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# Interiors

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BARBARA WESTBROOK BRINGS  
CUBS STAR JON LESTER HOME



# BRING IT HOME

When Cubs pitcher Jon Lester, his wife, Farrah, and their young sons moved to Chicago, they called on designer Barbara Westbrook from back home to make the place fit them. The result? A big hit.

By Elaine Markoutas  
Photography by Werner Stroube

In the life of sports figures, things sometimes move at a rapid clip. When Cubs pitcher Jon Lester was traded to Chicago, there were only a few months to find a new home for his wife, Farrah; their two sons, Hudson, 5, and Walker, 2; and their Black Lab.

"We actually found it on the Internet before we came up," says Farrah. "We looked all over, but I knew this was going to be the one."

Even though the architecture of this city hideaway was not at all like their off-season Atlanta home, which Jon describes as English Cape Cod cottagey, they knew their designer, Barbara Westbrook, could handle tweaking interiors and furnishings. Westbrook has more than enough street cred. She is the author of the recently released coffee table book *Gracious Rooms* (\$50, Rizzoli), which celebrates "warm, inviting homes full of Southern charm."

"We're a little more rustic and traditional," says Farrah, who is from



**HOME BASE**  
A pair of 19th-century Italian pinewood chairs with carved arms and new upholstery invite guests into the living room, which is anchored by an antique Turkish rug. The carved giltwood mirror above the fireplace, from late 18th-century Italy, balances the mix of old and new. Opposite page: The classical, forest limestone facade with a shake slate roof spoke to the Lesters' desire for a more traditional home.



#### COUNTER CULTURE

Westbrook had the painting restored in a warm shade of gray and changed out the hardware in favor of more modern pulls. She added a new faucet and pot filler from Waterworks, along with black granite counters and backsplash. The olive and taupe striped slipcovers and rustic iron pendant with a tin on brass shade create a mixed vibe.



#### NEW NICHE

From left: An antique Italian walnut desk is nestled beneath a small oval window with a pretty view of a tree and provides a spot for old books and antique inkwells. The one-of-a-kind lamp base is crafted from an old iron gate; Jon and Farrah wanted a warm, inviting home with lots of comfortable seating, and the desk chair is no exception.

Greenville, S.C. (Jon hails from Seattle). "But what we both really liked about this home is that it was very different." And they were game for changes. "You kind of have to change when you move to a new city," adds Jon.

The 7,000-square-foot, four-level urban home on a double lot has a lot to offer—bells and whistles include a wine cellar, home gym and plenty of outdoor terrace and deck space—but its interiors were all white and stark. "Beautiful moldings, but it was cold and fussy," says Westbrook. "like you couldn't put your feet up."

One thing Westbrook says the couple didn't want was something that would date easily, or a generic furniture store look that everyone has. "We're not stuffy formal fancy pants at all," says Farrah. "We like nice things, but [we want our home] to feel inviting. We have two little boys, so we didn't want white couches," she explains. Adds Jon, "my biggest thing is a homey, antique and rustic feel, which we added to a modern city look."

The benefit of an open floor plan—with main

living space in the center, dining room to the left and a smaller sitting area in the bay—forced a cohesive palette. Westbrook chose a warm-gray paint for the walls, a rich background for neutral furnishings punched up by textured fabrics, pops of red (a favorite of Farrah's) in alpaca pillows with pleated details and an antique Turkish rug.

Artwork was chosen to relate to hobbies like hunting and fishing, as well as birds and butterflies—things the Lesters just like. Deep sofas were designed for comfort. "Jon is tall, and he has a lot of tall friends," says Westbrook.

A more intimate spot in the bay is perfect for a glass of wine. Or, says Farrah, "I sit there and read a lot when the boys are napping." Sheer draperies on existing rods were replaced with more substantial but visually light wool with embroidered trim that adds elegance.

