

*The Home Designer***Summertime, and the Living is Easy**

By Brandon Neff

*Photos courtesy Brandon Neff Design*

A few months ago, I was contacted by a couple to decorate their uninspiring TV room. They wanted my help to create a space to match their dynamic energy and enthusiasm – a place for them and their two daughters to relax and be together. After installing a basic sofa and a ubiquitous recliner, they had given up any further attempts at interior design, but dreamed of a comfortable, inviting room for their young family. Compared to most projects I've worked on, the room was pretty average – it had all the essentials, but it said nothing about the happy family that used it. My first step was to find out what inspired them.

My clients have great personal style, but very little time to create a domestic style. They spoke about an oasis they had been fantasizing about since buying

the house a few years back. Like many of my clients, they had a good idea what they wanted to achieve, but had no idea how to get there. They had pulled piles of tear sheets from shelter magazines along with an iPad's worth of digital images depicting family rooms they coveted. But for more than four years the room betrayed them with uncomfortable seating, drab walls and a rug remnant impersonating an area rug. Following a round of 20 Questions we settled on a goal – to create a bright, functional and colorful space that celebrated their favorite season: summer.

The room had to accommodate several objectives: a place to hold the entire brood for weekly, family movie night; comfortably function as a hub for impromptu gatherings with friends; and serve as a nest to nap during long rainy days. (I think this last re-

quirement applied mainly to the family dog!) Luckily, the space had good bones and generous French doors that opened onto a large, sunny deck.

As I've said many times in this column, I first considered the architecture of the room to help guide the decoration. In this case, the house lent itself to a California coastal style with its clean lines, tailored moldings and hardwood floors – all in all a blank slate, but with a Western exposure that could handle more intense color. Next, in keeping with the summer inspiration, I pitched the idea of citrus brights balanced with cooler, watery shades – a balanced palette of two complimentary colors: tangerine and royal blue. And, to help ground the vivid combo, I suggested adding hues of soothing gray – a great foil for neutralizing stronger colors. We were on our way!

...continued on page D14

