

Fussy French to Modern Mix: A Home Redefined Through Color

Lauren Helmer

"I had plans of building a new home ... a white, contemporary glass box," says homeowner and designer Em Lee of [DesignWorks by Em Lee](#). But her vision of a light-filled future in a minimalist residence was interrupted by a different kind of light: her children and grandchildren, who urged her to stay close. Em and her husband gave in and found an intriguing home just five minutes away from her playful brood of seven grandchildren, an arresting, although somewhat dated, residence originally designed by legendary local architect [Spratt Long](#) in 1988. Em's goal with this home renovation was to create "a happy home for family and friends full of color, joy and surprise!"





Em worked with Clarke Bohorfoush of [Boho Designs, LLC](#), to streamline the landscaping, and she painted the exterior white, in keeping with her original vision. Removing the color and overgrown greenery accentuated the façade's clean architectural lines and added dramatic emphasis to the three arched entryways.

"The house was very French, covered in iron and so froufrou, but I fell in love with some of the core architectural elements — the 'bones' — of the house, like the double staircase and the double height dining room with the bridge crossing over it," says Em. "It just needed 'de-fussying.'" So she set about a year-long renovation of the home. She knew early on, for example, that she wanted to paint the walls of the entryway black, intermingled with bold, happy colors, including her current color inspiration, "Pink, pink and more pink of all shades, but mixed with black to give it an edge. I'm so thankful that color and whimsy has come back! I was never a fan of the beige or neutral look."