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Searching for Jane Britton's Killer

The brutal 1969 murder of a Harvard archaeology student went unsolved for decades. Then came an obsessive quest for answers.

By Becky Cooper

Upfront

STYLE WATCH

Tree of Life

A CHESTNUT HILL DESIGNER CREATES AN OASIS FOR REFLECTION IN HER HOME WITH HELP FROM A LOCAL ARTIST.

BY MARNI ELYSE KATZ

Initially, Soni Konduru wasn't certain that she wanted to set aside an entire room in her Chestnut Hill home for a zen zone, but, when the pandemic hit, she was glad she did. Not only does everyone in the family use it for prayer or meditation, it's become a quiet space where her 20-year-old son and 16-year-old daughter hang out and read. "People use it around their own schedules for ritual time, and it's also become a hideaway," the design principal of Daastann says. During Hindu celebrations such as Diwali, the five-day festival of lights that begins November 14 this year, the family gathers there to light oil lamps, chant mantras, and make offerings of fruit, flowers, and sweets.

1. The carved wood **table** from an Etsy maker in Jodhpur, India, is a representation of tables used for grinding grains outside homes in India. This holds bronze oil lamps and prayer books.

2. Schumacher **pillows** decorate the space where Konduru might join her kids for a chat. "The butterfly fabric reflects the cycle of life," she says.

3. When local workrooms couldn't swing a quick turnaround for **window treatments**, Konduru made mid-night video calls to vendors in India. "They showed me fabrics until I found this embroidered one," she says.

4. Pauline Curtiss of Patina Designs applied Venetian **plaster** to the walls and ceiling to create a dreamy effect akin to the patinated walls of old temples. Then she added the tree of life with leaves and lotus flowers fading away into the universe.

5. Bronze **objects** on the platform include statues of the goddess Radha and the god Krishna, a water bowl, bells, and an elephant incense holder. The temple hosts representations of more gods and goddesses including a large image of Lakshmi, goddess of wealth.

6. The marble **temple** that was custom made in Bangalore, India, sits on a platform. "We keep the gods on an elevated platform out of respect and devotion," Konduru says.

