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MAR/APR 2016 | DISPLAY UNTIL 05/09/16

INTERIOR DESIGN / MARK ASHBY AND ANNE GRANDINETTI, MARK ASHBY DESIGN
ARCHITECTURE / JESSICA STEWART LENDVAY, JESSICA STEWART LENDVAY ARCHITECTS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / MARY ELLEN COWAN, MESA

historic charm

INCORPORATING INVITING COLORS AND STREAMLINED FURNISHINGS,
A DESIGN TEAM UPDATES A DALLAS HOME FOR A YOUNG FAMILY
WHILE PRESERVING THE ESTATE'S CLASSIC DEMEANOR.

WRITTEN BY **TERRI SAPIENZA** / PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CASEY DUNN**

Designer Mark Ashby, along with Anne Grandinetti, updated the traditional architecture in the family room by bleaching existing wood details and pairing them with modern elements. A Milo Baughman coffee table from Sputnik Modern mingles with Jens Risom chairs from Collage and a custom Verellen sofa. Donald Sultan's archival pigment print hangs above the fireplace; the custom rug is from Creative Flooring Resources.



Less is more," says designer Mark Ashby when discussing the way in which he approached the interiors of a Dallas home in the Highland Park neighborhood that he designed for his friend and longtime client. "Having fewer things put more importance on everything we chose. Every piece counted." Ashby and the homeowner have collaborated on several projects over the years, including a handful of residences, an office and a restaurant. So when the client and his family moved again, the two friends were in sync from the start. "I consider Mark one of my closest friends and a trusted adviser," says the owner, who runs a private investment firm. "He gets me and my aesthetic, and when it comes to pulling things together and a sense of composition, Mark is at the top of this game."

Sited atop a bluff overlooking Turtle Creek, the 1920s estate house had an idyllic location but was in need of an update. Rather than tear it down, Ashby and his client decided to renovate the existing structure in order to respect and preserve its historic nature. This was in step with the owner's overall vision, which was a home that felt collected over decades but modernized and livable for his young family. "He wanted thoughtful and reserved yet warm and inviting, and the architecture of the house lent itself to that approach," says Ashby. "The house had great bones, but it was ready for a renovation, so we polished out the flaws and created a canvas for my client's own aesthetic."

Ashby and his design team, led by Anne Grandinetti, worked closely with architect Jessica Stewart Lendvay to use the home's existing bones and some new interior materials to modernize the outdated edges without changing its footprint. The extensive facelift included opening up the kitchen and breakfast room, rebuilding the bathrooms and creating entertaining nooks. "The house's interiors had a lovely sense of scale and a very classic layout that remained after the renovation," says Lendvay. "We changed and simplified details so it really felt like one consistent home."


Rather than discard the old-fashioned pecan paneling in the family room, Ashby gave it new life with a bleached ceruse finish. "It's an homage to Jean-Michel Frank," he says. Ceiling beams were bleached the same shade, making the room feel enveloped in warmth. A pair of

Jens Risom chairs, a Milo Baughman coffee table and an archival pigment print of sinuous smoke rings by Donald Sultan neutralize the traditional architecture. "The homeowner knew what he wanted," says project manager Antony Telling, who worked with builder Tom F. Hughston of Tom F. Hughston General Contractor on the renovation and currently heads his own firm, A.T. Construction. "He and Mark put a lot of effort into getting the details just right. Every selection was thoughtfully considered."

Knowing the flooring would be a prominent feature throughout the house, the design team took great pains to ensure the wood color was appropriate, ultimately choosing a honey hue. "It looks so simple, but we really analyzed the flooring," says Ashby. "We thought the honey color would look bright against the reflection from the water outside and feel more classical." Walls were treated with hand-applications of white Venetian plaster, adding a quiet layer of depth and texture to every space. "There's a very subtle sense of movement on the walls," says Lendvay. "The plaster is so highly worked it's like touching polished glass."