"I'm a huge lover of antiques—ever since I was a little girl," says Farrah. "My great-grandmother was a collector. We have a ton in our Atlanta home." When she could, Westbrook injected a bit





**HIGHER GROUND**  
Clockwise from top: A pair of wingback chairs and an ottoman are covered in salt-flores wool, and the linen draperies are from Love Piano's Windsor collection; a smoked iron chandelier with eight candles, from Formations, illuminates a wood-and-iron dining table. The nailhead-trimmed Dennis & Leen walnut chairs are upholstered in wool herringbone with chevron trim while skinned, lighter-colored bent and hoeses chairs prevent the look from being too moody; Westbrook added a textural runner and striking iron sconces with a hanging lamp to the dramatic curved staircase.



of country, like a collection of antique salt-glazed crocks with cobalt blue, that date from 1845 to 1870, in the glass-paned upper kitchen cabinets.

One of Farrah's favorite pieces is an Italian antique cabinet once used by priests. It's the centerpiece of the dining room and holds a collection of vintage pitchers.

The couple did not want to gut the kitchen, so Westbrook performed a mini face-lift. Farrah "really, really [loves]" that it flows into the family room, providing another favorite place for her to hang out.

Farrah says that the serene master bedroom is "more dainty than the rest of the house. I actually tend to like more masculine stuff, but it's soothing, and when Jon is on the road, the kids camp out with me."

Jon's chill space no doubt is his man cave: a wood-paneled room on the lower level, which features a streamlined sectional that he picked out with gently curved arms. The room is filled with

unusual antiques, like beehive side tables, vintage advertising signs and an antique primitive table from the 1800s where the kids can play or sit and create art projects.

The Lesters, who have been married seven years, met when he was rehabbing in the minors after undergoing therapy for non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The two are involved in Never Quit (nvqt.org), a charity that benefits pediatric cancer research, and hosted their first fundraiser last year at Metro.

They also love to entertain outdoors. Farrah calls Jon "the pitmaster," known for his specialties of pulled pork and beer-can chicken and no-knead dough pizzas on his Big Green Egg. When the team reached the second round of the playoffs last season, the Lesters hosted a giant party for 75 of his teammates and families.

"I love being close to 'Wigley Field,'" says Jon. "I wouldn't trade it for anything." ■



**PATTERN PLAY**  
Westbrook and design associate Kim Winkler texturally juxtaposed gingham and vintage airplanes in the boys' room and nursery (shown here) through accessories and direct airplane motifs and a set of vintage prints of prop planes above the crib add interest, while a ticking fabric bumper and crib skirt tie it all together. Custom Roman blinds feature a larger-scale stripe to coordinate.

## DESIGN DETAILS

**TYPE**  
Single-family home  
**LOCATION**  
Graceland West

**INTERIOR DESIGN**  
Westbrook Interiors,  
Atlanta  
barbarawestbrook.com

### RESOURCES

**Verellen**  
Living room sofas, banquettes  
seating in breakfast area  
verelleninc.com

**Rogers & Goffign**  
Fabrics in living room,  
chenille family room sofa  
rogersandgoffign.com

**Formations**  
Cocktail table and dining table  
formationsusa.com

**Sullivan Fine Rugs**  
Antique Turkish rug in living  
room  
sullivanfinerugs.com

**Holland & Sherry**  
Living room draperies with  
trim, heathered wool dining  
chairs, wool plaid chairs in  
family room  
hollandsherry.com

**Nicholson Gallery**  
Feather art, vintage remnant  
plaid pillow and coffee table  
in family room  
thenicholsongallery.com

**Bungalow Classic**  
Desk chair  
bungalowclassic.com

**Dennis & Leen**  
Dining chairs  
dennisandleen.com

**Waterworks**  
Pot filler, faucets, powder  
room sink  
waterworks.com

**RH Baby & Child**  
Beds in boys' room, crib and  
bedding, airplane mobile  
rhbabyandchild.com

**Dessin Fournir**  
Fabric on leather chairs,  
drapery in boys' room  
dessinfournir.com

**Antiques on Old Plank Road**  
Leather club chairs  
oldplank.com