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MAY/JUNE 2019

## WOMEN IN BUSINESS







functional elements like layout, storage, and stain-resistant fabrics that give parents peace of mind.

**What are your favorite details for a functional yet kid-friendly space?**

It's two-fold: I introduce texture with a plush throw blanket or a down- or Trillium-fill pillow and add color or pattern with pillow fabrics or window-seat cushions. For function, I gravitate toward machine-washable coverlets for bedding. I often pick neutral colors for sheets and main bedding to avoid fading and to bleach if needed. I like smart storage like play tables with cubbies and toy bins, or adjustable-height clothing rods to accommodate growing clothing sizes.

**What do you enjoy most about designing for your clients?**

Our clients don't live in spaces that serve as showrooms. They don't have the "off-limits" living room anymore. They need all their spaces to serve a purpose and want all the pieces in that space to be functional. I love introducing them to the idea of a designed space that aesthetically calms and inspires them while living up to their daily needs.

**You describe your style as "livable luxury." What does that mean?**

Livable luxury is the counterpoint to the idea that busy families couldn't have a luxurious design aesthetic without sacrificing the functional slant. It was an outgrowth of feeling like I didn't want to sacrifice the look of my home while it endured the roughhouse activities of my kids and our busy daily lives. I didn't want to wait until we made it through our young family stage of life before making a home I felt inspired to be in and proud enough to share with friends.

# LIVABLE LUXURY

Courtney Thomas, founder of La Cañada-based Courtney Thomas Design, reveals her tips and tricks for designing stylish, family-friendly homes.

by **SARA SMOLA**

photography by **STEPHANIE WILEY PHOTOGRAPHY**

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**here do you start when designing a family-friendly space?**

I start with *who* and *how*. *Who* uses this space most? *How* old are they and *how* do they use the space? For family rooms and kitchens, which is often a mixed-use space, we get a lot of input

from parents before setting design direction. For a playroom or kids' bedroom, I like to interview the kids. I use their vision for overall room design or seasonal refreshes and then I make sure to add the

**What are some other ways to incorporate kid-friendly design in one's home?**

I love displaying kids' artwork or recent creative projects. It doesn't have to be a large gallery wall of their latest watercolor pieces. It can be a rotating display area: a corkboard, a single shelf on a bookcase, a changeable art frame or clothespins on a piece of twine that hangs art over a desk in their room. I also love incorporating reading nooks in kids' rooms: a window seat with lots of pillows, an oversize reading chair, a bean bag, or a loveseat. ■