The floor color works in tandem with the white walls to provide a neutral backdrop that allows the homeowners' extensive art collection and fine furnishings to shine. Accent and upholstery colors were pulled from the washed-out, antique Oushak rugs used throughout. When choosing the furnishings, Ashby kept his client's preference for clean and contemporary in mind. "He loves a modern look but didn't want to live in a modern box," Ashby says. Therefore, a chandelier in the dining room was chosen for its weightless appearance paired with the more prominent lithographs flanking the fireplace, while a vintage Saarinen table surrounded by vibrant chairs adds color and warmth to the sparsely furnished and otherwise white room. "In contrast to the delicate look of the table and chairs, a chunky jute rug grounds the space and balances the artwork and furniture," says Ashby. In addition, the husband drove the color direction in the master bedroom, requesting a pewter shade for the plaster to give the room a cocoon-like feel.

Ashby consulted with landscape designer Mary Ellen Cowan to ensure the exterior felt as lush as the interiors. Along with native plant materials to create a sense of place, Cowan used "crisp, clean lines and subtle plantings to allow the architecture to sing." To meld a bit of history with modern flair, she reinterpreted the classic white-wood Chippendale-style gate with "thin metal in a subtle gray so details were discovered only upon closer inspection."

The overall result is not just a house, it's an entire mood carefully laid out by Ashby and the team. "It's a very beautiful and gracious old home repurposed for a modern family," says the designer. "We weren't trying to change the spirit of house or turn it into something it wasn't. Everything we did felt like we were honoring what we found." 

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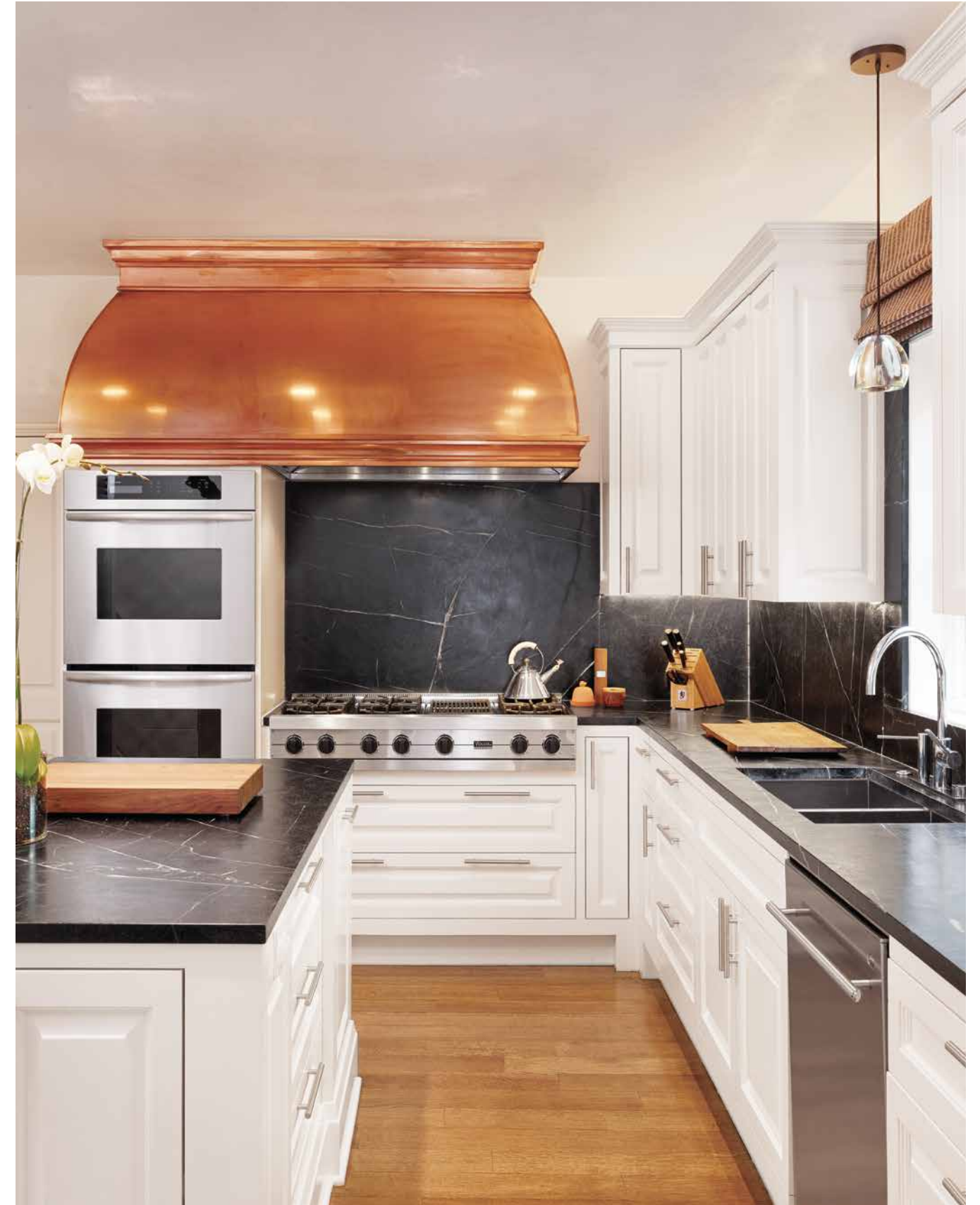


