapered ceiling. "I think the ceiling is kind of like curtains and rugs; if you've done something interesting there, the room feels more complete," he says.

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**SATURATION POINT**

By the time he designed the entry area, Andrew had overdosed on blue and white, so he shifted to aqua green to create a solarium feel.

**PLAN FOR ACTION**

"This room is not as delicate as it seems," Andrew says of the foyer. The custom bamboo-and-leaf mural is meant to surprise guests, but its durability is even more unexpected. The aqua background is just flat paint, so he can touch it up himself if the boys ding it. For the same reason, the baseboards are painted rather than stained. Underfoot, he laid a tough-as-nails, easy-to-mop porcelain tile from Mosaic House.



**SPREAD THE LOVE**

"Always have fresh plants in the house to bring home the season," is Andrew's yearlong mantra, but it's especially fitting at Christmas, when white cut amaryllis (from the Amaryllis & Caladium Bulb Co.) and potted evergreens in ginger jars are all it takes to make the dining room festive. The white table setting doesn't compete with the blue-on-blue scheme, inspired by the Iksel wallpaper that he bookmarked years ago for his own future home.





**LAYER ON LATTICE**

He traded color for texture to help dial down the master bedroom from the rest of the house, but he didn't sleep on a big wow moment. "I saw a lattice ceiling in Nantucket, Massachusetts, and then again at the Kennedys' home on Cape Cod," he says. "If the Kennedys did it, then it has to be cool."



**HAPPY DISCOVERIES**  
This room was initially planned for guests, but Jack and Henry stayed here on their first night in the house and never left.

**DOUBLE UP**

The couple put a second, smaller tree in the bunk room the boys share and instructed them to load it up with their handmade and sentimental ornaments. "We have the best of both worlds," Andrew says. "At night downstairs, we can stare at our coordinated tree for hours, and every other ornament (tacky, pretty, or somewhere in between) finds a home up here." A fresh bay leaf garland and knit stockings from Sundance Catalog enhance the cheer.



**TAKE A CHANCE**

Andrew suggests experimenting in a guest bedroom because it will rarely be used. He took his own advice and pulled an aqua color (Benjamin Moore's Sonoma Skies, 737) from the Quadrille wallpaper to cover the ceiling. "It felt like a smoother transition than having just white," he says. A vintage rattan four-poster bed and nightstand match the exuberance of the walls. **SL**