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FAMILY ESSENTIALS

DESIGNER KATHIE CHRISICOS TRANSFORMS A
WENHAM HOME WITH COOL, COHESIVE STYLE.

By Jennifer Sperry

Photographs by Greg Premru

A colonial is
transformed with
casual furnishings
in cool tones.



WHEN ALEXANDROS TSEPETIS AND ANN KRANTZ moved out of Boston's Back Bay in 2012, their daughters, Audrey and Eleni, were young and their chosen house—a colonial on a quiet cul de sac—full of potential. “We chose Wenham specifically because of all the open land and its bucolic feel,” explains Ann. “We liked the location, and the home has some beautiful features, but we knew we needed to renovate down the road to make it truly work for us.”

To start, the couple transformed the yard with a stone terrace leading down to a beautiful new pool. Over time, they updated interior finishes and features, but the living spaces never felt quite complete. Explains Alex: “The previous owners were really meticulous about taking care of the home structurally, but stylistically it hadn't really been touched since it was built in the 1970s.”

In November 2019, the couple reached out to interior designer Kathie Chrisicos for help with their stalled interior. They requested a new mudroom to start, but they



The project that started with a mudroom expanded into the living spaces.



The pop of blue continues in the kitchen on the center island.

also envisioned a more polished overall style and better continuity room to room. Chrisicos, an industry veteran and past president of the International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA), was up to the task.

"It's a charming, very livable colonial with a slightly rambling L-shaped floor plan," explains Chrisicos, who launched Chrisicos Interiors, a combination design studio/retail space in the Park Plaza Building, in 2016. "The home's architecture called for more traditional choices, but Ann and Alex didn't mind getting a little creative with prints and colors," notes the designer.

Initially, the kitchen wasn't even part of the plan. "It wasn't on our radar at all," admits Alex, "but Kathie convinced us that, for cohesion, we needed to include it." In place of its dark oak cabinets, Chrisicos opted for Shaker-style wall cabinets in a bright "Atrium White"

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—ALEXANDROS TSEPETIS



by Benjamin Moore. For the island, she chose a rich blue, specifically “Naval” by Sherwin-Williams. “It’s absolutely perfect,” says Ann of the flourish. “It adds just the right amount of color.”

“The flow of the kitchen is so much easier now,” continues Alex of the transformation. “We moved the fridge to create a better work triangle, and the upgraded sink is bigger and deeper. These improvements have made everyday life so much easier,” he contends. While the kitchen’s envelope stayed mostly the same, Chrisicos worked with the contractor and a structural engineer to remove an unnecessary soffit on a side wall, making way for a bonus beverage center.

For the dining area, Chrisicos topped an existing dining set with an eye-catching Quoizel light fixture in brushed nickel. “It has a presence, but it isn’t heavy and doesn’t obstruct the garden view,” says Ann. In the adjoining great room, the designer centered two of the family’s cushy club chairs on the newly whitewashed fireplace, creating an inviting sitting area. “We didn’t use this space very much,” points out Alex. “But now, when the kids are watching TV in the living room, we’ll light a fire and relax with a glass of wine, something we never did before.”





Chrisicos reworked the front entry sequence to carve out space for the requested mudroom. Its wall of custom cabinets repeats the kitchen island's same naval blue. Hooks, baskets, and under-bench cubbies organize frequently used items while everything else is stored out of sight behind paneled doors. Radiant heat under the Italian ceramic tile floor is a lifesaver on winter days, warming castoff coats and boots. Plus, it's a favorite napping spot for the family dogs.

"The mudroom is a game changer," exclaims Ann. "We used to live with a pile of kid stuff in the kitchen. It was always cluttered," she recalls. "Now, everything has its place, and if it gets messy, it takes just a couple minutes to put back in order."

The home office was another room prone to clutter. Chrisicos elevated its look with built-in desks on opposing walls: one is for Alex and the other is a homework station for the girls, ages 11 and 13. For added function, the designer had magnetic paint applied over

the girls' desks. "The best part is you can paint over it, so it blends right in," says the designer.

Cool blues continue in the living room, where Chrisicos balanced the existing wall color, Benjamin Moore's "Palladian Blue," with all new furnishings. Varying shades of blue—a cobalt blue sectional, ocean blue silk drapes, and navy velour chairs—blend harmoniously like differing depths of the sea. The designer added custom built-ins on either side of the picture window for additional display space and storage.

Now, the refreshed home communicates a consistent aesthetic, but it also functions well for a busy family of four. It's kid friendly, parent friendly, and even dog friendly. It's beautiful and practical all at once. ■

The mudroom offers plenty of storage in the way of hooks, baskets, and underbench cubbies.

INTERIOR DESIGN: chrisicos.com
LANDSCAPE & POOL: The Patio Company, thepatiocompanyma.com
CABINETS: Omega Cabinetry, capeannkitchens.com

CONTRACTOR: ipirenovations.com
MUDROOM, OFFICE, AND LIVING ROOM CABINETS: Custom designed by Chrisicos Interiors, crafted by Sartini Woodworking, sartiniwoodworking.com