

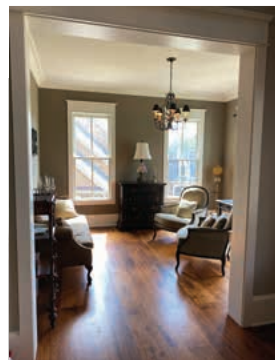
Lighten Up

Goodbye Tuscan look...thanks to some clever interior designers, a Marietta house now sports a relaxed, brighter style.

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Photography by CATMAX PHOTOGRAPHY

The piano room (Before) >



< Dining room (Before)



Even beautiful houses need a refresh now and then, particularly to fit new owners who may want a different look. For this traditional-style Marietta home, interior designers Joann Kandrac and Kelly Kole of Kandrac-Kole stepped in to provide the stylish makeover. “The house had been dark, with Tuscan-style light fixtures,” says Kelly. “It was nicely done, but wasn’t our clients’ style at all.”

The new goal: brighten up the home with clean lines, no clutter, statement lighting, and art, along with comfortable, well-made furniture. Some of the changes to lighten the mood were rather easy, the designers say. The walls were repainted a warm white (see their tips in “So, you want to lighten your house...”), and unnecessary millwork was removed to simplify the walls, visually. They also replaced older light fixtures, and used soft LED bulbs for ambiance.

Other changes were more than cosmetic but made a big difference. “We removed a wall in the dining room and created a very large, cased opening so that the natural light from the front of the house could reach the back of the house,” says Joann. As another visual trick, they replaced the heavier wood staircase railings with a slim iron version. The living room fireplace got a facelift by removing the heavy existing mantel; the new version has a floating wood mantel against a white base. Kitchen cabinets remained as-is, but with new hardware and countertops.

The design gurus also made sure furnishings and accessories complemented the lighter palette. To flank the living room fireplace, Kandrac-Kole found two nice-sized cabinets in an off-white shade. “They’re not custom cabinets, so that means the homeowners could take them to a future home,” says Kelly. Elsewhere, they were able to reuse window treatments from a previous house, as well as the owners’ primary bedroom furniture. A few pops of bold wallpaper also made a big difference throughout the house, a go-to favorite of the designers, along with the new lights.

“When our clients want a quick refresh, we lean on paint and lighting first, since they can make a world of difference,” says Kelly. “Most people don’t realize how poorly lit their homes are until all of a sudden their home is bright and cheery.”



Top right Subtle gold veining in the Costentino quartz countertops picks up gold in the light fixtures in the primary bath.

Above “This butlers pantry was a very fun space to design,” says Joann. “We gutted the entire niche and redesigned with a pretty wall tile (from Prosource Marietta), floating shelves and custom cabinets that are viewable from several areas of the home.”

Middle left “We got the homeowner hooked on wallpaper in her last house so we knew we could do it again in this laundry room,” says Kelly. “Since she volunteers at Mostly Mutts in Kennesaw and is a big dog fan—family dog Bella posed in the photos—we had fun with the wallpaper.” Custom cabinets throughout makes for a very neat and tidy laundry room.

Top left The piano room is all about relaxing and listening to music. **Top right** The homeowners’ existing rug anchors the dining room, lightened up with new Bernhardt furniture and a linear light fixture from Visual Comfort. **Bottom left** The design team kept original countertops in the kitchen, but changed the countertops and backsplash, and added new hardware, with help from local Marietta company Highland Design Gallery. Oversized brass pendants bring in a contemporary flair. **Bottom right** The other side of the living room shows the revamped fireplace and new cabinets.



We'd worked with Kelly and Joann in our previous house and loved their style," says this Marietta homeowner. Kelly Kole (left) and her business partner Joann Kandrak have worked together for 16 years, and are known for their colorful, custom designs, as well as their dynamic personalities. In fact, you can listen to the Kennesaw-based team on their own podcast, Inside Design with Kandrak & Kole.

So you want to lighten your house...

The Kennesaw-based design team of Joann Kandrak and Kelly Kole have been transforming Cobb County houses (and beyond) for years. Some of their best tips to freshen up a home:

*Paint walls off-white. "We like Sherwin Williams' paints the most, with 'Alabaster,' 'Shoji White,' and 'Aspire White' as three of our favorites," says Joann. They recommend an eggshell finish on walls, flat on the ceiling, and semi-gloss on the trim--unless the goal is high drama, in which case they choose a high gloss oil on trim.

*Switch to lighter window treatments. "We're anti-plantation shutter, because they block way too much light," says Kelly. "We use Hunter Douglas cellular shades and roller shades the most, preferably ones that allow light to filter through. For curtains, we recommend very simple hardware --we use a wrought iron French rod the most."

*Go light for upholstery. Don't be afraid to go with lighter colors in this age of performance fabrics, since the days of choosing dark materials just because they don't show spills are over, say Kandrak-Kole. Upholstered furniture such as sofas, breakfast room chairs, and barstools can all wear fabrics that repel stains, and therefore be light and bright. Faux leather is another popular option that can be wiped off. 📺