

A formal dining room featuring a black lacquer dining table with a central pedestal and curved legs. The table is surrounded by white upholstered chairs with ruffled skirts. A large, ornate crystal chandelier hangs from the ceiling. In the background, a large, ornate gold mirror is mounted on a wall with white paneling. A wooden sideboard with two lamps is visible behind the table. A large floral centerpiece sits on the table. The room is carpeted and has a window with curtains on the left.

# *Prominence* of **PLACE**

IT'S AN ELEGANT OVERHAUL WHEN DESIGNER LIZA BRYAN AND ARCHITECT RYAN DUFFEY TRANSFORM THIS BUCKHEAD ABODE INTO THE ULTIMATE FOREVER HOME

WRITTEN BY *Kate Abney*

STYLED BY *Eleanor Roper*

PHOTOGRAPHED BY *Emily Followill*

In the midst of exquisite crystal, gilt and antique case pieces, a Regency-style, black-lacquer dining table gives this room its solid center of gravity. Flowers by Holly Bryan Floral & Botanical Design.



*pictured and opposite*  
 The living room-cum-study is moody but mindful. Collectively, its dark walls, bold brass and symmetrical sightline almost recall the well-mannered glamour of Dorothy Draper's Victorian Writing Room at the Greenbrier Hotel. Even the handsome card table could easily sub as a writing desk.



AFTER SPENDING MORE THAN 30 YEARS AT A HOUSE in a notable Buckhead development, one homeowner decided it was at last time to shape it up for the 21st century. Initially, she and her husband wished to improve only the connection between the interior and exterior (including the pool, the patio and a now-octagonal porch), but as their designer, Liza Bryan, soon revealed, there was much more to be remedied. The kitchen layout needed improvement; the main level rooms deserved to relate to one another more appropriately; and there was a disconnect between the home's anterior and posterior. "I remember telling them, 'We're going to touch every space in this house. It's a great house, a great location, a great lot, but it needs total updating,'" says Bryan.

"The front of the house was classic, almost Georgian in style," says Ryan Duffey, the architect Bryan brought to the project, but the inside remained true to the architectural bones of its early '80s roots. His plans for improv-



*above* The Dessin Fournir wing chair is one of designer Liza Bryan's favorite touches. "It gives you the height you need by the fireplace without looking like Grandma's chair," she says.

*opposite* Thanks to a 60-inch round dining table and six high-back chairs covered in a high-tech DeLany & Long fabric, this casual dining nook is anything but basic. Drapery fabric, Galbraith & Paul.

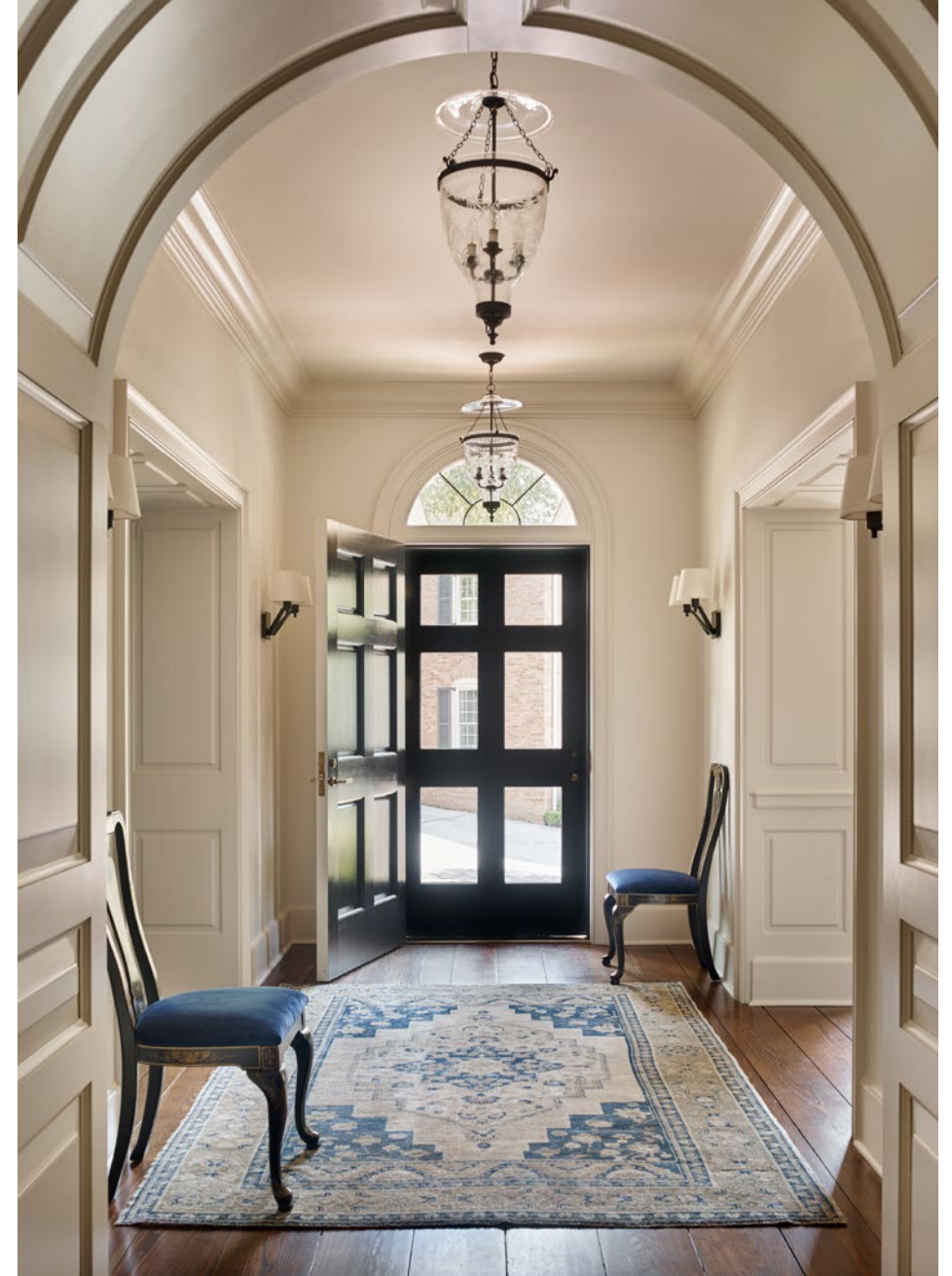
ing and refining the architecture included a smarter kitchen footprint, bolder cased openings between rooms and high-quality materials with low-maintenance benefits.

