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# DESIGNER Q&A

WITH CHRISSEY HOWARD & BARBARA SCHWENK  
OF JINX MCDONALD INTERIOR DESIGNS

This dynamic duo has done it again. Award-Winning Interior Designer Chrissy Howard and Design Associate Barbara Schwenk of Jinx McDonald Interior Designs take this trite interior and transform it into a refreshing, California Chic family home.

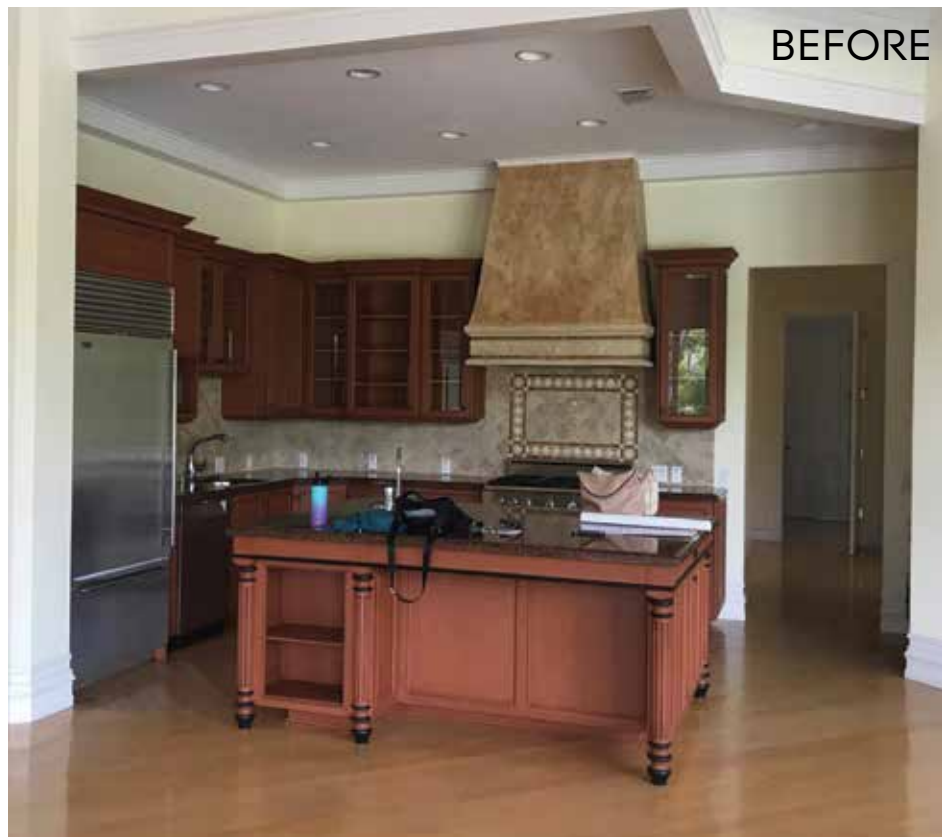
We sat down with Howard and Schwenk to get the full story on this bright and bold remodel. The existing home, full of traditional elements, was calling out for an update, and one of the homeowners was calling out for color — this intrepid color-confident design team matched perfectly with the clients! ▶



Chrissy Howard



Barbara Schwenk



**Home & Design:** What were the clients looking for?

**Howard:** When someone says, "I love color," and when they actually pull images of color, that's when you know you're going to get to use color. The lady of the house was a very prepared client; she came to our first meeting with a plethora of inspirational imagery. We were excited that this client was outside the norm — a young wife and mother with a strong vision of how she wanted to live in this home with her family, and the design style she wanted to be surrounded by. We were pleased to be able to give her both! ▶



**Home & Design:** Will you share with me how you achieved a balance between comfort and trends in your design with this family-forward client?

**Howard:** We understand that trends can be popular one minute and blasé the next. So, if we take cues from our client's preferences and form cozy, relaxed, and practical spaces, as opposed to something that is trending, there is a greater chance of them loving it now and loving it later — it is timeless.

To balance functionality and style, we opted for durable fabrics like Sunbrella and Crypton in the kitchen, and the California Chic concept lent itself well with this wipeable, flat-cabinet door style. The island is a functional two-tier design — one at counter height and one at table height. The latter is perfect for the young children in the home with artistic pendant lights overhead that possess a sculptural quality and add some fun to the space. ▶



**Home & Design:** Will you walk me through your design process for a project like this?

**Howard:** We always encourage our clients to communicate their preferences with pictures, such as a favorite piece of art or furniture they want to work around. It's during those first few meetings when we decide if a client should see all the options, or whether we should narrow them down. We ascertained this client was decisive and loved color, but also that she was open-minded to our suggestions when we collaborated together. Communicating the design to clients through these beautiful three-dimensional renderings — done by the talented Barbara Schwenk — is a powerful tool we employ. The renderings offer the clients a chance to preview the design before committing to something like raspberry-colored chairs in a blonde kitchen. ▶





BEFORE



RENDERING

**Home & Design:** When you presented the renderings to the clients, what was their reaction to the bright colors? How do you know where to use bold color and how much to use?

**Howard:** I loved the client's enthusiasm! She was always saying, "You nailed it!" I remember a conversation my design associate, Barbara Schwenk, and I had about the family room built-in, and we were asking each other, "What shade of green — and where do we start and stop it?" Through Schwenk's renderings, we were able to get a better sense of how to use this powerful, vibrant green, and it was clear that painting the back of the built-in with a creamy-ivory color was the right move to achieve just the right amount of bold color. ▶

AFTER





**Home & Design:** With vivid hues in most rooms of this home, can you elaborate on the decision behind this deviation from color in the master bath?

**Howard:** It's so important for us to listen to our clients. In the master bath, the lady of the house wanted a spa-like retreat, and the man of the house wanted a luxurious steam shower — a place where they could both wind down and relax. The clients fell in love with the black, white, and gray tile, and it's what inspired the color scheme that functions as art above the tub. This Asian zen style is exactly the quiet space they had envisioned. ►

**Home & Design:** We'd love to touch on the current Southwest Florida market. What have your clients been asking for and prioritizing in their design projects?

**Howard:** After going through a pandemic, people seem to appreciate their homes now on a different level. What we're seeing is people starting to rethink major spaces like kitchens, master suites, outdoor spaces, and obviously offices! They are requesting more luxury items in the kitchen because if they cannot run out and get their favorite coffee, they want to be able to make it at home. In the master suite, washable fabrics are preferred over dry-clean only — essentially an uptick in practicality. ►



AFTER



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



**Home & Design:** What advice do you have for homeowners looking to remodel or purchase a new home this year?

**Howard:** We understand that home-buying choices seem more limited right now, but just know that we have the experience and expertise to guide you through a complex remodel. Don't discount a diamond in the rough — with the right team, it can become your dream home! ■

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