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Designer Jennifer Brady treats her own Tudor to a modern makeover.

# A Cinderella Story

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Jennifer Brady amplified her home's architectural character by paneling the living room walls and adding a coffered ceiling. "I wanted one space in the house to feel really special," says the designer, who also added a storage cabinet next to the fireplace, which is flanked by a pair of vintage slipper chairs covered in a zebra print.



**ABOVE:** The square dining room demanded a round table, which Brady illuminated with an Akari pendant designed by Isamu Noguchi. **LEFT:** The dining room's window bay was transformed into a game area that doubles as overflow dinner seating. (Twelve-year-old daughter Kidder made it her "home office" during the pandemic.) **FACING PAGE:** A Susan Harter mural wallpaper lends English country charm to the living room, which is punctuated by a pair of aluminum tables from Gervasoni.



Compact in size and squeezed onto a modest lot, the Wellesley, Massachusetts, Tudor struck many house hunters as a candidate for the wrecking ball. Vegetation ran wild outside, while the mold and pet stains inside bore fragrant testimony to decades of neglect.

Where others saw decay, however, Jennifer Brady saw opportunity. "It was a charming house, it was in a great neighborhood, and we knew

*“I THINK EVERY ROOM SHOULD HAVE AN UNEXPECTED ELEMENT.”*

*—Designer Jennifer Brady*



**ABOVE:** The Moroccan rug was too small for the family room, so Brady set it atop a larger neutral carpet. **LEFT:** Jennifer Brady tends bar in the former kitchen, now dubbed The Palm Court. **FACING PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:** An Ochre pendant illuminates the honed-marble island in the kitchen addition; the Andersen windows were painted black to emulate the home's original steel casements. Vintage stools nestle into the island's recess, which is covered with melamine to resist scuffing from fidgety feet.

that we could make it what we wanted it to be,” says the interior designer, who had previously renovated her own homes in Boston’s Back Bay and South End.

To resuscitate the 1920s home, she focused on finishes rather than furnishings, relying on color, texture, and trim to introduce visual interest in lieu of flashy fabrics or patterns. “Architectural detail is what makes a space feel special—more so than the furniture and fabrics you put in it,” she says.

Under the ministrations of finish carpenter Paul Curran, the living room’s barren walls blossomed with bands of flat paneling, while the ceiling sprouted ornate coffers, conjuring a sense of elegance that the original space lacked.





“That room was in pretty rough shape when they moved in,” Curran concedes.

Brady paired the creamy woodwork with a pastoral mural wallcovering that spans one wall, underscoring the room’s newfound formality. “I just thought it would be more interesting than a large piece of art,” she explains.

To maximize space, Brady banished floor-hogging radiators in favor of forced-air heat and tucked a contemporary sectional into a corner of the living room so she could seat more people at parties. Nimble aluminum occasional tables take the place of a traditional coffee table and add a touch of glitz to gatherings. “I think every room should have an unexpected element,” the designer says.

Craving more space for entertaining, Brady and her husband, Michael, hired

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Defying convention, Brady placed a chaise at the foot of the bed instead of a bench and suspended a contemporary Le Deun Luminaires pendant above. Hats accompany an antique bow-front chest in the primary bedroom. A Kohler tub dominates the neighboring bath. **FACING PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:** Brady maximized space in a guest room by inserting the bed in a nook outfitted with bookshelves and a TV. The office is headquarters for Brady’s business, KidderKokx Interior Architecture & Design.



architect Elise Braceras Stone to design an addition, which includes a garage, kitchen, primary bedroom suite, and a family room covered in navy blue grass-cloth. “People get scared of dark colors,” acknowledges Brady, who kept the ceiling and trim white to offset the color and framed the windows in ombre fabrics that bridge the contrasting hues.

The designer employed a similar approach in the new kitchen, where white cabinets and generous expanses of White Rhino marble partner with dusky green walls that appear almost black at night. To add a little levity, she introduced a quartet of midcentury-modern stools upholstered in a Rose Tarlow toile and illuminated the island with a Calder-esque mobile adorned with glowing glass orbs. “We have plenty of recessed lighting, so it’s really more of a decorative element,” Brady says.

Initially, the designer painted the primary bedroom white, but she found





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**ABOVE:** Brady rounded a foyer doorway leading to the kitchen for architectural interest and surrounded it with a Lindsay Alker wallpaper featuring cavorting stags. **RIGHT:** The remodeled basement is daughter Kidder’s domain, starting with a mudroom outfitted with reindeer wallpaper from Élitis. **FACING PAGE:** After the kitchen addition was built, Brady turned the old kitchen into an entertaining space dubbed The Palm Court, which she wrapped in a Pierre Frey wallpaper depicting a surrealist ball that Salvador Dalí hosted in 1941.

that the color only emphasized the enormity of the space. So she replaced it with a warm tobacco brown that complements her collection of antique furniture. Contemporary art and lighting—plus a toe-tickling shag carpet—lighten the sultry mood.

Growing up in a 1920s Maine cottage, Brady learned to appreciate old houses and is pleased she was able to save this one. “I love the history, I love the charm, and the stories that come with them,” she says.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Jennifer Brady, KidderKokx Interior Architecture & Design

**RENOVATION ARCHITECTURE:** Elise Braceras Stone, Elise Braceras Stone Architect

**INTERIOR MILLWORK:** Paul Curran, C&M Custom Carpentry

