

young love

This first-time homeowner knows how to make a lasting impression. Filled with plucky colors and rehabbed vintage furniture, her Dallas home oozes youthful comfort and affordable style.

BY JODY GARLOCK
PHOTOS KIM CORNELISON
STYLING JENNY O'CONNOR

EASY BOUQUET
Snip leafy branches to green up a room.



Stepping inside her front door is Nancy Fallen's treat at the end of a busy day at work. "I just smile," says Nancy, *left*. "It's such a happy scene." Her 1927 Dallas home is a feel-good mix of color, character, and chic. She and designer Emily Johnston Larkin share what they did and what you can learn from it.

WINNING COMBO

Mimic this simple gallery wall: one large, two medium, and two small framed works.

REFRESH

Pillows are the quick-change artist of the decorating world. Two patterned pillows and two same-color solids (they'll act as anchors) are a can't-miss way to liven up a sofa.

REFRESH

Swap a traditional coffee table for an upholstered bench or ottoman. The fabric can tie a room together, and the softness makes it work as seating, too. Add a tray for a sturdy catchall.

Be strategic with color. Keeping walls and big-ticket items neutral allowed for shots of bright color in smaller items. "Just make sure you distribute the color throughout the room," Larkin says. In the study, *above*, patterned pillows spread the chartreuse to the sofa wall.

Mix old with new. High-gloss paint and mod fabrics gave secondhand side chairs, such as the slipper chairs, *above* and *opposite*, new life. "My house feels unique because of them," Nancy says. See before photos and get Larkin's spin on rehabbing castoff chairs, *page 28*.



CLEAN SWEEP
White paint makes the fireplace—old bricks and all—look chic.

Add a statement piece. The chunky mirrored coffee table, *above*, is an eye-catcher. It's functional, too. Feet, board games, and snacks have all found a place on it. "It's durable—and amazing to look at," Nancy says.

Show windows some love. "Drapery panels are so easy these days," Larkin says. "All you need is a fabulous fabric, curtain rings, and a skinny rod." Large-scale print draperies (with turquoise that complements the velvet chairs), *above*, punch up Nancy's living room. "They're the focal point when you walk into the room," Larkin says. "People usually think curtain panels are the last thing they need, but they're amazed at how cozy the room feels after they get them up."

Shake things up. "The less matchy, the better," Larkin says of furniture. Her rule of thumb for cobbled-together ensembles: contrast. "You want to vary your shapes and vary your materials," she says. In the dining room, *opposite*, square wooden chairs pair with a round metal-base table.

Consider every detail. Small things add the wow, such as the graphic fabric on the backs of dining chairs (after all, that's the side everyone sees) and crystal beading on what was a plain chandelier, *opposite*. "The beads take it to a different level," Nancy says. "I have a girly side, so I like what these little touches do for my home."

LIGHTEN UP
Shelves with grooves for plates sub for a heavy hutch.



SURPRISE!
This fabric is wipeable vinyl. Spills? No worries.



REFRESH

With a yard (or even less) of fabric, a dining chair can set a whole new tone for a room. Pop out the seat and re-cover the cushion, or drape a slipcover over a Parsons chair.





RISE ABOVE

A tall-back chair is a great way to fill an empty corner.

“To me, a home is never truly finished. You can always add new accessories or things you collect to refresh intermittently.”

Emily Johnston Larkin, designer

Carve out “me” space. A small table and vintage chair (spiffed up with white paint and trendy ikat fabric) were all it took to turn a corner of Nancy’s bedroom into a reading nook, *left*. “It’s such a cozy spot,” she says.

Move things around. “Rearranging furniture can make a room feel like a whole new space,” Larkin says. In Nancy’s bedroom, the trade-off for better flow was that the bed had to go in front of windows. The solution? A curtain wall, *below*, that adds a dreamy quality and functionality. When the curtains are open, they softly frame the upholstered headboard. “They look great either way,” Nancy says.



REFRESH

For a makeover in minutes, focus on the bed. Turn down the coverlet, then add contrasting color with a throw (drape it across the center) and a few small pillows or a big bolster.



BRUSH UP
White paint on frames and legs refreshed all these chairs. See the before snaps, *below*.



PATTERN PLAY
This high-back chair easily handles a large print. The lesson? Consider scale.



Advice from the 'chair whisperer'

Designer Emily Johnston Larkin can find the pretty potential in any old chair. Here's how she transformed these four:

1. SLIPPER CHAIR "It's furniture without visual weight," Larkin says. "The frame on a slipper chair is small, so a busy fabric won't be overwhelming."

2. DINING CHAIR Dining chairs are Larkin's sweet spot. "With as little as a half-yard of fabric, you can get a new look," she says. "I love using a durable fabric like vinyl or leather on the front and a less-practical 'wow' fabric on back—the part you see most."

3. ARMCHAIR A tufted fan-back sealed the deal for Larkin. "Tufting gives a chair life," she says. "Stick to a solid fabric like velvet or a mini print. Big patterns compete with the tufting."

4. WING CHAIR "The shape of this chair had me at hello," Larkin says. "It's interesting from all directions. Always purchase a chair with great bones; that's the one thing you can't change." ■

Easy upholstery

Turn a sad chair into a success story with our step-by-step upholstery guide. BHG.com/Chair

