

# Renovations create spiritually uplifting family area

By **Merlisa Lawrence Corbett**  
Special to the Washington Examiner

When Sally Poling decided to renovate her Ellicott City home two years ago, she wanted to eliminate the feeling she got when she walked through the main level. "It depressed me," she said. "It was dark and dated."

Poling turned to designer Brad Weesner, who specializes in holistic design — incorporating architecture, landscaping and interiors. Determined to create a space reflective of Poling's personality, Weesner designed a spalike retreat on the home's main level. With soothing neutral blues, grays and creams, the first floor is elegant but inviting, calm, warm and spiritually uplifting.

Previously decked with 1980s tapestries, red velvet furniture and pumpkin-colored walls, the first floor was a collection of boxy rooms lacking style. One wall, which separated the kitchen from the family room, seemed inadvertently placed to obstruct the flow of natural light from the sunroom to the rest of the house.

"I would wake up in the morning and walk out into this dark space," Poling said.

Weesner, who has experience building homes, replaced solid walls with a sequence of wide archways, which formed a corridor around the family room. This created a cloister along a wall of windows at the back of the house, where there used to be a sunroom. The windows overlook a beautifully landscaped back yard with a slate patio and outdoor furniture fit for fine dining. Taupe bamboo linen drapes cover the windows.

In the kitchen, Weesner replaced a vaulted ceiling with a traditional 9-foot ceiling.

"I like a space to feel human," Weesner said of the importance of proportion and scale.

Luxuriously Old World, with a nod to European country, the kitchen is classic and charming. Antique, cream-colored cabinetry, custom-made by Olde Mill Cabinetry of Frederick, Md., features dentil molding along the top. A decorative cornice is mounted above the Viking range. A bare wall paneled in the same wood finish as the cabi-



**BEFORE:** When Sally Poling walked through her main level, it felt dark and dated. She enlisted the help of designer Brad Weesner to create a space that reflected her personality.



PHOTO COURTESY AMY ELIZABETH

**A place to sit**

Two cross-back chairs with a faux metallic finish accompany two large glass cocktail tables in the center of the space.

**Coordinated colors**

The room is fitted with a Thomas O'Brien-designed Safavieh silk and wool rug in soft blues and grays.

**A touch of class**

Two high-back Neoclassical chairs in light blue are tailored with dressmaker flounces, which add formality to the room.

**AFTER:** The family room that was once dark and dreary is now sun-drenched and inviting. The space is filled with coordinated pieces including cross-back chairs, Neoclassical chairs, glass cocktail tables and a Thomas O'Brien rug.

netry gives the room a cohesive and sophisticated feel. Weesner accented the luxurious cabinets with his signature, curved corners, barely visible from afar.

"The closer you get, the more things are revealed," he said.

Taupe shadow marble countertops and backsplash sparkle like jewels over the cabinetry. A mahogany island topped by black granite anchors the room. A large polished nickel lantern hangs over the island.

The counters' double-beveled edge replicates the double-beveled panels on the cabinet doors and the two-level step down into the family room. "I love repeating forms," Weesner said.

Weesner used Neoclassical shapes

**Resources**

**Designer**  
» Brad Weesner Design  
bradweesnerdesign.com

**Fabrics**  
» Beacon Hill Fabrics  
beaconhilldesign.com  
» Kravet  
kravet.com

**Furniture**  
» Christopher Guy  
christopherguy.com  
» Baker Furniture  
bakerfurniture.com

**Kitchen cabinets**  
» Olde Mill Cabinetry, Frederick  
oldemillcabinetry.com

throughout the home, especially in the family room. Dentil molding wraps around the entire first floor. Two high-back Neoclassical chairs upholstered in soft blue are tailored with dressmaker flounces, which add formality to the otherwise casual and comfy seats.

Across from the upholstered pair are two cross-back chairs with a faux metallic finish. The pairs of chairs are separated by two large glass cocktail tables. The room is fitted with a Thomas O'Brien-designed Safavieh silk and wool rug with soft blues and grays. The rug coordinates well with the walls, painted in Benjamin Moore's Edgecomb Gray, which contains a hint of blue, appearing almost creamy beige. "It's a warmer gray," Weesner said.

Custom-made tree-branch sconces are mounted in tall niches on the archway walls. This allowed Weesner to minimize the use of many floor and table lamps, which gives the interior a cleaner look.

A whimsical two-legged console table designed by Christopher Guy is attached to the wall. "That's my absolute favorite piece," Poling said.

No longer stuck in the dark, Poling enjoys walking into her remodeled, sun-drenched family room. "It just feels better," she said. "It was functional and just fine before. But this is more me."

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