Above: Ashby created entertaining nooks with bars and built-in services for seamless hospitality. In the breakfast room, a soapstone countertop from IGM Corp. pairs with custom cabinetry conceived by the designer, along with architect Jessica Stewart Lendvay, and fabricated by Johnson & Burres. Cabinetry hardware is from Elegant Additions.

Right: Whimsical yet formal, the dining room includes vintage chairs from Wyeth in New York covered in a Knoll Textiles fabric. The Bourgeois Bohème Atelier chandelier hangs above a vintage Eero Saarinen table featuring a custom top. Robert Longo lithographs, a mirror from Blackman Cruz in Los Angeles and drapery fabric from Dorian Bahr complete the scene.



A George Nelson pendant from Design Within Reach illuminates the French butcher-block farm table from 20cdesign and chairs purchased online through 1stdibs in the breakfast room. The space, which opens to the back garden conceived by landscape designer Mary Ellen Cowan, was envisioned with minimalism and functionality in mind. Wood floors from French Brown run underfoot.



The kitchen was opened up during the remodel in order to become the house's center. Existing cabinetry features Top Knobs hardware and contrasts with soapstone countertops. An Alison Berger Glassworks pendant hovers above a Dornbracht faucet. The window treatment showcases a handwoven shade from Lafayette Interior Fashions' Manh Truc collection; the vent hood is an existing element.

This page: A nook in the formal living room overlooks a creek behind the house. All of the chairs and the coffee table are by Edward Wormley for Dunbar, from Sputnik Modern. The orange Pollack velvet on two of the chairs was pulled from the faded hues in the adjacent Oushak rug; the vintage fixture is from Alan Moss in New York.

Opposite: In the formal living room, Ashby refurbished the original 1920s carved fireplace to offset the otherwise modern feel of the space. A Le Corbusier sling chair mingles with leather B&B Italia sofas and a George Nakashima table. Art consultant Deborah Page Projects found the Brad Miller Wave series works.



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-MARK ASHBY



Above: Vintage midcentury chairs from Collage, covered in a Knoll Textiles fabric, inject a jolt of color into the master bedroom sitting area and reside with an existing Knoll coffee table. The plaster John Dickinson side table sports a vintage Arne Jacobsen lamp. Windows are dressed in a Mokum textile from George Cameron Nash.

Right: In the powder room, custom cabinetry fabricated by Johnson & Burres coordinates with a limestone countertop from IGM Corp. as well as a Duravit sink and Dornbracht faucet. Porcelain sconces from Grange Hall illuminate a Christian Liaigre mirror from George Cameron Nash.



Custom pewter plaster graces the walls of the master bedroom, where a Christian Liaigre bed is covered in Holly Hunt suede and wrapped in linens from Wildflower Organics. Christian Liaigre sconces brighten vintage nightstands from Wyeth. The Moroccan carpet is from Black Sheep Unique, and the Jack Spencer archival pigment print is from Stephen L. Clark Gallery.