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ELLE DECOR

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THE GLAMOUR OF GOING GREEN

CHIC AND SIMPLE WAYS TO SAVE YOUR HOUSE AND THE PLANET

A FRESH START

LIZ LANGE OPENS HER DOORS IN PALM BEACH

HOUSE GOALS IN SHAKER HEIGHTS

Whitney Haslam Johnson and her three sons in the family room of her Georgian Revival house in Shaker Heights, Ohio, which was designed in 1927 by architect Clarence Mack and has been newly updated by Suzanne Kasler. The sofa and chair are from Bungalow Classic, the cocktail table is by Formations, and the wallpaper is by Gracie.

TOUCH DOWN

CLEVELAND BROWNS SCION WHITNEY HASLAM JOHNSON ENLISTS **SUZANNE KASLER** TO RENOVATE A 1920s HOUSE FOR HER YOUNG FAMILY.

BY **JESSE KORNBLUTH**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **NICOLE FRANZEN**

THERE ARE FEW AMERICAN VENTURES MORE PRIZED THAN ownership of a professional football team, and businessman Jimmy Haslam joined that elite club in 2012 when he bought the Cleveland Browns. Financially, he's had success. On the field, the team has struggled. Change was in order. And in the executive suite of family-owned sports teams, that often means more family.

Haslam knew exactly where to look. His daughter, Whitney Haslam Johnson, had worked for her father for more than a decade, becoming chief experience officer in 2017 at his company, Pilot Flying J, which operates highway rest stops. Her husband, James Wood "JW" Johnson III, had been a director and producer for CBS Sports for 15 years before launching a media company that made videos for the Browns. The Johnsons were happily living in Nashville, where they were raising three boys (now ages nine, eight, and seven), but Whitney was commuting to Knoxville, and her husband often flew to Cleveland—these were two exceptionally accomplished jugglers. So some years after her father bought the Browns, he invited them to move to Cleveland and assist in the team's rejuvenation. They recognized the call as a touchdown pass.

The Johnsons quickly bought a 1927 brick house—nine bays wide, with seven bedrooms and nine baths—on two acres in Shaker Heights, an inner-ring suburb of Cleveland, and enlisted Suzanne Kasler, the noted Atlanta-based decorator. Like her clients, Kasler is not orthodox; in a single room, she can combine periods and produce striking wall treatments that are, above all, comfortable environments. In the Johnsons' new home, she found a house that had been "gracefully updated," allowing her to focus on a master plan. The dining room was close to the

RIGHT: In the dining room, the table, limestone urn, and pedestal are by Formations, and the curtains and throw pillows on the custom banquettes are in a Robert Kime fabric. The chandelier is by Vaughan, the sisal rug is by Stark, and the walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Drop Cloth. The artworks are by Michelle Y. Williams.

ABOVE: In the living room, the Saladino sofa is in an Old World Weavers velvet, the Directoire bergères are from Scott Antique Markets, and the armchairs from Kasler's line for Hickory Chair are in a Nancy Corzine fabric. The cocktail table is by Karine Szanto, the floor lamp is from Kasler's line for Visual Comfort, the urn torchieres are by Michael S. Smith, and the bar (*left*) is painted in Sherwin-Williams's Fame Orange. **RIGHT:** The powder room's sink is by Waterworks, the fittings are by THG Paris, and the sconces are by Travis & Company. The mirror is by Kerry Joyce, and the wallpaper is by Dedar. **OPPOSITE:** The sofa and chair in the living room are from the designer's line for Hickory Chair, and the cocktail table is from Profiles. The side table is by Mark D. Sikes, the lamp is by Vaughan, and the antique barometer is French; the curtains are of a J. Robert Scott fabric, and the photograph is by David Burdeny.

entrance, and it was the room you walked through to get to the living room; it would, she sensed, work better as a family room, so she used a hand-wash to tone down the yellow wallpaper, and it looked as if it had always been the most welcoming room in the house. The living room was huge, ideal for the entertaining that the Johnsons planned to do. Kasler chose white sisal carpet and childproof fabrics, "but if something spills…well, rooms get better with age." She created a library that JW has commandeered as his office, and she lacquered a closet and made it a bar. Upstairs, she added a very welcome laundry and expanded a closet for Whitney. "We wanted to make the house younger and more stylish," Kasler says, "and we did."

The test of a family home is in the living, which, in this case, never stops. ("School is over by June, football starts in July," Whitney notes.) Each boy has his own bedroom,

ABOVE: In a guest room, custom beds are topped with Peacock Alley linens, and the nightstands are by Made Goods. The ceiling light is from Kasler's line for Visual Comfort, the Sister Parish wallpaper is from Travis & Company, and the curtains are of a Cowtan & Tout fabric. The artwork is by Kayce Hughes. **RIGHT:** In the master bedroom, a Joseph Konrad mirror hangs above a cabinet by Kasler for Hickory Chair. The artworks are by Hunt Slonem. **OPPOSITE:** The Hickory Chair master bed and Visual Comfort lamps were designed by Kasler, the poufs are by Bungalow Classic, the chandelier is by R Hughes, and the rug is by Stark. Artwork, Paule Marrot. For details, see Resources.

but they prefer to sleep in the same room. "They really are like triplets," Whitney says. "Putting them to bed is never a one-and-done. It's a process every night."

"Whitney keeps a pristine, edited, tailored house," Kasler says. Yes, to a point. Cleveland winters can be long. Happily, so is the foyer, which serves as a "sports hub" for Nerf football and Nerf dodgeball and a construction zone for Lego towers and castles. There is a playroom in the basement that was intended for these activities, and the boys do use it, but "there's nothing nice about it," Whitney says.

She still works at Pilot Flying J; she is also involved with the team. Her husband is now deep in the business side of the organization. The Johnsons remain jugglers, but the absence of planes and separations gives them time to make a real contribution to the Browns. "We spend our days thinking about new ways to have success on the field and off," Whitney reports. It is still an uphill climb—the Browns have never been to the Super Bowl. But the Johnsons declare victory every night when they come home. ■