

# Genius FLAIR

## FABULOUSLY CUSTOMIZED

Clever projects fill a home in Austin, TX, with quirk.



Whenever Wendy Conklin is clothes shopping, she runs into the same challenge. “I see a great pattern on a top or a dress and I think, *I wish I could upholster something with that!*” says Wendy, the designer behind Chair Whimsy. Unique fabric, wallpaper, and paint colors abound in the 2,840-square-foot Victorian in Austin, TX, that she shares with her husband, Blane. To Wendy, every textile, every vintage furniture find, every piece of art tells a story—the knockout wallpaper she discovered after hours of scrolling, the settee she drove across the state to get, the paintings done by her adult daughter. “Life is too short not to surround yourself with spaces you’ve lovingly created and put yourself into,” she says. “It brings a lot of joy.”

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BUFF STRICKLAND** STYLED BY **HEATHER BULLARD**

Of course the couple's 11-year-old Boston terrier has a charismatic name: Nike, as in the Greek goddess (their first dog was Zeus).



**FABULOUS STAIRS**  
To make the magic, Wendy cut and adhered Matisse-like wallpaper from Spoonflower.

**FABULOUS SETTEE**  
This antique had a caved-in seat before Wendy resuscitated it. The floral fabric is original; the hot pink velvet is her handiwork.



#### FABULOUS CHAIRS

An animal print basically functions as a neutral here; Wendy hand-painted the frames gold. "The chairs are from the 1890s and have more character than any new ones I could buy," says Wendy.

#### FABULOUS MANTEL

Simple accents bookend a painting by artist Carrie Schmitt that, says Wendy, "is like having fresh flowers every day."

#### FABULOUS COLOR SCHEME

"When you fall for a fuchsia rug, one thing leads to another!" says Wendy. This beauty, from Manhattan Rugs, brings out the hue in the settee fabric by Clarke & Clarke.

“Any place can be customized. Back in college, I made curtains for my dorm room.” —Wendy



**FABULOUS STUDIO** It's one lively place to work, with eye-popping blooms in the Kim Parker for Clarke & Clarke wallpaper. The flowery fabric on the chairs in progress is from artedemitierra.net. Checkered laminate flooring joins the pattern party.

**paint color**  
Tricorn Black by  
Sherwin-Williams

**FABULOUS NOOK**  
Paint the walls black?!  
Yes—a dare from a friend.  
“I knew it would look cool  
because of all the light and  
the dynamic patterns,” says  
Wendy. The settee fabric  
is by Kravet, and the chair  
fabric is by Carrie Schmitt.

**FABULOUS  
CABINETRY** Wendy  
decked out the backs of the  
glass-front cabinets with  
Anthropologie wallpaper. It’s  
on the side panels, too. Heart  
eyes for the Smeg coffeemaker  
that picks up the pink.

**FABULOUS TOUCH**  
A poppy fruit bowl brings  
instant personality to the  
countertop.

PREVIOUS SPREAD, FAR RIGHT: HECTOR SANCHEZ



**FABULOUS SPA** The main bathroom already had an old-school Victorian look going, with marble tile, a claw-foot tub, and a console sink. Wendy leaned into the mood and did pale pink on the walls.

**paint color**  
Perfection by Valspar

**FABULOUS STOOL** An old one looked better than new once Wendy rehabbed it with fabric by Carrie Schmitt and painted the legs gold (a go-to move for her furniture flips).



**FABULOUS ACCENTS** All-white lamps weren't going to fly; Wendy painted the flowers on them hot pink. Even the tassels on the bench have extra whimsy—they're vintage.

**FABULOUS BED** For an easy bedroom spiff-up, after putting in fab blue and white shades from Smith & Noble, Wendy painted the bed's metal frame with dark teal chalk paint (Aubusson Blue by Annie Sloan). A pile-on of pillows and a blanket from Anthropologie also reinvigorated the room.

**FABULOUS ART** The couple's older daughter, Raegan, painted several portraits inspired by Frida Kahlo. Wendy snagged frames at a local antiques mall and painted them for this guest room.



**FABULOUS SETUP** Chairs arranged around a jute rug by Safavieh form an inviting hangout.

**FABULOUS PAINT JOB** A second guest room is yet more proof of the power of PIY (Paint It Yourself). Wendy did Decisive Yellow by Sherwin-Williams on the shutters and desk chair, and matched a desk to the green wicker nightstand from a garage sale (\$5!).

**FABULOUS LAMP** Wendy upcycled a Goodwill light with a new shade; it's covered with the same print as the wallpaper in her studio.



