

ometimes you just know. Like when the graceful gesture of a curving staircase feels like your grandmother gathering you up in her arms. Or when the wise whisper of mature old oaks calls your name. "The minute we walked in the door, it immediately felt like home," says the new owner of a "grand dame" of a 1939 abode in Charlotte with a well-told story of its own. "It reminded my husband of going across the street to his grandparents' house."

Situated in highly desirable Myers Park—a historic Queen City neighborhood where lemonade stands and shady old-growth trees still abound—the residence initially attracted the family of four thanks to its classic proportions: high ceilings, generous rooms and the balanced hallmarks of traditional Georgian architecture. But also central to the home's appeal were less-tangible ingredients: nostalgia and timeless good style.

The couple's instincts were upheld when a design-industry comrade, designer Charlotte Lucas, walked through and gave the residence an enthusiastic thumbs-up. "It was a gorgeous old house with huge potential; it just hadn't been updated," explains Lucas, who worked with residential designer Frank Smith and general contractor Phil Goodwin to mastermind its transformation.

Part historic preservation, part renovation, the project involved conserving the house's stately front façade while more than doubling the square footage along the back—capitalizing on the abundant acreage of a rare double lot. "We wanted to keep that old house feeling, but make it warm, colorful and comfortable. A happy family home," says the wife, who initially joined weekly brainstorming gatherings with Lucas, Smith and Goodwin to hone the vision for its revitalization.

"It was valuable to have different perspectives of our overall goal, and a great team effort," Lucas notes. Both North Carolina natives, the owners share generational ties to furniture-industry stalwarts based in nearby Hickory. Mutual to their childhoods were frequent visits to their families'

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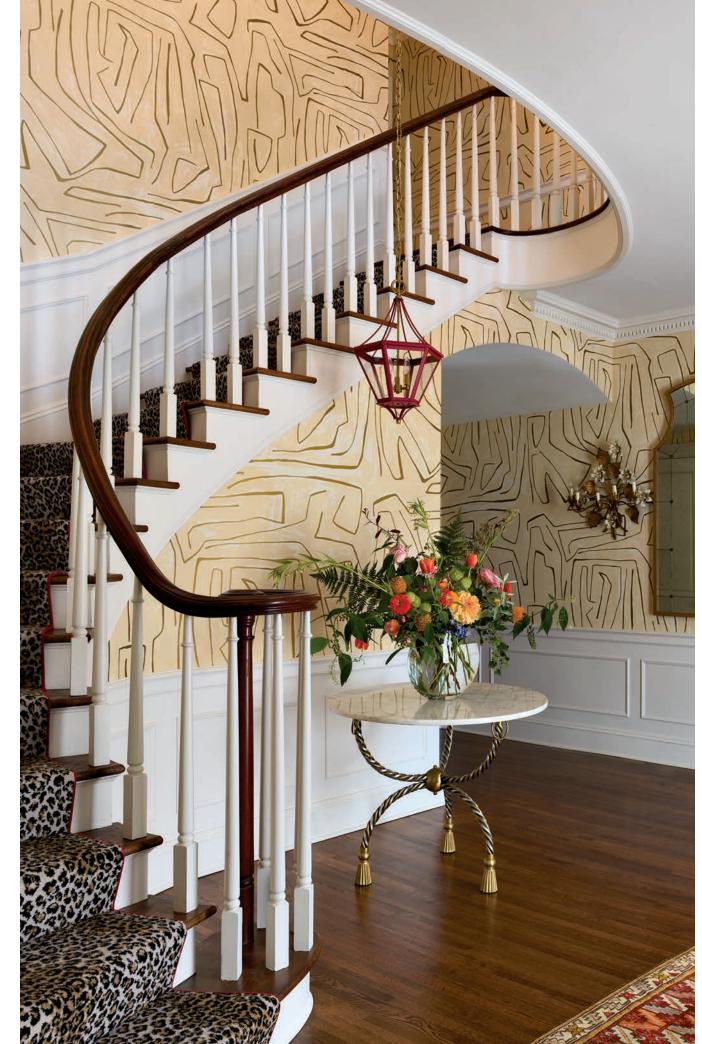
factories, watching expert craftspeople and finishers at work, so their appreciation for quality workmanship runs deep—as does their collection of heirloom furniture. "It was a dream," says Lucas, who began by inventorying the pieces her clients already owned, such as a pair of pagoda-style cabinets designed by Oscar de la Renta that she gave pride of place in the entryway. Still, "The clients encouraged my creativity, with freedom to use whatever brands I wanted," Lucas assures. "But we already love so many of the manufacturers in their families' stable, and my team usually pulls from them anyway."

