WASHINGTON DC • MARYLAND • VIRGINIA

The Magazine of Architecture and Fine Interiors

HOME & DESIGN

Spring STYLE

Colorful ideas to brighten your décor

LUSH LANDSCAPES
Award-Winning Projects

PRIVATE TOUR
with Olympic Skater
MICHAEL WEISS

grace NOTES

A renovation updates a 1920s Tudor-style house in DC while preserving its period charm

By Jennifer Barger
Photography by Edward Addeo

Visitors enter the stone manor house through a peaked doorway (opposite) that opens into a wide, welcoming foyer (these pages) furnished with antiques. The foyer overlooks a lush back garden through French doors and connects to the living room via archways.

The large living room easily accommodates several seating areas and a grand piano. Off-white walls allow plush antiques and bespoke pieces such as a David Iatesta coffee table and sofas from Nancy Corzine to take center stage. A coffered ceiling adds interest, while French doors admit plenty of natural light.

"There are lots of layers, and there's a story behind everything."

—SUSAN BEIMLER

Wide, arched double doors separate the entry hall from the elegant dining room, which showcases an antique dining table and chairs paired with wingback host chairs by Edward Ferrell + Lewis Mittman.

Ambassadors, presidents and Hollywood stars from Elizabeth Taylor to Vincent Price have all hobnobbed in this grand 1927 stone manor in DC's Massachusetts Heights. But thanks to a 2012 renovation by its latest owners, the vibe these days is more comfortable storybook castle than Hollywood lair.

The empty-nester husband-and-wife owners enlisted interior designer Susan Beimler and architect Ankie Barnes to help make the nearly 8,000-square-foot home feel both relaxed and refined. The challenge? Preserving its Jazz Age, neo-Tudor details—coffered ceilings, Gothic arched doorways and wood library paneling—while "lightening up and enhancing everything," explains Beimler.

"I don't want to live in a museum," says the wife. "I need a place to host family and friends." Beimler, Barnes and his team made this possible by smartening up the graceful structure. This gentle facelift involved remodeling the kitchen, rejiggering the capacious dining room and adding a dramatic tower to house a new second staircase. "We had a second staircase before," laughs the wife, "but it was designed for billy goats."

In his take on the new, three-story staircase, Barnes created a silo of stone and light. "We wanted it to be as bright as possible," says the architect. "The top of it is like a traditional Italian belvedere, with windows wrapped around three sides. It's not too heavy and it doesn't compete with the rest of the house."

The couple entertains often and hosts their grown children and grandchildren for frequent meals. So Barnes opened the kitchen up to the dining room via an arched door that mirrors a door on the opposite side of the dining space. Another arched opening was added to link the kitchen to the stone-walled, enclosed porch-turned-breakfast room. "The eating and food preparation areas weren't well-incorporated," says Barnes. "Now, the whole space has such generosity."

In the dining room, an antique walnut table purchased in Georgetown seats eight to 14, plus there's room for a children's table too. "It makes for fun celebrations," says the wife.

The kitchen—once primarily a staff workspace—morphed into a home cook's dream via expanded windows, a nine-foot, marble-topped island and a six-burner Wolf gas stove. Cabinets

RENOVATION ARCHITECTURE: ANKIE BARNES, FAIA, LEED AP, principal; MELANIE GIORDANO, AIA, and STEFAN HURRAY, Associate AIA, project architects, Barnes Vanze Architects, Inc., Washington, DC. INTERIOR DESIGN: SUSAN BEIMLER, Susan Beimler Interior Design, Washington, DC. RENOVATION CONTRACTORS: Potomac Valley Builders, LLC, Bethesda, Maryland and Horizon HouseWorks, Bethesda, Maryland. LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Green Gardens, Inc.; Clarksburg, Maryland.

French doors open from the entry hall and living room out to the patio (this page). The dining room (opposite) also leads outside through a Tudor-style arched door.

The light-filled kitchen features clean-lined, traditional cabinetry, a Niermann Weeks chandelier and stools from Interior Concepts. Marble countertops and backsplash create a seamless look.

The breakfast room (above) is distinguished by heated slate floors and whitewashed granite walls. Designed by Green Gardens, Inc., with lush plantings and blooms, the back patio (opposite) offers space for al fresco dining as well as relaxation.

were painted Benjamin Moore's fog-like Galveston Gray and paired with veined Calacatta countertops for a serene vibe. "Both the husband and wife love to cook, and now they've got a space with light, pull-out cabinet shelves and great flow," says Beimler, who devised a clever storage hack: a jumbo blackboard near the stove that conceals a spice cabinet.

The granite walls both inside and outside the cozy breakfast room were whitewashed for a weathered-yet-warm feel. Finished with a heated slate floor and Beimler's French-meets-informal furniture choices, the space is where "we eat most of our meals," says the wife. "It's so charming."

Beimler and Barnes also recast other graceful rooms on the first floor such as the bright center hall, the wood-paneled library and the jumbo-sized living room with coffered ceilings. Much of the décor was inspired by the home's abundant natural light and lush gardens, which shimmer through the outsized windows and French doors. "At the back of the property in particular," remarks the wife, "it feels like a tree house."

In the living room, the ample sunlight is boosted by an eight-paneled gold mirror above the poured-concrete fireplace mantel. Barnes cleverly had the mirror constructed to conceal a big-screen TV.

Furnishings, many used in the couple's previous homes, lean toward what might be called "château chic." French antiques (twin 1700s cabinets and an iron Parisian gate refashioned by David Iatesta into a coffee table) and art sidle up to comfortable sofas and plush carpets in the living room. "There are lots of layers," says Beimler, "and there's a story behind everything. They have so many interests!"

The wife's love of gardening shows up indoors as well as out. Think cement balls cheekily placed under a Chippendale table in the front hall or an antique eagle weathervane keeping watch in the living room. It seems right at home yet regal—just like the fairytale house itself. ❖

Writer Jennifer Barger resides in Washington. Photographer Edward Addeo is based in New York.

SEE RESOURCES at homeanddesign.com.