



FAMILY HEIRLOOMS GET A NEW LEASE
ON LIFE WHEN MIXED WITH BOLD
COLORS AND SPIRITED PATTERNS

PLAYING WITH THE PAST

In a Nashville house renovated by designer Markham Roberts, an oversize lampshade covered in Schumacher's Sargent silk taffeta proves that an antiques-filled dining room doesn't have to feel formal. Pierre Frey's Mauresque adds an exotic touch to the backs of dining chairs upholstered in Michael S. Smith's Gavle from Jasper. **OPPOSITE:** Walls lacquered in Benjamin Moore Aura in Vanderberg Blue set off a photograph by Patrick Tournéboeuf.





The crisp white-lacquer coffee table and a luminous photograph by Eric Cahan mix easily with a traditional tufted sofa covered in Brunswick & Fils' Botticelli and slipper chairs upholstered in Clarence House's Kashmir. Roberts designed the blue Josephine lamps for Christopher Spitzmuller. The sisal rug is by Stark.

CARRIE NIEMAN CULPEPPER: This Nashville house has one foot in the present and one in the past.

MARKHAM ROBERTS: The family has very beautiful, very good, old English and American furniture, as well as a lot of handsome equestrian art. So what we tried to do was use all of that stuff but mix it with more contemporary pieces, such as some casual, easy-going furnishings and abstract photography.

It certainly has a youthful spirit for a traditional home. Who lives here?

The clients are in their 40s with two daughters. They have tons of friends and their friends have kids. They entertain really casually, barbecuing, hanging out by the pool. They wanted to thoroughly update the house, which was built in the 1920s. We basically gutted it and left the front facade.

Did your background and education in the history of art and architecture help inform the renovation?

A love of old houses is really what guided the whole project. This was a very pretty old house, so I did not want to ruin it. I wanted to respect it and make it look as though nothing had been done to it. You want to hide things like light switches and thermostats. You don't want to see them next to a beautiful painting.

That family room looks like it's ready for almost any kind of gathering.

This is a big room intended to be used in many different ways, because there are times when it's just the family hanging out and there are other times when there are a lot of people over. So we made sure there is a variety of very comfortable seating. Whenever I'm there, we end up playing backgammon. The table was a special gift from the client's grandmother, so we put it in front of the fireplace.

Do you have a secret for balancing antiques and new pieces?

I would say that there is no rule, rhyme, or reason to what I choose. For me, it was important to pull the rooms in different directions with the furniture selections, so that they all play off one another. There was a



stellar American highboy that came from her grandfather for the living room. Then I found a Biedermeier chest for the corner, and hung a Chinese deco mirror above it. I designed a pair of slipper chairs and covered them in an Anglo-Indian-inspired paisley, which is unexpected and more interesting. It's just whatever looked good, whatever worked. I never want a room to feel stuffy.

How did you decide on those deep-teal lacquer walls in the dining room?

I really wanted to create a shock effect between the very light living room and the tweed-covered family room. And it's a room that's mostly used at night, so I wanted something that's dark and saturated and looks beautiful with candlelight.

ABOVE: The marbleized painted floors in the kitchen look great and hide scuff marks. An industrial-style pendant by the Foundry complements the Wolf range and hood. **OPPOSITE:** A ceiling painted in Benjamin Moore Aura in Black Knight makes for a handsome porch that's used year-round thanks to a fireplace and fans. The teak sofa and armchairs by Restoration Hardware are covered in Kravet Navy canvas and Quadrille's Island ikat custom-printed on Sunbrella fabric. Palecek wingback chairs. Paul Ferrante pendant.

and casts a lovely light onto the table. And what I like about that table is that there are rings on it, some wear and tear from use. If it were highly polished and seemingly brand-new, it would just look horrible.

Tell me about those painted floors in the kitchen.

It's a marbleized finish. There's a lot going on so you can't see dog prints and whatever else. It's a big floor, too, so I had to do something large-scale and with a lot of movement to it so it wouldn't look like a roller rink.

Where did the idea for that wrought-iron porch come from?

There's an estate in Amenia, New York, called Wethersfield; it was owned by a man named Chauncey Devereux Stillman, and it's now a house museum. Its wrought-iron porches and balconies were my inspiration. We added the fireplace to make it a year-round space.

I've never seen a porch with a black ceiling before.

Actually, it's more of a charcoal, because black was too dark, and there's a hint of green in it. It took me a while to mix this color. The ceiling is wood slats, to get that curve, and then riveted metal on the other side. **You trained with the decorator Mark Hampton. Is his imprint evident anywhere in this house?**

Well, it's funny you should ask, as all of the antiques came out of a house that he had designed for the wife's parents. It was interesting, because I knew a lot of these pieces from old photographs of Mark's work. **You've certainly mastered that kind of relaxed, traditional look that seems so quintessentially American.**

I grew up in an old house, my grandparents lived in an old house, and I've always been drawn to American architecture from the early 1900s to the 1940s. In a Tudor-style house, like the one I was raised in, you could have an English library next to a French living room. Americans would blend all these styles, and the houses were very much like Americans themselves: a great mix.

PRODUCED BY DAVID M. MURPHY





The furniture in the family room can be moved easily, for flexibility. Roberts designed the tufted chaise, covered in Pierre Frey's Shabby linen, and the Bridgewater chairs, in Quadrille's Arbre de Matisse. The pair of Althorp chairs from John Rosselli & Associates flanking the fireplace are upholstered in Lee Jofa's Hollyhock Ikat linen on the front and a Holland & Sherry fabric on the back. The walls are covered in Cowtan & Tout's Playa tweed. The 19th-century Chinese scroll table is from James Sansum Gallery. Rug by Stark.



1. The curtains in the library are Pierre Frey's La Riviere Enchantee. 2. Holland & Sherry's olive twill on the powder room walls is accented with strips of antique ikat. 3. The kitchen walls and cabinets are painted in Benjamin Moore Aura in Distant Gray. 4. Brunschwig & Fils' Talavera adds character to the master bedroom walls. 5. The entry's hand-blocked wallpaper is Claremont's Palm Stripe. 6. Waterworks' Boulevard fixtures complement the marble-top tub. Ceiling fixture, Chameleon Fine Lighting. 7. Farrow & Ball's Ringwold wallpaper brightens a guest room. 8. Faux-grain paneling enhances the masculine ambience in the library. **OPPOSITE:** A former sleeping porch became a daughter's bedroom. Roberts hid blackout shades behind eyelet sheers on the three walls of windows, then added linen curtains trimmed in Lee Jofa's Portofino. Headboard and bed skirt in Sister Parish Design's Dolly, through John Rosselli & Associates.





Warm shades of cream, beige, and brown create a soothing atmosphere in the master bedroom. Chaise from Hollywood at Home, covered in Cowtan & Tout's Playa. Brunswick & Fils' Les Touches on the antique Italian armchair. Peter Fasano's Kalahari on the footboard. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES