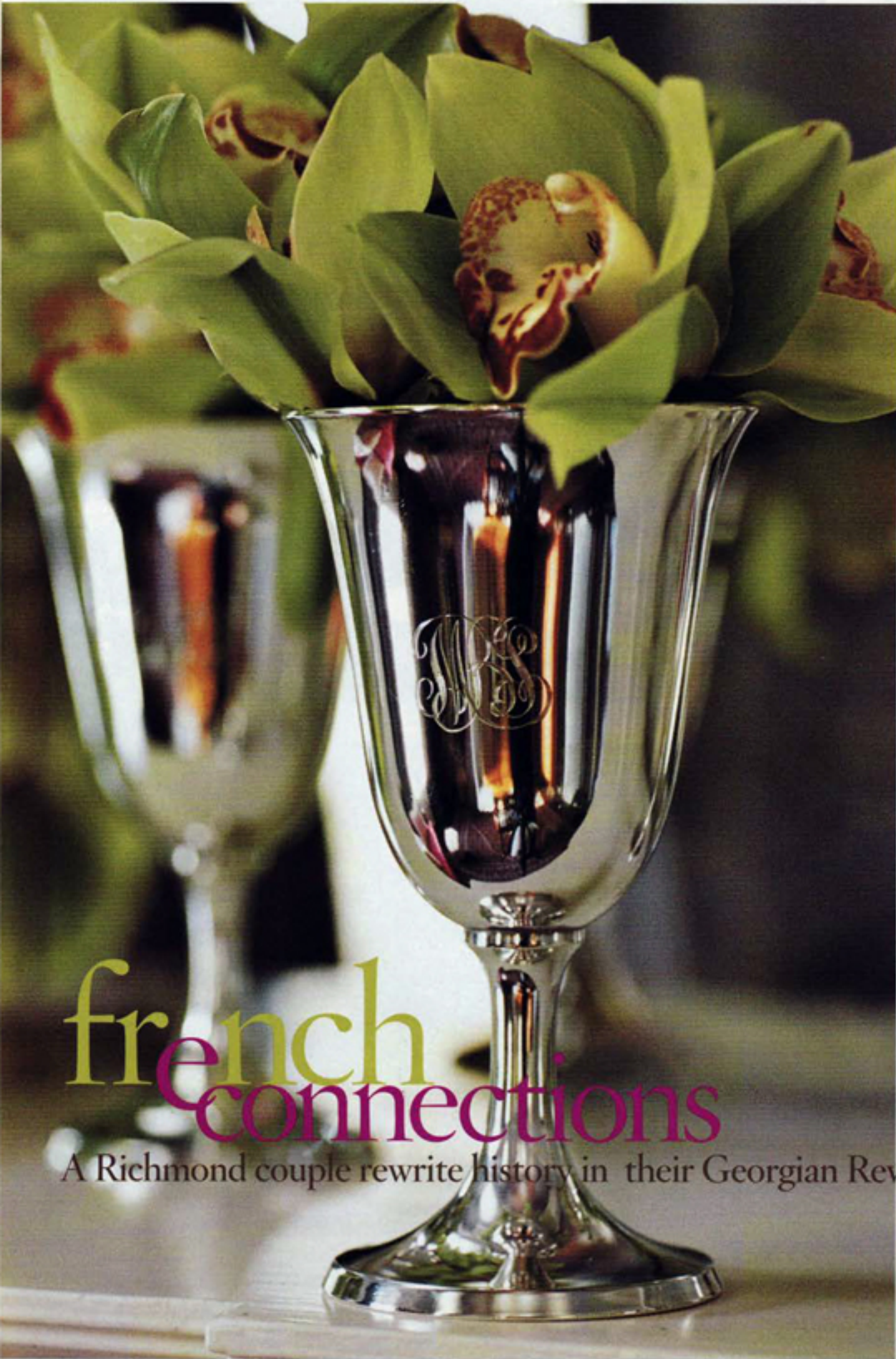


September 2005

TRADITIONAL HOME

Classic new furnishings
from Alexa Hampton
Carolina Herrera Jr.'s
charming kitchen

simply irresistible
50 *inviting rooms that will inspire your decorating*



french connections

A Richmond couple rewrite history in their Georgian Revival home.



The library is a study in modern masculinity. A fresh gold color on the walls is grounded by the caramel of worn leather sofas and dramatic accents of black throughout the room, creating a welcoming spot for Justin and Tanya French to relax.



when Justin and Tanya French were hunting for a new home, they wanted space

and a sense of the past. The house they found, "Westbourne," a 1918 Richmond estate often called the best example of Georgian Revival architecture in Virginia, provided both—historic significance and spacious grounds where children (son Griffin was a soon-to-be toddler and daughter Chloe was on the way) could explore to their heart's content.

Justin, a developer who buys and renovates historic properties, loves history, so it was no surprise that this classic house, designed by renowned Virginia architect Duncan Lee, caught his eye. It had been home to Douglas Southall Freeman, a Richmond newspaper editor and Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, until his death in 1953. Although the house has an illustrious history—Dwight Eisenhower and Robert Frost have been guests here—Justin was most inspired by Freeman's community activism, which is also dear to his and Tanya's hearts. "It was important that this house accommodate large crowds for fund-raisers," says Justin, "but also be comfortable enough for the children."

