

pretty practical

FOR THIS
MINNEAPOLIS
COUPLE, AN
ADDITION TO
THE FAMILY
CALLED FOR A
CHANGE IN THE
DECORATING
EQUATION.

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At the heart of daily life is the family room, also called the "garden room" for its views of the perennial gardens outside. An antique table isn't too precious for feet or toy trucks. Cubbies tucked beneath the window seat offer kid-friendly storage.





Rachel Johnson Hamlin and Tom Hamlin were accustomed to living life on their own terms, content with their professional roles as attorneys in Minneapolis; their community service work; and their tidy, beautiful, grown-up home. Then, after 10 years of marriage, son Luke joined the family. Soon, puzzle pieces and action figures could be found hiding in the puddles of silk drapery panels. Happily, life and home decor were no longer for adults only, and this home needed to adapt.

But how do you commingle elegance with the élan of a young boy? "We needed a place to be together as a family, but I still needed it to be pretty," Rachel says. The family turned to Lucy Penfield of Lucy Interior Design of Minneapolis for help. Rachel had no problem with staking claim for grown-ups as long as there was equal time and space for family. "I wanted a place to take the wear and tear instead of the living room—we still like to keep it as a formal place for guests," she says.

Penfield started with a plan to open up the kitchen and add a family room where the Hamlins could cook and cuddle together, where messes could be made and then hidden from view at the end of the day. But beauty was not sacrificed for practicality. Penfield designed the family-friendly addition to complement the stylish, serene decor of the living room and the grown-up glamour of the master bedroom.

Color became the key ingredient that tethered one room to another. "I remember showing Rachel this beautiful palette of fabrics one day—with color—and she was giddy about it. It was like channeling something inside of her. And that was the beginning of the scheme," Penfield says.

With her newfound color courage, Rachel gave Penfield full rein to move it boldly through the home. In the entry, a welcoming coral bench tips off visitors to what lies



THIS PHOTO: Modern meets tradition head-on in the family room. Vintage-inspired lamps, baskets, and plenty of down pillows cozy up boxy upholstery and modern art. OPPOSITE LEFT: The home's exterior exudes traditional style with shake shingles, crisp white shutters, and English gardens. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Interior designer Lucy Penfield, left, and homeowner Rachel Johnson Hamlin.



THIS PHOTO: Refinement defines the living room. Asian touches—the coffee table, the *étagère*, and the charming antique bench at the fireplace—are design staples for Penfield. **OPPOSITE TOP:** A shapely leather armchair and bronze drum table bring sculptural, curvy forms to the square fireplace. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Modern art gives stylistic balance to the living room's traditional upholstered pieces.





buying art

Before working with designer Lucy Penfield, homeowner Rachel Johnson Hamlin had never purchased a piece of art. "I was completely insecure about it," she says. Penfield recommended art consultant Kim Coventry, who met with Rachel and her husband, toured the home, and asked about their preferences. "Then she began to send us images of art," Rachel says. "We began to see what we liked and developed the confidence to buy a few pieces. I have never regretted one purchase of art. It is a process, and that is what we most enjoy about it."



lucy's look

■ **Make a traditional room more modern** with transitional (read: simple and boxy) shapes in neutral fabrics. Add color in pillows and art.

■ **Mix formal and casual pieces** for a collected look. Penfield chose a traditional skirted sofa in the family room, but paired it with bright prints and a weathered coffee table with a woven top.

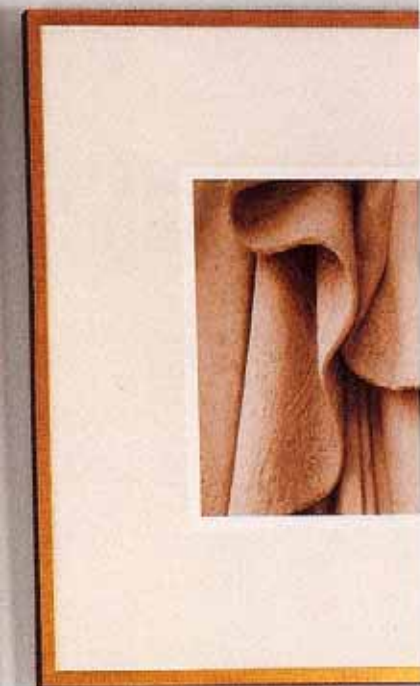
■ **Use large objects** and accessories—such as the low bronze table and cast silvery vases in the living room—for interest, texture, and impact.

■ **Add something black** for visual weight. The bedroom's armoires, the living room's étagère, and the family room's lamp are power points.



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THIS PHOTO: A hint of sparkle in the master bedroom takes the robin's egg blue and mocha brown palette from pretty to glamorous. ABOVE RIGHT: A curtain—or portiere—provides a soft transition between the sleeping space and dressing area. Each space has its own black armoire—one for the TV and the other for accessories, sweaters, and linens.

ahead. Penfield used color in the living room like a modern artist with a large, neutral canvas—a splash of salmon and Chinese red here, with bits of curry yellow and blue there. As a more formal space than the family room, the living room includes a leather wing chair and a creamy sofa with silk pillows for added color.

The family room, where color and pattern cheerfully meet, does not compromise on style, but required that Penfield be practical. Stone flooring proves virtually indestructible, and an antique Chinese elm coffee table easily doubles as a fort for Luke, now 6. Cotton canvas upholstery on side chairs is rugged, and heavy-duty textured cotton on the sofa offers durability to belie its elegant look. Easy-to-reach colorful canvas bins tuck under the window seat to make kid-friendly space for toys, books, and art supplies. "We wanted this room to be less about display and more about storage," Rachel says.

While Rachel still has her pretty spaces for the grown-ups, now there is room for the puzzles and action figures, too. "This is a home for Tom, Rachel, and Luke, not for show," Penfield says. Rachel agrees with the sentiment. "Lucy's gift is her ability to create something that is 'us,'" she says.

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THIS PHOTO: "If you are adding on a family room, you might as well add on a porch," Rachel says. Simple, affordable wicker furniture and happy colors make this a favorite sunny spot. **OPPOSITE:** The adjacent deck offers open-air space. "We love our time outdoors because it's so short in Minnesota," Rachel says.



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think practical

"But don't bail on pretty!" Penfield says. Just because the room has to be kidproof doesn't mean you have to compromise the look. Here, Penfield shares some reliable tips on making any room family-friendly.

- **Stone or tile floors** wear well and make a timeless statement. Glass will break, but spills wipe up and the floors can withstand the rolling wheels of toy cars and trucks. For softness, add an inexpensive rug that rolls up for summer.
- **Choose distressed pieces**, such as the family room's farmhouse console table and antique coffee table. A scratch or dent will only add "patina."
- **For custom upholstery**, have the fabric professionally backed to add strength and resist puncturing and unraveling. Penfield also recommends hiring a professional to treat all upholstery for stain resistance.
- **Consider indoor-outdoor fabrics**, which now have a supple hand. "They no longer feel like cardboard," Penfield says. She uses selections for headboards, sectionals, and built-in eating nooks, and is giddy about cleanup. "Take a soapy sponge and scrub!" she says.