Besides tearing out thick green carpet to reveal beautiful wood floors and enlarging the windows, the home's public spaces didn't undergo huge structural changes. "It was more about sprucing up, using design to cohesively blend the old with the new for a consistent, hip-traditional feel throughout," explains Lucas, who held true to her reputation for harnessing bold patterns and high-impact hues. To accent the graceful curve of the original staircase, she chose a mod graphic wallpaper: "something crazy and fun in what was previously a very traditional foyer."

In the living room, a similarly florid chinoiserie wallcovering with an alabaster backdrop directly influenced the chromatic textiles employed throughout: colors such as Prussian blue, smoky sage and a vibrant poppy used for silk draperies and cornices that "nod to the history of the room, but in an updated way." This warm palette bleeds into a cozy library lined with stained white pine paneling, a leopard print wall and even more Chinese motifs, whereas the kitchen is comparatively guiet. Here, Lucas let the gray-stained maple island serve as a grounding force amid the room's more contemporary plasterwork, bringing in black and white marbles and unlacquered brass for contrast. Club chairs upholstered in a custom pink velvet from the husband's family's mill make a big impact in the adjacent family room, where a bright floral sofa captures the crisp, happy, punchy feel Lucas and the wife were after.

From this vantage point at the rear of the house, one can easily recognize more contemporary architecture at work, although the transition is almost imperceptible until you sit up and deliberately take notice. In this space, 9-foot-tall glass windows and doors, painted off black, create contrast with the surrounding white walls while framing the lush trees beyond. The dark frames have the uncanny effect of removing barriers, "like you're at one with nature," Smith notes.

Looking at that backyard—it's where the previous owner's daughter was married and where her son's rehearsal dinner was held—you can almost envision the home's past as clearly as its present. "This was where she raised her family, and now where we plan to raise ours," the wife adds warmly. Because of the design team's committed efforts to restore it, this special residence will stand the test of time. "It's one of those rare houses that will be loved the rest of its life," Smith says. And thanks to homeowners who opted to steward it into the future rather than start anew, that life will be much longer.



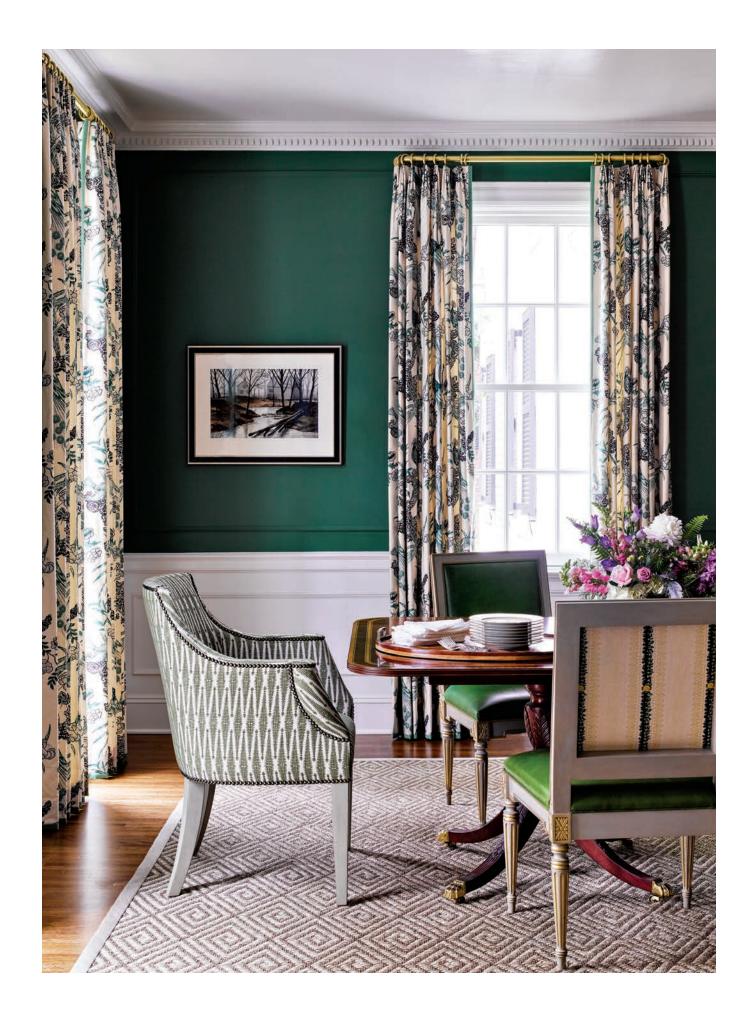
In the entryway of this stately Charlotte home, general contractor Phil Goodwin rebuilt the grand staircase railings, retaining the grace of the original. Designer Charlotte Lucas chose a Lee Jofa wallpaper—Graffito by Kelly Wearstler—to enliven the traditional room. A hanging lantern by The Urban Electric Co. adds punch. The marble and brass table is vintage.

Opposite: The owners hail from furniture-making families, so their heirloom pieces were interspersed with fresh selections in the living room including Highland House's Henri side table and Aerin's Montreuil Floor Lamp for Circa Lighting. Draperies and cornices fabricated in Sahco's Cosimo silk offer a nod to the home's 1940s roots—but in a contemporary hue.

Below: Old-world elegance meets feminine flair in the living room, where a midcentury-esque Julian Chichester daybed wearing Thibaut's Kuba fabric relaxes the formality of Schumacher's sumptuous Madame De Pompadour wallcovering. Velvet pillows and a 1970s coral cocktail table pull their hues from the wallpaper, while a brushstroke lamp by Bunny Williams Home brings in a playful note.







Opposite: Dining room walls donning Benjamin Moore's Balsam complement the owners' existing leather dining chairs, while a newly acquired Dixon armchair by Century Furniture, covered in a Valdese Weavers fabric, adds contrast. For the draperies, Lucas selected Miles Redd's emerald Peacock silk for Schumacher to "pull out the pretty greens," she says.

Below: Thomas Hayes barstools covered in Caress Celery leather by Hancock & Moore are the perfect height to tuck underneath the kitchen island—topped with Revere White marble from Walker Zanger. The burgundy range is by Lacanche, and the Neo Double Bar pendant by O'Lampia echoes its brass details, along with those on Waterworks' Henry faucet.







Cole & Son's Savuti Ardmore wallpaper combines with custom brass shelves by Volodko to bring a sense of grandeur to the butler's pantry. The cabinetry and ceiling are painted with Benjamin Moore's Jamestown Blue. Adding to the drama are scalloped soapstone countertops from Walker Zanger, Chautauqua cabinet pulls by Classic Brass and a Newport Brass bridge faucet.



A wall upholstered in a Valdese Weavers leopard print fabric animates the library. Goodwin carefully restored the room's original woodwork, which frames a sofa covered in a vibrant Valdese Weavers velvet with Samuel & Sons fringe. A pair of vintage armchairs wearing Manuel Canovas' Pagoda fabric in rouge joins Highland House's Honey Bunch tables for a hint of geometry.

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Opposite: On the master bedroom walls, a wash of Farrow & Ball's Pale Powder offsets a bold floral LuRu Home China Rose fabric on Highland House's Gilbert loveseat and a scalloped Courtney bed by the same company. Sconces designed by Suzanne Kasler for Visual Comfort & Co. cast light at the bedside, highlighting the subtle luster of a sateen coverlet by Leontine Linens.

Below: Antiqued mirrors by Accent Glass and black and white hex tiles from Harkey Tile & Stone lend an aged effect to the master bathroom. Lucas customized the pattern of the latter to fit with the era of the house. Highland House's Mame Chair dons a pink Otomi by Valdese Weavers while the ribbed glass and antique brass chandelier is by Visual Comfort & Co.

