



*thoughtful*  
TRIMMINGS

*Something old, something new seems to sum up the style and décor of this venerable home that becomes even more stately during the holidays.*

TEXT ROBERT C. MARTIN  
PHOTOGRAPHY GORDON BEALL



T

here's nothing quite like driving through a long-established neighborhood that seems even more enchanting when decorated for the holidays. Most towns and cities have such noteworthy enclaves, where shady avenues lined with an assortment of wonderfully built, distinctive houses take on added appeal with an abundance of wreaths, garlands, and lights. This gracious home sits in one such neighborhood, Washington, D.C.'s Palisades area, and it appears to be right in step with the surrounding residences—but there's a rather significant catch. While the adjacent stately structures have sat for years on mature lawns that overlook the Potomac River, this home's authentic demeanor is a well-conceived accomplishment because it's new.

"The project basically began when the clients, who already lived nearby and loved the neighborhood, yearned for a property facing the river," says architect David Jones, co-principal of Jones & Boer Architects. Jones had just completed a Greek Revival-style project down the street from the riverfront site, and the couple had taken note. Coincidentally, they were also friends with interior designer Ally Banks and builder Michael Banks, both of whom had worked with Jones in the past. Once the mutual association had been established, the design team got to work. "The residence that resulted from our collaboration is a buttoned-down, traditional, Federal-style home on the outside with a surprisingly more contemporary demeanor on the inside," Jones explains. "The home's restrained exteriors suit the neighborhood, while its more exuberant interiors reflect the homeowners' aesthetics."

Convincing details such as ornate cornices, classic corner pilasters, and operable



Previous pages, left and right: Slate roofs, black operable shutters, and a host of Federal-inspired details bestow a time-honored permanence to this gracious home with no indication of the fresh, hip vibe inside. "This is a fully modern house that just happens to be dressed in traditional garb," architect David Jones says. "Just off the formal stair hall lies a wide-open family room that's linked to the kitchen and breakfast area beyond, which differs from the expected, conventional living room." These pages, left: The buffet in the entry hall sets the tone for the more contemporary interiors. Right: The home's dining room displays an equal measure of formality and lightheartedness. Florist Sida Forman created a striking centerpiece by incorporating cedar, bay leaf, Rose Story Farm garden roses, white Majolica spray roses, Super Parrot tulips, and white ranunculus.







Functioning as both an office and an entertaining space, the "blue den" abounds with natural light that animates the high-gloss walls, bookcases, and trim. "We gave a lot of attention to the furniture layout in this space to make sure it accommodated all the owners' needs," says interior designer Ally Banks. "Pocket doors enable the room to be closed off from the rest of the house whenever the husband desires privacy for working." Once work is done, the couple often slides back the doors to enjoy a glass of wine while admiring the views of the Potomac River beyond. The den also provides an intimate setting for small gatherings, as well as overflow space during holiday parties. Simple indoor wreaths, along with favorite brassware filled with ornaments, make a fitting statement to welcome in the season.





shutters lend a ready-made history that blurs the line between past and present. As Banks helped the owners select certain elements like finishes, lighting, paint, furnishings, and window treatments, she made sure that each piece complemented the vintage detailing that already existed throughout the house. The designer faced a tricky balancing act of arranging old and new pieces together, often in the same room. "Some of the major furnishings are midcentury, one-of-a-kind pieces that the homeowners purchased in antiques stores from around the country," Banks says. "The clients wanted a neutral palette throughout the interiors, but they didn't shy away from color and personality."

To enhance the home's dual nature, local florist Sidra Forman

utilized a natural mix of cedar, bay leaves, and eucalyptus in creating the holiday décor. Appropriately, she worked in concert with the clean lines found throughout the house while establishing a cozy feel that's expected this time of year. "I'm a huge fan of foliage and textures, and in the winter, some of my favorite materials come from area farmers, particularly in Virginia," she says. Seasonal flowers also play a key component in her yuletide arrangements. "With flowers, I always prefer a few larger, stronger pieces rather than an abundance of arrangements." And the end result speaks for itself as the architecture and décor seamlessly blend together, making a statement not only during the holidays but also year-round.



Above: Black painted steel-and-glass doors, which fold to one side, connect the casual family room to the screened porch beyond. "When opened, the porch and room become a cohesive space that appeals to the homeowners' indoor/outdoor way of living," says Banks. "The effects are amazingly similar to being in a tree house." A vase of Peony tulips provides an inviting burst of color to offset the family's traditional Christmas tree. Top right: A large, concrete island with waterfall edges separates the kitchen from the family room. Right: The master bedroom offers a serene and simple retreat with touches of elegance. "It epitomizes the clients in every way," says Banks.