Once the possibilities were clear, so was its potential, and Bryan and Duffey both give credit to the entire design-build team for the success of this project, notably builder David Childers of Macallan Custom Homes, metalsmith Charles Calhoun, landscape designer Alex Smith of Alex Smith Garden Design and Vintage Lumber Sales, which supplied and installed elements such as river-recovered cypress and antique oak beams (even once painted white, the old-growth wood retained its depth of character).

"One of my favorite things is to whitewash or paint old beams. You get the texture and the grain, but the color is more integral to the color scheme than dark-stained wood," says Bryan of the ceiling treatment in the kitchen and family room. Her work on the furnishings was just as complex a process as the interior architecture. Besides acquiring many elegant new pieces (Bryan's favorites such as Holland & Company, Dessin



To coordinate with the rusty tone of the owner's avian photography, Bryan chose a chocolate brown herringbone for the McAlpine Home counter stools and updated them with unlaquered brass hardware. *opposite* The foyer is the finest example of the architectural details envisioned by architect Ryan Duffey; builder David Childers; and Morgan Creek Cabinet Co., which built out the paneled walls and deep casement openings.



Fournir and Waterworks are well represented), the designer led focused efforts to edit down the couple's decades' worth of acquisitions—many with significant meaning. “We kept only her best antiques, only her best china, only her best silver,” explains Bryan, who has a great deal of experience helping clients “let go”—both figuratively and literally.

Among those retained from a lifetime of collecting were Queen Anne-style dining chairs and an antique console in the dining room, a honey-colored blanket chest in the master, a smattering of favorite china reimagined as wall decor and an epic collection of original photography. Though the husband considers himself a hobbyist, Bryan and Duffey are both quick to equate him with a professional artist.

“He’s an avid amateur photographer and has so many incredible images of Africa,” says Bryan. “Their love for Africa and travel has played such a big part in their lives and the way they decorate their home.”

In a previous house Bryan had designed for the couple, African accents were introduced in a straightforward manner. This time around, Africa appears most prominently in photographs: framed birds in the kitchen, giraffes in the friendly family room, sunsets and cityscapes in the stately living room.



*left* In the master bedroom, window treatments made with Galbraith & Paul fabric mingle with a reproduction Oushak rug, a British Colonial bookcase, a heirloom

blanket chest and a few pieces of blue-and-white china. *above* An elegant built-in bathtub replaced the original Jacuzzi to bring the light-filled room into the 21st century.

Bryan designed whole rooms around these images — something we see reflected in the living room’s dark walls and the white kitchen’s tawny accents. Still, design moments like these became stronger with the architectural details designed to support them — namely, the millwork and cabinetry drawn by Duffey and executed by Morgan Creek Cabinet Co.

Nowhere is this attention to detail more evident than in the foyer, where the home’s interior connects effortlessly with the American Colonial character of its façade. Extra-wide case-ment openings create a sense of prominence and place, while concealed custom cabinetry in the form of paneled walls in the living and dining rooms are outfitted with touch-latch openings, providing an invaluable amount of storage space.

While the effect is striking, the purpose was far more practical: the living room’s dark-grey paneled walls, for instance, hold everything from flower vases to board games that the

grandchildren play when they come to visit; in the decidedly glamorous dining room, some of the cabinets are lined with Pacific Silvercloth for air-tight storage of silver and china.

Upstairs, the bedrooms were furnished with several classic pieces—some of them heirlooms, others culled from a previous project Bryan completed for the owners—but Bryan was careful to create fresh showstoppers, including classic fabrics and crisp, custom linens for the beds. In the master bath, a formerly tight footprint was transformed into a light, bright space where every square foot was used sensibly. Waterworks fixtures add polish, while walls of mirrors bounce sunshine around the room.

While redesigning this home may not have been a task for the faint of heart, the project's design professionals did so with impressive finesse, a spirit of collaboration and an overall impression of ease. Because of their efforts, the Georgian flair of the façade is reflected in strong, stately interiors better suited to these homeowners than any new construction ever could have been. Essentially, it's a house with an old soul and a new heart. *See Resources, Back of Book.*



An upstairs guest room is packed with dress-maker details, including custom linens by Jacksonville, Florida's The Linen Ladies, crewelwork lumbar pillows from Ryan

Studio, a Sister Parish pattern on the window treatments and chaise longue, upholstered headboards featuring a knotted motif, and upholstered benches with skirt pleats.



Cradled by a Boston ivy-clad brick wall, the pool surround strikes a balance between the simple and the formal. Thanks to valiant efforts by Duffey, Childers and landscape architect Alex Smith to

alter the rear courtyard and hardscapes (including the addition of an octagonal porch), the pool and outdoor living spaces now relate to both each other and the house naturally and seamlessly.

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