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Just Right

A FLORIDA FAMILY FINDS ITS PERFECT
 MATCH IN AN ENGLISH-INSPIRED HOME
 DESIGNED BY ANDREW HOWARD



Living room An indigo pattern from Schumacher gets double play at the windows and on an armchair with nailhead trim. A pair of sofas from Lee Industries are upholstered in a slate cotton velvet. An armchair with saffron-yellow leather offers a shot of warmth to the cool palette. **Family** Manala and Christian Douglas with daughters London Rose, 4, and Isla, 3. **Exterior** The Douglasses wanted a house that felt like a modern, Florida-style take on an English country manor. **Preceding pages** French doors off the living room offer access to a poolside seating area in shades of blue and beige. In the living room, a dark-painted ceiling becomes the perfect foil for an antique brass chandelier from Arteriors.



FOR designer Andrew Howard, more isn't always more. "Not every piece in a room needs to be the star," he says. "Every space should have only one or two shining stars. Those elements should take center stage while other pieces fall into the background. If everything stands out, nothing stands out."

Family friends and clients Christian and Manala Douglas took that advice to heart when working with Howard on their newest—and hopefully forever—home in Jacksonville, Florida.

Inspired by a visit to Chatsworth House, a renowned mansion in Christian's home country of England, the couple wanted a modern version of an English country manor—an unpretentious home with functional, updated, and, most important, family-friendly interiors to accommodate their growing family. (They have two young daughters: London Rose, 4, and Isla, 3.)

"We wanted a home that has a designer look without being unapproachable," Manala says. "A space that reflects our personalities and looks flawless while still hiding juice accidents."

So Howard went to work, keeping interiors updated and cleaned by incorporating relatively sparse plasterwork and avoiding

heavy moldings and architectural details. Next, the designer added visual interest with color, sculptural fixtures, and strategically placed pops of pattern.

In the living room, Howard's one (or two) shining-star edict holds true. A large-scale antique brass chandelier draws the eye, set against a ceiling stained dark to add what he calls "human scale" to the room.

"That fixture is definitely the centerpiece here," Manala says. "It feels like a piece of jewelry set off against black velvet. It becomes the Hope Diamond in the room."

The room's co-star is a Japanese-inspired, indigo-hue fabric used in draperies and as upholstery on a club chair. The rest of the room revolves around color, comfort, and usability. Fabric-fronted cabinets flank the fireplace and provide storage. Two large chesterfields clad in slate cotton velvet and a vibrant yellow leather armchair round out the cast of characters and offer plentiful family seating.

"The ceiling and the windows really deserved to be the standouts here," Howard says. "The rest of the room was kept relatively simple. The sisal rug and sofas almost recede in comparison." As for the splash of yellow, the designer believes every successful



room needs layers of color. "The yellow plays off the blue beautifully," he notes. "It's a standard Florida palette with a bit of a spin—more hip and modern."

That updated coastal color scheme spills over into the kitchen. The living room's blue is mirrored in countertop-to-ceiling Moroccan-inspired tile. Playing off that hue is a mix of neutral yet elegant elements—from the mirrored cabinets that house Manala's beloved wedding china to an industrial-style island with a Calacatta Gold marble countertop.

The real showstopper here, however, is the curved-apron hood with brass banding. Other elements were chosen for their supporting roles. "The hood was actually a given before we even started the house," Howard says. "Manala and Christian had seen it and fallen in love with it." He notes that he designed everything else in the room so it wouldn't detract from the hood. "It's the mack daddy in the room, no doubt," the designer adds. "Even the lighting was purposefully kept smaller in scale so as not to compete with it."

Though the dining room is arguably all about neutrals and a mix of metals—a grass-cloth wallcovering with faux-gold rivets, curvaceous



Porch A sisal rug adds interior flair to this exterior space. The pillows and blue-and-white ceramic garden stools from Mrs. Howard add a dose of cool color to the otherwise neutral space. Sofas and chairs are from HomeGoods.



Master bedroom Amethyst velvet draperies with custom pelmets "feel like they should be in a hotel suite," says designer Andrew Howard. Master bath Blue tile from New Ravenna was installed vertically for visual interest. Manala's closet Benjamin Moore's "Pink Ruffle" gives a girly edge to Manala's dressing room.



cream-color dining chairs with nailhead trim, faceted gilt lamps, and a nickel starburst chandelier—the home's most personal item shines brightly here.

"To me, this room started with the artwork," says Manala of a brilliantly colored Hermès scarf, which is framed above the credenza. The scarf is special to her because it was a gift from her aunt, but had been in her closet for almost 12 years. "I finally have the right place for it, and it's really one of the highlights of this house to me. It makes me feel like I'm home."

Against the room's otherwise quiet palette, the intricate piece comes to life—serendipitously playing off the home's coastal-with-a-twist scheme. A marriage made in design heaven.

Stepping into the home's more personal zone—the master suite—color becomes less reserved and more personalized. The primarily blue palette takes a backseat to more romantic hues. Purples and pinks grab the spotlight, but are used strategically—in Billy Baldwin-inspired window treatments and an utterly feminine closet.

"In my mind, these are rooms where it's OK to step outside of the box colorwise," Howard says. "Your living room isn't necessar-

ily that space, but why not in your master bedroom?" He admits to some nervousness when Manala said she wanted a pink closet. "But in the end, we really embraced it, and it turned out beautifully. It's just a warm, happy hue."

A mix of textures as well as buoyant color distinguishes the bedroom's serene atmosphere. A white flokati rug, a tufted headboard, a smattering of animal prints, and heavy, velvety curtains encourage total retreat.

"It's almost as if you're given a big bear hug every time you walk into the room," Howard says with a laugh. Manala wholeheartedly agrees. "It feels like a luxurious, romantic hotel suite," she says. "It's toy-free, kid-free, and impactful."

It's also a place she'd like to call home forever. "This is our third home in this neighborhood," she notes, adding that she believes the house reflects both her and her husband's personalities. "It's truer to us than anywhere else we've lived. I feel like this is our third bowl of porridge, and it's just right."

Interior designer: Andrew Howard **Residential designer:** Kevin Gray
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