



from blank to SWANK

In Rye Brook, a designer transforms a bare room into a chic dining space for a family of four

DESIGNED BY LARA MICHELLE FEINSOD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHUAN DING

Both modern and cozy, the once-empty dining room gets pop from a bold light fixture, textured chocolate brown wallpaper and matching curtains that let light dapple in.



"WHEN WE STARTED IT WAS REALLY JUST A BLANK SQUARE," RECALLS DESIGNER Lara Michelle Feinsod, describing the roughly 15-foot by 15-foot room just off the foyer in Melissa and Andrew Kaminsky's Rye Brook Colonial. The couple had moved into the home a year and a half earlier after relocating from Manhattan with their two young sons, and had tackled a number of other renovations already. "Lara had helped us design our powder room, bedroom and a homework room for the boys," says Melissa. "But turning this empty space into our dining room would be our biggest project together."

But where to begin? "They told me they wanted something contemporary with blues, beiges and browns," says the designer, owner of Lara Michelle Beautiful Interiors Inc. in Rye Brook. "But because the home is a Colonial, we decided to mix in some traditional elements. I never like to depart too much from the 'bones' of a house."

Adds Melissa: "We're not real formal, so we liked the idea of something simple yet elegant with a little color and 'pop.'"

Seeking to achieve that perfect blend, Feinsod boldly contrasted colors and styles throughout the space. To enliven the room's walls, for instance, she juxtaposed traditional white wood paneling with a striking chocolate-brown textured wallpaper from Larsen. The paper's intricate woven pattern is repeated on the window curtains, also from Larsen, which block an undesired view of the driveway while still allowing sunlight to filter in.

Dark and light hues are also contrasted in the room's key furniture pieces, all from Baker, including a walnut buffet with a limestone top and a large walnut dining-room table with matching chairs that are upholstered in faux crocodile leather from Dedar—a material cleverly chosen for its durability and stain resistance. "Between our kids and golden retriever that sheds all over the house, the faux crocodile is perfect—if there's a stain I can just wipe it off," says Melissa with a laugh.

Overhead, a bold contemporary-style fabric chandelier from Stonegate Designs adds illumination. "I must have shown Andrew and Melissa 20 different lights before they chose this one; they didn't want your everyday traditional chandelier," says Feinsod.

Agrees Melissa: "A typical chandelier with crystals just wasn't us; this just suited our tastes better—we were both instantly drawn to it." Two fabric-shade sconces with brushed nickel bases add extra light to the walls.

Also contributing to the homey feel is a comfy window seat topped with a coffee-hued cushion from Giant. A large sequined pillow from Lillian August and smaller throw pillows upholstered in fabrics from Lee Jofa, Kravet and Barbara Barry add extra panache.

Finishing touches include artwork from Kathryn Markel Fine Arts in Manhattan and a pen shell-framed mirror from Oly on the walls, plus mercury glass candlesticks from Oly and real animal horns from Mariani Gardens in Armonk, all placed atop the dining room table. Now, with ample seating for entertaining, the room has become a lively hub for holiday meals.

"We're very happy with our new dining room," says Melissa. "Everyone who comes in says they love it, and our friends who saw the room before, when there was nothing in it, are really taken aback by its transformation."