

from Bland to Beautiful

by Michelle Klarhos Curran
photos by Rosemary Fletcher Photography



A Local Designer Transforms a Bedford Bedroom

When Katherine Ford decided to turn her master bedroom into a true sanctuary, there was little doubt about who would take charge of the transformation.

Ford had worked with Acton-based designer Barbara Hirsch of Elza B. Design on two other projects in her Bedford home and was very pleased with the results.

"I met with several interior designers when I took on the first project in our home and was most impressed with her presentation and suggestions for that first living room-dining room project," Ford says of Hirsch. "I was particularly attracted to her eye for color, as well as her clarity and openness in discussing budget."

Acton designer Barbara Hirsch, principal of Elza B. Design, turned the master bedroom in Katherine Ford's Bedford, Mass., home from bland to beautiful using a design based on Ford's love of nature-inspired art and books. A neutral color palette with pops of teal and antique rose give the room a fresh and relaxing feel.

Ford, who has owned her home since 2006, says she loved the light and space in her master bedroom, but never spent much time making it her own. The furniture, she says, was too dark and heavy. The color — or lack thereof — was bland. And the room didn't reflect her personal style. So when she decided it was time to create a place where she could take refuge from her busy life as

recommended a neutral-colored base palette — Farrow & Ball's "Joia's White" for the walls, an upholstered linen headboard accented with antique bronze tacks by Putney Barn, and a custom armoire by Bernhardt upholstered in a basket-weave linen for the reading nook. She also recommended built-ins, one for Ford's television and other electronics, and two more to display her collection of books.

Ford had the built-ins crafted by Thomas Backborough of Thomas Backborough & Associates in Acton, and then Hirsch had them painted a crisp bright white to pop against the linen-colored walls.

Hirsch designed the rest of the color scheme around two of Ford's existing pieces: a small, gorgeously-colored patterned rug, which was used to anchor the reading nook, and a bird print from Ford's art collection.

The teal in the rug is reflected in the new window treatments — custom linen Roman shades by Smith & Noble — and in the ruffled throw draped over the fresh and fun-free white bedding, which is topped off by two custom-made throw pillows that add texture and dimension. Antique rose can be seen in subtle pops throughout the room.

Three more nature-inspired prints of Ford's were selected to hang above the bed — framed in wood that was stained the same antique bronze as the headboard tacks.

"Lighting is extremely important," says Hirsch, who replaced the dated overhead light with a soft, semi-flush fixture with a drum-shaped linen shade. "Ceiling fixtures can add a lot of sculpture to a room."

The bed and the white wooden nightstands by Waterline that flank it are anchored to the space by a neutral rug. "I really believe in rugs as connectors of furniture," Hirsch says.


The result of all this is a room with a bright, airy and inviting modern-country feel — a space Hirsch says really tells her client's story.

"We absolutely love our bedroom," Ford says. "It is elegant, restful, pretty and holds some of my treasured keepsakes. It is a wonderful spot for rest, rejuvenation as well as for family snuggles."

"My expectations were met and then exceeded," she adds about Hirsch's design. "I was confident that I could trust Barbara with this project, and she did not disappoint."

Ford says she unexpectedly needed to downsize the overall scale of the project due to a changed budget, but that Hirsch didn't skip a beat. "Barbara was extremely understanding and flexible with that unexpected development," Ford says. "She worked closely with me to scale back the project slightly and still meet my overall goals."

Design success stories such as this one, both designer and client say, come from having a working relationship based on mutual trust.

"The more the client can trust that the designer has their back, the better the project will be," Hirsch says. 

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Fresh, fun-free white bedding, custom throw pillows and a sconce-style lighting with articulated arms make Ford's master bedroom the perfect place for family snuggles and curling up with a good book.

a working mom of three and showcase her personal interests — art and literature — Ford and Hirsch came up with a plan for a master bedroom that was relaxing, serene and feminine.

"The room felt like it had no soul," Hirsch says of Ford's room. "It was kind of a hodgepodge of things that didn't feel connected."

Hirsch, an accomplished artist who studied graphic and fashion design in Paris, calls herself a "methodical" designer. Her design consultations usually begin with a detailed questionnaire that's crafted to reveal her client's needs and sense of style.

"I do a lot of homework," Hirsch says. "I need to understand my client."

For this project, Hirsch, who founded Elza B. Design in 2007,