

Homes / October 19, 2018

Trade Secrets

by Judy Bean



Just a month after renovating her family's new home, interior designer Leah Bailey hosted a party. Eighty-plus guests and 12 servers mingled throughout her mostly white dwelling that rainy afternoon, bearing red wine, sweet tea, various bruschettas and other tasty stain-makers.

Bailey never batted an eye. "We had the best time!" she recalls. And no wonder. She was confident her "Lowcountry, Southern, relaxed French" decor could withstand any number of guests. Longer term, she knew the home would also suit her outdoorsy husband, two energetic kids, three dogs (two of them puppies) and one young, adventurous cat.

Bailey began her design career 17 years before buying this house, and she had already designed more than 30 clients' homes, including many vacation retreats. Planning for active lifestyles became second nature to her as she continued to refine her serenely elegant, but distinctly durable, style. Its hallmarks: tranquil colors, abundant textures, reclaimed materials and unique art and collections — all in harmony with classical trim and, here and there, modern furnishings.

Along the way, she also renovated five homes for her own family — the Bradley Point house is the Baileys' sixth. She and husband, Stephen, a pharmaceutical rep, began renovating their first home in 2002. In 2014, the couple renovated and moved into their fifth house, their most extensive renovation to date. Bailey, whose mother had just died suddenly, was "hungry for a big project" to help her cope with her grief. And quite a big project it was, with down-to-the-studs demolition and rebuilding. "When we were done, the only original things left were the interior doors, a bathtub and the fireplace," she recalls.

Louning.



Image 1 of 26
Photo by Kelli Boyd

The Baileys settled in, the way they always do. "It's important for our home to be functional for kids and dogs," Bailey says, citing her knack for making outdoor rugs and fabrics fit her distinctive aesthetic, and for collecting versatile antiques that function well in different spaces. "For me, a successful interior is one that can evolve," she says.

After four years in the all-but-rebuilt house, the Baileys began considering moving to Bradley Point. It was near the Savannah Yacht Club, where Leah and Stephen had met, and where they'd maintained a family membership for years. Their kids had friends in the neighborhood, and they all loved the breezy island setting.

But the type of home they wanted — newly built and somewhat secluded — was scarce. So when a real estate agent called about a new house they could tour before it went on the market, they jumped at it.

It was just the right size and location for the family and just the type of project Bailey needed. "I could give it my personal touch without another major renovation." Her personal touches included a new kitchen backsplash, new paint and lighting inside and out, new outside shutters and new landscaping.

Because their previous home sold quickly, the Bradley Point renovations took place after the Baileys moved in. Painters, installers and landscapers came and went with surprisingly little disruption. It helped that Bailey had worked happily with most of them before. "With my clients and in my own home, I stick with people I know and trust," she says.

Once the makeover was done, friends who'd seen the home before "couldn't believe it was the same place," she laughs. "But basically, all we changed was the lighting, paint and furniture placement."

Inspired by seashells, small relics and bits of wood she'd collected on her travels, the new space is as breezy and bright as its island setting. Walls are painted in Paperwhite by Benjamin Moore, a slightly blue-tinted white reminiscent of summer sunlight. "It's important to me when I come in that my eye has somewhere to settle," she says, and pale walls offer that. Fabrics and rugs are also light in tone, but surprisingly dirt-proof — even the striking white cowhide under the farmhouse-style dining room table. "Cowhide is really durable," Bailey says. "And you can clean it with a hose — just like a cow!"

Like the dining room, the spacious kitchen is a welcoming spot for guests — and chefs in the making. "I love to cook and my son does, too! He could cook every meal with me!" The double sinks come in handy for those mother-son meal-prep sessions.

The living room includes two seating areas, one with club chairs that swivel to help conversation flow. Treasured mementoes, including shells Bailey's mother collected, beckon from tabletops and inhabit two large painted cabinets, new but chosen largely because they look old. "They're not perfect," Bailey says. "They look like something you'd find in a unique little shop."

Genuine antiques also inhabit the space, including another painted cabinet Bailey intends to keep forever. This home includes many things she's become attached to. Some have been moved from room to room, others from home to home. Some are heirlooms, like her mother's collections and her own childhood iron bed (now in her daughter's room). "I like a space to have history," she says, "and to tell a personal story."

Details

Owner(s): Stephen & Leah Bailey

Year built: 2014

Year purchased: 2017

Square footage: heated 3,693; under roof 4,948

Number of bedrooms and bathrooms: 4 bedrooms, 4.5 baths

Time to complete renovation/remodel: 1 year to complete renovation

Residential planners: Wilson Roberts Residential Planning

Interior designer: Leah G. Bailey of LGB Interiors, LLC

Contractor/builder: Jeff Hart with Homes With Hart Construction

Tile/flooring: Garden State Tile / MT Adams Tile, Phillips Flooring

Counters: Creative Stone

Paint: David Balza of JD Painting

Wallpaper: Leah G. Bailey of LGB Interiors, LLC.

Wallpaper installer: Edwina Scarborough

Windows/doors: Anderson

Kitchen design: Leah G. Bailey of LGB Interiors, LLC; fixtures, Kohler at Ferguson Showroom

Bath design: Leah G. Bailey of LGB Interiors, LLC; fixtures, Rohl at Ferguson Showroom; Wilson cabinets; Circa Lighting light

Lighting design: Leah G. Bailey of LGB Interiors, LLC

Landscape and hardscape design: Will Schubert with Premier Landscaping

Audio/visual: Sight & Sound

Plumber: Randy Arkwood

Landscaper: Will Schubert with Premier Landscaping

HVAC: Ogeechee Heating and Air

Furniture: Leah G. Bailey of LGB Interiors, LLC

Appliances: Livinggoods

Accessories: Leah G. Bailey of LGB Interiors, LLC and Habersham Antiques, Alex Raskin Antiques, Clutter, Picker Joe's, Scott Antique Markets in Atlanta, Irene Mayo, and Bellamy Murphy

Art: Leah G. Bailey of LGB Interiors, LLC

Art framing: Atwells

Family Photos: Christine Hall Photography

Tags from the story

Alex Raskin Antiques, Atwells, Christine Hall Photography, Circa Lighting, clutter, Creative Stone, Fall HOMES, Garden State Tile, Habersham Antiques, Homes with Hart Construction, JD Painting, Leah Bailey, LGB Interiors, Livinggoods, MT Adams Tile, Ogeechee Heating and Air, Phillips Flooring, Picker Joe's, Premier Landscaping, Randy Arkwood, Savannah, Savannah magazine, Sight & Sound, Wilson Roberts Residential Planning

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