## so you want to MAKE OVER some chairs

- **PICK A DURABLE FABRIC:** Cotton blends are Wendy's main go-tos for chairs. Pros also like microfiber, which cleans up nicely and repels water (though it's a bit harder to DIY). Avoid doing silk on frequently used seats; it often snags, like a run in a stocking.
- **LAY PATTERNED FABRIC ON THE SEAT,** the back of the chair, or both, to decide which part of the design you want to see front and center.
- **NAILHEAD TRIM, WELT CORD, OR A DOUBLE-WELT ADD OOMPH,** especially in a hue that contrasts the fabric. "I've sewn welting and it's easy," says Wendy. When she's using a complex pattern that has many colors, Wendy matches the trim to a prominent one.
- **ASK WHETHER THE UPHOLSTERER WILL REDUCE THE FEE** if you remove the old fabric yourself. "You could also paint the frame or just the legs to personalize it before bringing it in," says Wendy.

“Sure, you could do a mood board and plan out your colors, but it's really fun to wing it!”  
—Wendy

# SHOP THE LOOK



**kettle**  
Vintage 1.7-quart  
enameled-steel  
kettle in aqua,  
\$50, chantal.com



**table**  
Acme Furniture  
Alger 22"H x  
18"-diameter wood  
table in light yellow,  
\$79, walmart.com



**chair**  
Spring Collection  
Charley Floral  
velvet and wood  
chair, \$1,499,  
chairwhimsy.com



**ottoman**  
13"H x 20"-diameter velvet pouf in blue, \$89,  
crateandbarrel.com



**pillows**  
From left: Cockatiel 18" x 18"  
polyester pillow, \$43, femmehesse  
.etsy.com; Artistic Weavers Liviah  
20" x 20" polyester pillow, \$54,  
homedepot.com



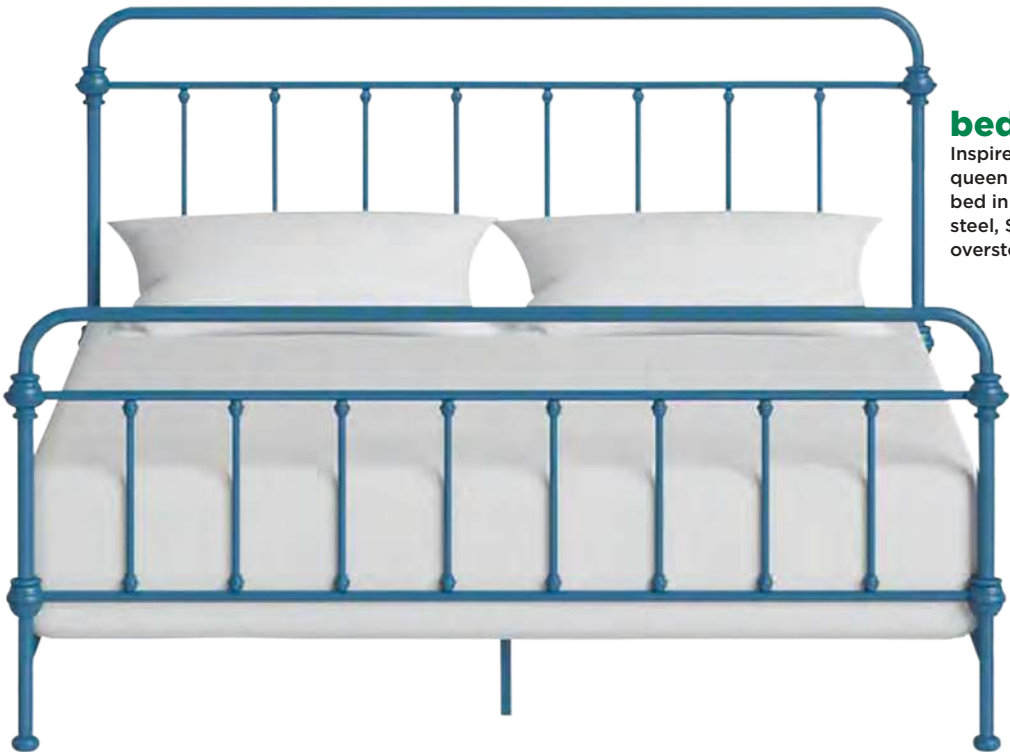
**outdoor  
swing**  
Polywood Vineyard  
60½"-wide plastic  
swing in white,  
\$389, lowes.com



**bowl**  
The Pioneer Woman Flea  
Market 10½"-diameter  
stoneware bowls, \$25 for a  
mixed set of 3, walmart.com



**rug**  
Dash & Albert Casar 5' x 8' cotton, wool, and  
polyester rug, \$1,368, annieselke.com



**bed**  
Inspire Q Giselle  
queen metal  
bed in blue  
steel, \$502,  
overstock.com



**lamp + shade**  
Almeria 20"-tall metal  
lamp, \$59, safavieh.com  
for stores; Peony Floral  
10"-tall cotton shade, \$120,  
sassyshades.etsy.com