

Oversized flower murals by Laura Ashley flank the living room space. Antique lace curtains hang between gold silk curtains to soften the light coming through the windows. Mismatched furniture gives an eclectic vintage feel that's colorful and fun.

Small Space Design

Our 2021 Project House design-and-build team use their creativity to turn a small studio into a cozy guest getaway.

BY KRISTIN DOWDING

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICK MCGINN
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"You can be bold with a studio because it's a fun stay for guests who won't be living in it every single day."

Renovations take time. And while our design-and-build team Kara and Matt Christensen of Garden Gate Homes has been working hard to complete our 2021 Project House in Franklin, Tennessee, we have the opportunity to share a bonus project of theirs.

They took on a studio build that tested their creativity in designing a smaller space with multiple functions. "When you start designing a studio, you need to spend some time figuring out how to best lay it out," says Kara. "In this case, we didn't separate the different spaces. It has an open flow, and the only divide is the rug." With a soft color palette and their passion to mix new with antiques, Kara and Matt designed a cohesive studio space for guests.

VINTAGE INSPIRED

Because it's a new build, Kara had to create character to get her preferred Old World vibe, and she used both new and old pieces to achieve that goal. Genuine vintage pieces such as the nightstands, butcher-block island, mirrors and the trunk made of an antique door bring on the charm. But some of the newer pieces have their own charm to contribute too. "Charles P. Rogers makes iron beds to look old," says Kara. "This one has a distressed finish with a pretty brass color."

Kara also added a vintage vibe to the wall paneling behind the bed. "I varied the width of the planks to create a pattern," she says. "Some are wider and some are skinnier. It looks more old-fashioned when it's not perfect." Even the new wall murals by Laura Ashley have vintage appeal. "We framed the murals using old-fashioned moldings," says Kara. "It's like creating a big picture with wallpaper."

HOW TO CHOOSE Wallpaper

Penne Cairoli, president of Laura Ashley US, shares her tips on selecting the right wallpaper for your space.

BY PENNE CAIROLI OF LAURA ASHLEY US

PRINT. Start with the pattern. Do you gravitate towards stripes or florals? Do you want something subtle or bold? Do you want to bring nature indoors, or use a formal print with history? Wallpaper is such a personal choice, and when you see something that resonates, you'll know it. If you choose the right wallpaper, it will feel good in any room and make you happy every time you see it.

COLOR. This is a big factor when choosing wallpaper. If you love yellow, a wallpaper with yellow hues will always feel right. If you already have other elements for the space, consider the other key pieces. Rugs, sofas and artwork should either coordinate with or complement the wallpaper.

LOCATION. Accent walls are a great way to make a memorable impact, and nothing makes an impression like a wallpaper mural. Oversized florals are trending and offer a modern twist on a traditional print. Also, look for unexpected small spaces to wallpaper for a memorable moment. We love to wallpaper a closet as a fun way to bring joy to a dressing room, but a wallpapered bookshelf or the back of a bar works well too.



Space is limited with slanted ceilings, so Kara and Matt cut 14 inches out of the wall to create a spot for bookshelves. They lined the cutout with Woodgrain panels for texture and repurposed an antique Irish pub table into a desk.



(left) Woodgrain panels painted a vintage gold color span the back wall for added texture. The iron bed frame is made new to look vintage from Charles P. Rogers, and it sets the tone for the bedroom area. The nightstand and mirror are genuine vintage, and the sconces are plug-in friendly.

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