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17 *designing* WOMEN

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Pastry chef, author, and restaurateur Rebecca Rather savors time with friends at her Fredericksburg, Tex., home.

* Refers to this month's cover stories.
ON THE COVER: Photograph by Ellen
McDermott. Styled by Nicola Marc. For
story, turn to page 94.

Carrie Raphael's Maryland farmhouse embraces the loves of her life: family, style, and career.



FOLLOWING *her bliss*

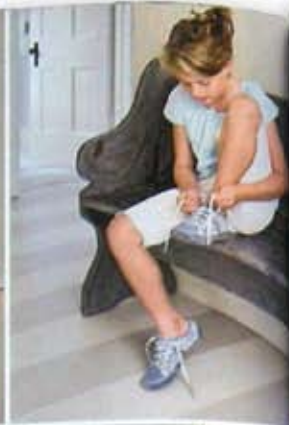
At first glance, gemstone pendants, pastel walls, homospun linens, and vintage fabrics in the Victorian home designer Carrie Raphael share with her husband, Charlie, and their two children—Emma, 9, and Noah, 8—appear fragile and ethereal. They are anything but. “It’s all about functional beauty,” she explains. Clues to Carrie’s philosophy and career path were evident early on: “As a child, I decorated shoe boxes into rooms for small dolls, and I was fascinated by Laura Ingalls Wilder’s Little House books because they centered on the joys of family and home,” she says. Yet she couldn’t decide upon a career. “The only things I truly enjoyed were picking out colors to paint our home and searching for fabrics to furnish it. One day, Charlie’s father asked if I ever considered design. I signed up for classes the next day and that was that.” Soon after, Raphael Designs debuted with a line of slipcovers and then blossomed into an interior design service. “Acting on my passion was the answer,” Carrie says.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELLEN MCDERMOTT STYLED BY NICOLA MARC WRITTEN BY FRANÇOISE O’NEILL



ENTERTAINING

“I love to cook and give parties,” says Carrie. “Whether it’s setting the table or baking a cake, the creative process is the same.” To make the cake shown, start with a classic yellow cake and top it with Seven-Minute Frosting; countryliving.com/7minfrosting.



OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The master bedroom, says Carrie, "makes me feel calm." A vintage buffet holds dinnerware benches, such as the one Emma sits on, are a staple of the Swedish interiors Carrie favors. The bedroom bench is inscribed with the couple's anniversary date. Noah already shows an aptitude for design. In typical Carrie style, a slipcover pairs a floral pattern with the natural fabric, and another marries velvet and organza (middle right), and new chairs are dressed in vintage Swan (bottom center).



FABRIC & PAINT
A built-in recess in Emma's room was made into a home-work area. Charlie built the cornice and desk, and Carrie dressed the nook with fabrics. A pink vintage mirror adds depth and light. A new chair swears up the desk. Lucy, the family Shih Tzu, stands guard.

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"I love the Scandinavian tradition of painting floors. It defines and completes a room."



COLLABORATING
Cerie and her husband, Charlie, are business partners. "Charlie handles the business end, including marketing and graphic work for raphaelsdesigns.com, and managing the various projects. We work side by side and respect each other's strengths and opinions."



PHOTO: Of the dining room Cerie says, "I love to mix textures and patterns. It gives a piece personality." THIS PAGE, TOP RIGHT: A church window and pew capture the Scandinavian style she loves. BOTTOM RIGHT: Sleep-ins and fabric samples. BOTTOM LEFT: Cerie sees furniture as dress forms and its covering as clothes. DINING CHAIRS: 901154K. BLUE SOFA: CALICO CORNERS. FOR RESOURCES, SEE ADDRESS INDEX.



Intentional and
 Carrie's family home, and work are
 a harmonious whole. "I never sleep
 apart from the other. That's
 why I work from home. Beauty and
 function make a house but family
 and happiness make it a home."

Creating a vision
 "Get practical but be willing to
 include the people in your life. No
 Our children have always been
 surrounded by creativity. Every
 piece of furniture is not green and
 fresh underpinks and natural
 elements. "Chairs and I love for
 them to be inspired. For me, that's
 the path to success."

From a first job
 "Culture has been my muse from
 the start," she says. "It inspired
 and still does. The exposure
 that nurtured my business." She
 values design elements to her love
 of fashion, including her preference
 to offer dresses and slipovers to
 skirts and ball gowns. But restraint
 is the secret. "Too many details
 and the beauty is lost."

Knowing when to listen
 Carrie's beauty and practicality
 define Carrie's designs. "But
 each project is different," she says.
 "Understanding how closely the
 client's house is key to the right look."

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