

JULY-AUGUST 2012

VERANDA

ESCAPE INTO
SUMMER



FLAIR, FORM, AND COLOR

A GRAND RICHMOND
HOUSE PLAYS AGAINST
TYPE WITH A MIX-
AND-MATCH APPROACH
FOR WHICH THE ONLY
PREREQUISITE IS BEAUTY.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY SUELLEN GREGORY
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A bright damask is softened when used on the reverse. Antique chairs, David Bell Antiques, in Mulberry fabric. Table, Beeline Home. Floor lamp, Parc Monceau. OPPOSITE LEFT: 19th-c. wallpaper panels, Linda Horsely Antiques. Antique French chairs in Vervain silk. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Table, Parc Monceau. Custom chairs. OPENING PAGES LEFT: Vintage chair, Art, Oberto Gili. OPENING PAGES RIGHT: Chairs, Niermann Weeks, in Manuel Canovas fabric. Chandelier, Caroline Faison Antiques. Sconces, Vaughan.



“IT’S A JOY TO WORK WITH A CLIENT WHO’S SO ADVENTURESOME,” SAYS SUELLEN GREGORY, THE INTERIOR DESIGNER RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS LIVELY

reimagining of a classic Georgian grande dame. Subtle surprises behind every arched doorway are the result of a refreshing open-mindedness to all things of beauty—unencumbered by importance or provenance—shared by the Richmond-based designer and her longtime client.

Like any intuitive professional who has collaborated with the same family over a span of years, Gregory has learned to channel her client’s taste. “I don’t know how it all comes together,” says the wife, who shares the house with her husband, three children, and cockapoo. “It feels like Sue and I never hash the project out—we spend half the time talking about

kids and weddings and funerals. It just kind of happens.”

The majestic 1921 manor was designed by one of the classical masters, W. Duncan Lee, a leading residential architect of his day. In this house the homeowners found Lee’s original floor-to-ceiling windows, columns, pilasters, and elegant mantles with gold-trimmed marble fireplace surrounds, all gloriously unaltered. Envisioning additional room for everything from a get-together for a gang of teenagers to a festive dinner party for a crowd of grown-ups, the client commissioned Raleigh architect Carter Skinner to create a pool cabana with almost 2,000 square feet of enter-

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Contemporary art and a flaking architectural fragment balance gilt touches. Custom sofas in Bergamo fabric, with pillow in Dedar stripe. Custom coffee table. Antique fragment, David Bell Antiques. Art, Richard Carlyon (left); Robert De Niro, Sr. (right, top); Hans Hofmann (right, bottom). 18th-c. console and lamps, Parc Monceau. Flowers throughout, Tommy's Garden.



The sweep of lightly ruffled curtains echoes the movement in a scrolling headboard. Curtains in Élitis silk. Custom headboard in Claremont wool. OPPOSITE LEFT: 19th-c. table and antique chandelier, Parc Monceau. Chairs, Niermann Weeks. Range, Viking. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Wallpaper, Brunswick & Fils. Curtains in Clarence House cotton with Samuel & Sons trim

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taining space. Down to the red brick facade and slate roof, the cabana is a careful mini-me copy of the main house.

Charged with decorating both structures, Gregory wanted interiors that would be “crisp, but comfortable; sophisticated, but welcoming,” using pops of color against a palette of cream, gold, and gray. In the dining room, she introduced drama by filling in panels on existing millwork with mirrors. Throughout the house the designer upholstered with cottons, avoiding fabrics that would look “dressy,” especially for antique pieces. Animal prints are used as accents on furniture, floors, and walls—inspired by a zebra-skin rug the client inherited from her grandmother, who nabbed it decades ago on safari.

Among the fine French, English, and Swedish antiques that the two discovered on numerous shopping trips, they’ve also peppered elements of whimsy. Both designer and client are self-confident—why not mount this architectural fragment

we’ve been carrying around Atlanta’s Peachtree Hills all day next to that 18th-century French bust in the family room? The native Southerners also deliberately tossed out the traditional art timelines that one would typically find in a stately Virginia home. Forget ancestral portraits and sporting paintings. Here hang photographs by Oberto Gili and Sally Mann; drawings by Richard Tuttle, Hans Hofmann, and Robert De Niro, Sr.; paintings by Alex Katz; and contemporary abstracts by the late Richard Carlyon, a noted local artist. “Georgian architecture is so classic, and so easy to live with, it really allows you to do what you want,” says Gregory. “We set out to mix antiques with contemporary art.”

“It is very serendipitous the way Sue and I find things and the way they work in the house, but all of the different spaces relate,” says the wife. “This is a happy house with a lot of good family stuff going on—and it remains true to itself.” □