Fate, coincidence, call it what you want, struck when a friend recommended local designer Suellen Gregory, and it happened that Tanya had just read a story in *Traditional Home*—"Pretty in Pink," September 2003—about another Richmond house that Gregory had designed. "Suellen sounded like just

Left: An embroidered fabric at the living room windows sets the color scheme of coffee with cream, soft aqua, and rose; the same fabric was used for costumes for the musical *Les Misérables*. **Above:** The foyer provides a majestic entrance into Westbourne and serves as a classic and quiet backdrop for the Frenches' art collection.

the person who could help me make my house beautiful," says Tanya. "I knew that this would be a long-lasting relationship."

Tanya loves color, and since the previous homeowners were partial to linen white, she was eager to experiment with palettes. Gregory started with the magnificent entry hall, which she kept classic and minimal so the Frenches' artwork could shine. "Art is a passion for us," says Tanya. "We like contemporary, and our young, fresh pieces from local artists mix well with the traditional elements of the house." Twelve-inch vertical stripes painted on the walls in cream and white were topped with a dark glaze that antiques and warms the space. To carry the classic theme further, Justin enlisted local furniture designer Harrison Higgins to create a pair of settees made for the space. "Justin and Tanya really felt committed to using local craftsmen, just like you would have years ago," Gregory notes.

Details abound in the formal living room, which Tanya wanted to be feminine. Hand-smocked drapery panels hang from a twisted-rope pole painted gold. An English roll-arm sofa and matching chair were given dressmaker touches—channels in back, buttons across the front. Pillows feature various frills, including pleated ruffles, rope trim, and fringe.

The living room's femininity is balanced by the masculinity of the library, now Justin's favorite room. The library's palette grew from a rug the Frenches already owned. A sea of leather on a pair of Chesterfield sofas, purchased from the previous owners, engendered a rather stiff look. Gregory's solution? Substituting black velvet seats on them. A black velvet ottoman trimmed with lavish bullion fringe visually connects the sofas to a pair of stately wing chairs covered in a black-and-gold fabric.

Right: Reproduction 18th-century wood chairs alternate with slipcovered pieces to add variety in the formal dining room.

Below right: Justin and Tanya French with son Griffin and daughter Chloe on the front steps of Westbourne.

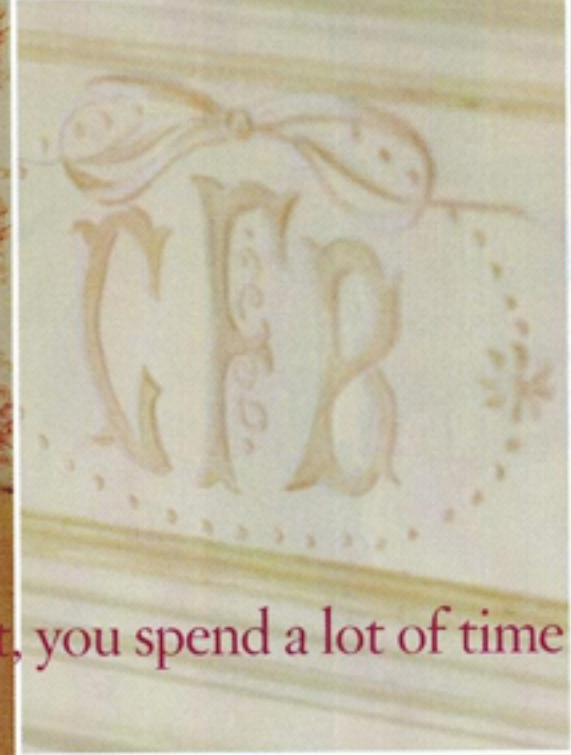




The nursery was created with the mother in mind just as much as the daughter. "When you have an infant, you spend a lot of time in that room," says Tanya. Pink floral fabric applied to the walls is contrasted with blue draperies adorned with silk rosettes. To personalize the room, Chloe's initials were painted on the fireplace mantel. The adjoining bathroom was covered in a pink trellis wallpaper that complements the pattern of the sink's gathered, beribboned skirt.

When you have an infant, you spend a lot of time in the nursery.

—HOMEOWNER TANYA FRENCH





Tanya and Justin love entertaining (they recently packed 150 people into the house for a Richmond Symphony fundraiser), so Gregory knew she could go over the top in the dining room. A silver-leafed ceiling makes the space literally shine; a large mirror over the fireplace reflects a candlelight glow. The French blue walls are highlighted by sumptuous gray silk drapery panels bordered in a darker velvet.

With the formal rooms in place, the house needed more casual spaces. A view of the outdoors from three walls led Gregory to the sky-blue color selection for the solarium. The painted sky on the ceiling hovers over dark-stained pilasters and dark-framed furnishings with contrasting light upholstery.

The kitchen needed a renovation, too. Here an existing butler's pantry ate up valuable cooking space, and there were no upper wall cabinets. Tanya and Justin opted to open up the kitchen by removing the wall that separated it from the pantry, installing an island where the children could sit, and adding upper cabinets.

"We knew this house was home the minute we saw it," says Tanya. "We love pretty things—beautiful art and great furniture. We've gotten that, and been able to share it with our kids. It's the home they will grow up in, and I love that." ■

Interior designer: Suellen Gregory
For more information, see sources on page 206.



Artisans Gavin and Ty Jarrard designed the pot rack over the granite-topped island. Opposite bottom: A radiator with a warming box was moved from the original butler's pantry to its new home in the kitchen. Opposite top: The solarium is a sunny mix of light blue and ivory fabrics.