



LIVING LARGE

From left: The living room features sofas with brass nailheads, striped silk curtains, armchairs with pinstripe-patterned fabric and a modern, metal-and-glass light fixture from Four Hands. Above the fireplace hangs original artwork by Deljou Art Group; Waits (owner) and Dunbar (designer).



For some busy executives, decorating a four-story townhouse from scratch might sound daunting, even overwhelming. But, for newly single Chris Waits, regional vice president of Home Depot for the mid-South region, it was a challenge he relished.

"I was recently divorced after 17 years of marriage and starting over," says Waits, who has worked at Home Depot for 24 years and now oversees 122 stores. "I wanted a fresh start with the house."

Waits chose the townhouse from floor plans supplied by its eventual builder, John Wieland Homes and Neighborhoods. To help with initial decisions regarding interior finishes like bathroom tiles, granite countertops and hardwood flooring, he consulted a friend in the design department at Home Depot,



NEUTRAL TERRITORY

Clockwise from left: In the bathroom, Waits loves the custom artwork by Deljou Art Group because it reminds him of the ocean; a walnut-and-steel table and bench from Four Hands serve as focal points in the breakfast room, along with a Jonathan Adler light fixture; upholstered window seats and a custom Bernhardt headboard add sophisticated touches to the master bedroom.



but ultimately turned to interior designer Chelsea Dunbar, owner of Blu Interiors (bluinteriors.com), to help him create a cozy home for him and his two daughters.

"I knew that I wanted it to be inviting and modern, but not too cold or industrial," Waits says. "Chelsea nailed my style within minutes."

According to Dunbar, Waits was incredibly easy to work with. "He likes a rustic, masculine look, and he also wanted it to look very neat and tidy," she says. "He cared very deeply about how it would turn out."

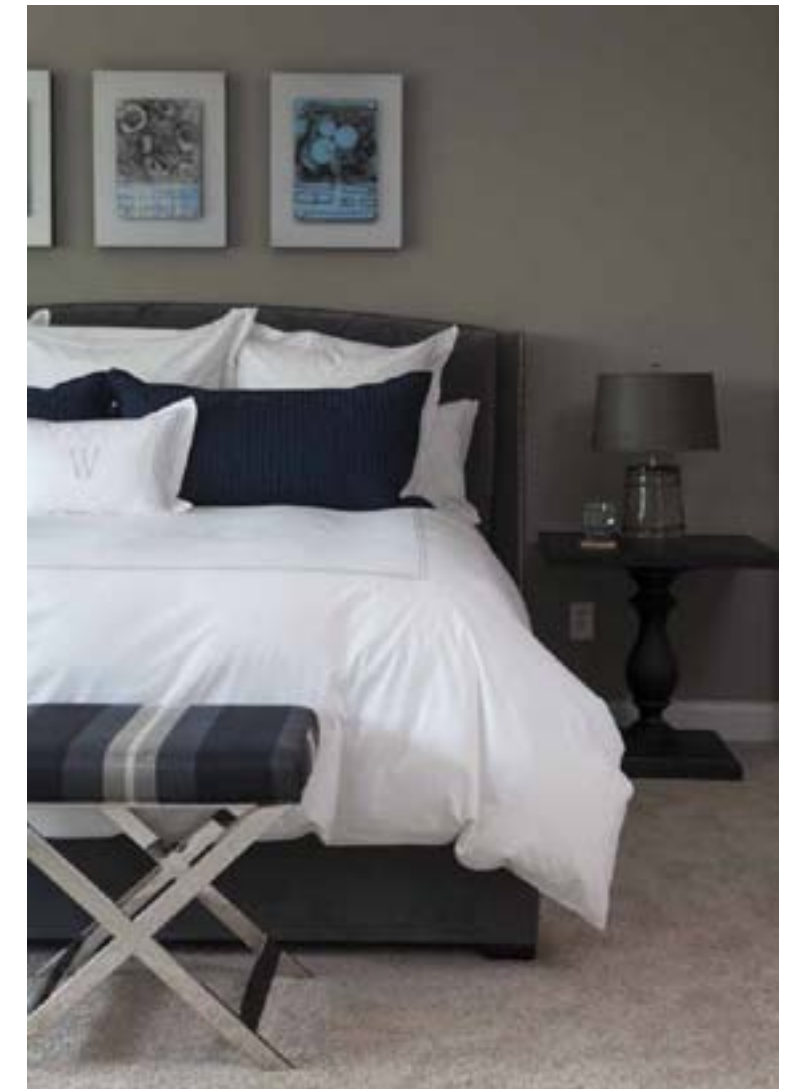
One of Dunbar's first undertakings was to examine the furniture and artwork Waits had brought with him from the house he shared with his ex-wife, suggesting what to keep and what to donate or sell. "[Architecturally], it was a blank slate, so we had to come in and add texture," Dunbar says. "We also changed all the lighting with fixtures that were more contemporary looking."

The color palette is neutral—basically one paint color for the entire house because of the open floor plan. While Waits pored over design books at Restoration



Hardware, which he loves, Dunbar combed retail and trade-only showrooms, and commissioned custom-made pieces from artists and furniture-makers. Since it's a family home, she zeroed in on ultradurable fabrics and rugs; to keep it luxurious, she employed velvet on sofas and even the headboard in the master bedroom.

The end result is a house that's as much an expression of Waits' passions as his personality. "I love being outdoors and I grew up that way," he says. "I love hunting, fishing and hiking. I wanted to bring the outside in, in a sophisticated way, and have it be warm like a home." Now, whenever Waits is back in Atlanta between his many business trips, that is exactly where he is. ■



Home Again

To begin anew, Home Depot heavyweight Chris Waits turns a fresh-start floor plan into a welcoming townhome for himself and his two daughters.

| By Travis Neighbor Ward | Photography by Jeff Wolk |