



SOUTHERN COMFORT

A SEATTLE HOME OFFERS A STATELY SETTING FOR
ANTIQUES AND ENTERTAINING

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IN THE TOP-FLOOR LIVING ROOM, ARCHITECT STUART SILK EMBELLISHED CONTEMPORARY FORMS WITH CLASSICAL DETAILING, CREATING A SETTING THAT CAN ACCOMMODATE BOTH MODERN AND HEIRLOOM PIECES. THE PAINTING OVER THE FIREPLACE DATES FROM 1830. THE MAHOGANY TEA TABLE IS A BAKER REPRODUCTION, AVAILABLE THROUGH DESIGNERS AT BAKER KNAPP & TUBBS. (206) 763-3399.



A BARRELED DORMER DIRECTS ADDITIONAL LIGHT INTO THE FAMILY ROOM. FRENCH DOORS LEAD TO A BROAD TERRACE OVERLOOKING LAKE WASHINGTON. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER RIGHT, THE ADJOINING KITCHEN MIXES STREAMLINED CABINETRY WITH A LUSTROUS ANTIQUE CHANDELIER AND ILLUMINATED CABINETS SHOWCASING THE OWNERS' SILVER. AN 18TH-CENTURY HEPPLEWHITE TABLE COMMANDS CENTER STAGE IN THE DINING ROOM, WHERE IT'S PAIRED WITH AN 18TH-CENTURY CHINESE PAINTING. THE HOUSE FLANKS THE SIDEWALK AND BACKS UP TO A STEEP HILLSIDE. A SERPENTINE STAIRWAY AFFORDS PRIVACY AND GUIDES VISITORS TO THE SECOND-FLOOR ENTRY, WHERE IT'S JUST ONE MORE FLIGHT TO THE LIVING ROOM.

Southern traditions die hard. When you're reared below the Mason-Dixon line, love of home, hearth and heritage (not to mention Karo pecan pie) becomes second nature. Even after moving to the Northwest 25 years ago, one couple still fills their home with attitude as Southern as a warm bayou breeze.

But don't look for anything too antebellum here. The three-story, 3,800-square-foot home, designed speculatively by Seattle architect

Stuart Silk and built near Madison Park by Reed Construction, is a hybrid of traditional and contemporary architectural styles, blending stucco, wood trim, arches and bay windows. It's this foot-in-many-artistic-camps design that appealed to the Southern ex-pats. "We both have such eclectic interests and personalities," says the wife.

Still, the moment you push through antique iron gates at the entry (a touch of French Quarter), there's an air of mint juleps and that trademark hospitality. This is a home for entertaining. Its magnetism

and focus is the top floor, where Silk designed an airy amalgam of living and dining room, kitchen and library—almost loftlike in stature. Grand vaulted ceilings and graceful barreled dormers crown the space. Clerestory windows capture the slightest hint of light. French doors open to a terrace that embraces the Lake Washington view.

After spending years in a rambling six-bedroom family house, the retirement-minded owners purchased the house while it was still

under construction and commissioned Bumgardner designer Kay Fleenor Compton to orchestrate interior details. A collection of antique Turkish Oushak rugs ("favored by Southerners") in shades of coral, caramel and seafoam green inspired the palette. Compton reprised these hues in sensuous Scalamandrè silks and billowing ball-gown curtains. "They already had enough furniture—many are heirloom family pieces—so we simply reupholstered," she says.

THE MIDDLE FLOOR FEATURES A GRACIOUS MASTER SUITE BOASTING A FRESIDE SEATING AREA AND A COMMODIOUS WINDOW SEAT FRAMED IN THAI SILK.



Throughout the home, rooms allied by color and eminent antiques feel gracefully traditional. Only a second glance reveals what a medley they truly are. American Indian baskets and blankets, a Chinese salon table, venerable paintings on silk, an exotic leather rhino sculpture and wildly contemporary art reside comfortably near the 18th-century American Hepplewhite dining table, stately wing chairs, regal antique secretary and a Victorian slipper love seat that's been in the family for five generations. Above the living-room fireplace hangs a treasured British oil from 1830. Above the neighboring library fireplace hangs a bold, minimal graphic: "102 Boulevard Haussman, Paris." The address, painted by Ian Whittlesea, is where Marcel Proust lived while he wrote his masterpiece, *Remembrance of Things Past*. "That's my favorite literary work," says the wife, her genteel Southern accent still intact. She and her husband read passionately; their shelves nearly bend under the weight of their books.

The home and its residents are best defined by Compton's brazen shuffling of elements: modish and classic in the kitchen. At center stage over the island hangs the grand antique silver chandelier brought from the couple's previous home—a piece with such heft it's hard to imagine the logistics of hanging it, let alone polishing it. "They thought it would look too fussy over the dining table," says the designer. "But the irony of it being in the kitchen pleased them."

Gleaming silver pieces (many predating the Civil War) also fill a row of glass-fronted illuminated cabinets with interiors painted burnt chocolate to showcase the collection. Contrasting this ornate display with an otherwise streamlined kitchen makes it more approachable. Opposites do attract. Note the sleek stainless-steel pulls against traditional cabinetry and the edgy checkerboard tile backsplash near the luxe Giallo Provenzia marble-topped island. What a setting for guests sipping Sazeracs as the hosts whip up barbecued shrimp with cheese grits or oyster-and-artichoke bisque. Even the fare is a blend of Northwest and Southern specialties.



ESPRESSO-COLORED MARBLE GRACES THE MASTER BATH. NIERMANN WEEKS SCONCES AVAILABLE TO THE TRADE AT BEACON HILL SHOWROOMS/ROBERT ALLEN, (206) 763-0100.

On lower floors (reachable via stairs or a small elevator), several bedrooms lie in wait of grandchildren's visits. But the gracious master suite on the middle floor is a favorite retreat, a subdued haven. Its tailoring balances masculine and feminine: copper colors and a simple muslin canopy for him, windows trussed with rich Thai silks for her. Cage-like wooden storage chests from Singapore offset the English 18th-century breakfront bookcase. Antique oil paintings of dachshunds, the owners' favorite breed, were accumulated on European trips.

Niermann Weeks beaded sconces enrich the master bathroom's dense espresso swirls of *Emparador* marble. Handsomely framed letters penned by Southern ancestors refine a roomy dressing area. Even here, the home celebrates its roots. But for this couple, it also has wings.

"We feel renewed here," says the wife. "We finally have time to enjoy each other's company. This home feels special just for us." ■

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