

AT HOME

Setting down roots of great design in Alexandria home

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
Special to *The Examiner*

After years of decorating some of the finest homes in the area, interior designer Virginia Norment finally got the chance to design a house of her own.

A newlywed three years ago, Norment and her husband ditched their Washington single pads — hers a narrow row house and his a one-bedroom condo — and settled into a 2,000-square-foot single-family home in the Beverly Hills section of Alexandria.

With a husband indifferent to design, Norment felt free to create spaces that reflect her style: casual sophistication.

“My husband is a prince. Thankfully he doesn’t feel like he has any taste, so I got to do whatever I want,” Norment said. “Also, he’s seen my work and the projects I’ve done and trusts me.”

Fun, fresh and fashionable, Norment combines neutrals and metallics with ease, creating a sense of flare and familiarity.



PHOTOS BY ANDREW HARNIK/EXAMINER

Interior designer Virginia Norment got to decorate her own house when she and her husband bought their first single-family home.

“I wanted the design to be timeless,” she said. “I don’t plan on moving for a while. We really wanted to put down roots.”

In the family room, located behind the kitchen, Norment captures elements of nature in an updated play on rustic. A massive rustic pine cabinet with two large windowpane

glass doors stands in front of brick walls painted in a deep olive-gray.

The brick, originally part of the home’s exterior, also can be found in the foyer. A room-sized jute woven rug from West Elm rests on oak floors and sits under a large, rectangular coffee table made of wide pine planks mounted on an iron base.

A collection of colorful vintage glass bottles in various sizes sits atop the pine cabinet and is clustered on the floor. The bottle colors, neutral pale blues, greens and browns, replicate colors found throughout the house. Perched near the window is a long Crocodile Palm, a dried leaf of a palm tree with spikes that resemble crocodile teeth.

Two tall chairs upholstered in sage-colored linen fabric flank an antique drafting table. A wingback Federal chair that had belonged to a relative was reupholstered with bold metallic prints on linen from Osborne & Little, one of Norment’s favorites for fabrics.

The dining room is all about sophistication. Taupe, nail-trimmed microsuede chairs surround a large wooden round black table. A Palecek pendant lamp of intertwined driftwood formed into a globe hangs over the table. The same style branches are featured in two dark-wood-framed rectangular panels hung horizontally.

A dramatic floral print on drapes from Osborne & Little flanks a small window in the room. The fabric contains every blue, green, brown, gray and beige found in the design color scheme. “These drapes are the defining part of the design. I think

Norment’s tips for making your space look bigger

Before starting her residential design business, Norment spent more than 10 years decorating model homes for area builders, using techniques that created the illusion of more space and depth in the room. Here are her tips for creating “space” in your own home:

1. Hang window treatments as close to the ceiling as possible.
2. Light colors on walls make rooms look larger.
3. Raise the bed off the floor, via bed risers or with the frame.
4. Choose different textures to create warmth.
5. Use “look books” for inspiration. Copy a look you love, even if you can’t replicate it piece by piece.

SOURCE: VIRGINIA NORMENT, VIRGINIA NORMENT INTERIORS, VANORMENTINTERIORS.COM



they bring everything together,” she said.

A real zebra-skin rug sets the tone for the living room, which features many Asian- and tribal-inspired accents. A cozy beige sectional sits across from a black nail-trimmed leather chair with an accent pillow made from the fabric in the adjacent dining room. A large deep mahogany Asian-style coffee table complements twin black X-sided bookshelves.

The master bedroom and kitchen are works in progress, but Norment said now that she has planted her roots, she has plenty of time for pruning and perfecting.

Comparing some remodelers can be like comparing a meek sapling to a mighty oak.



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