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BEFORE



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A NEW OPEN FLOOR PLAN
COMBINES WITH REFINED
ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS TO
BRING RELAXED ELEGANCE,
AN ELEVATED STATURE, AND
PLENTY OF SPACE TO THIS
RENOVATED MARYLAND HOME.

PAST PERFECTED



Everyone knows you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. The same advice applied to Karen and Kevin

Seallan's stately stone Colonial home in Potomac, Maryland—at least it did before the couple turned to residential designer Anthony Wilder and his team to take on an ambitious renovation of the 55-year-old house.

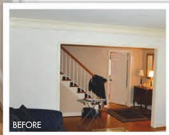
"All the character had been heaped on the exterior, while inside it was a jumble of small rooms and cramped spaces with no coherent flow," says Wilder. "Overall, though, the structure was full of potential."

To better connect the home's facade with its interiors, the design team first created a new entry. The addition of a copper gabled portico supported by Doric columns reaffirms the scale of the home's original dormers and bay window and adds even more beauty to the surrounding lush country gardens. The team then moved inside to begin opening up spaces for a more natural flow between rooms. "Our goal was to introduce new sight lines and restore balance," says Wilder. "The appeal of a center-hall Colonial is in its symmetry."

Most of the improvements were made by reconfiguring and making the most of existing space rather than expanding the square footage. In the foyer, two new classically scaled archways with finely crafted trim delineate a formal living room and the relocated dining room, which was returned to



left and below: Before, basic square-framed openings connected a hodgepodge of medium-sized rooms that were not conducive to the way families live and entertain today. Now generous paneled archways with intricate trim and molding open up the house and offer an elegant flow between spaces. The graceful new stairway and newel posts create pleasing focal points from the living and dining rooms.



Previous pages: Tall, multipaned windows flood the renovated sunroom with natural light and views, while a soaring white palette combines with a sophisticated mix of comfortable furnishings for an inviting space in every season. These pages, opposite: The repositioned dining room takes advantage of the original bay window gacing the front of the house. Right: The gabled portico offers a stately new entryway, more in keeping with the scale and character of the original exterior.





Before, the kitchen was dark and cramped. Now it resonates with a mood that is refined and refreshingly modern. Framed casework openings and the two columns create an engaging interchange between the kitchen and breakfast room.

its rightful place along the front of the house. A pair of custom-designed newel posts and a sinuous new handrail with a glossy black lacquer finish afford the stairway an elevated poise.

Typical of many older houses in need of an update, the kitchen was dim and tunnel-like, which was hardly suitable for an active family. In this room, the design team did decide to add some much-needed space. And while setbacks limited the addition to only a 6-foot bump-out, the team took full advantage of every inch of new space. In the process, they also turned a potential liability into a design asset. A steel structural beam rising through the house turned up after the wall was removed, prompting the integration of a pair of classically detailed columns to frame the island.

With the kitchen now front and center, the family finds cooking to be decidedly more social and visually exciting. The expansion allowed for a new large window above the sink, flooding the space with natural daylight. In addition, a black-and-white marble backsplash pairs with a custom-designed range hood layered with stainless steel strapping to create a dramatic focal point.

To solve the storage and circulation issues that often come with older homes, the team added a new pantry and mudroom and reconfigured a back stairway leading to a suite over the garage. "Now all of the



Opposite, top: Previously, a jumbled hallway of closets and random doors greeted visitors at the entry. A new archway now creates pleasing sight lines through the house and establishes a welcoming procession from the foyer to the kitchen. Bottom, left to right: The marble backsplash and range hood add dramatic visual accents in the kitchen. Walls of windows flood the breakfast room with sunlight. Above: In the kitchen, the new curved window makes the most of the space added along the back of the house.



clutter is out of the way and doesn't interrupt the new sight lines," says Wilder.

At every juncture, the designer forged seamless connections between old and new. For example, in the sunroom, he maintained the height and dimensions of the space but added a new coffered ceiling, classically detailed pilasters, and elongated vertical windows to create the illusion of more volume. "This room had

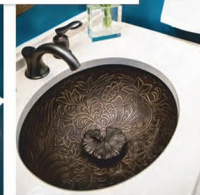
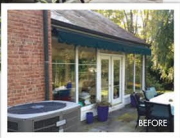
probably been a screened porch that had been glassed in at some point," says Wilder. "The changes we made give it a better sense of connection with the rest of the home."

Interior designer Keira St. Claire also helped bring the sunroom into the fold of the original house with a calming mix of complementary finishes and layers of textures. Furniture with low silhouettes allows for views of the outdoors in

every direction. The ceiling, walls, and fabrics offer a predominantly white palette, enabling the few accents of color and the carefully placed family antiques to make subtle statements. A pair of wingback chairs that had belonged to Karen's great-grandmother were slip-covered in a chartreuse geometric pattern, offering a pleasing green overture that nods to the natural landscape visible

through the three walls of windows. Such sentimental items combine with comfortable upholstered pieces to create a space that is both practical and highly personal.

"The scope of the renovations certainly evolved and grew over the course of the project," Karen says. "In the end, this older home that was already beautiful has been transformed into a new home that perfectly fits our family."



Above: French doors swing open for a welcoming exchange between the sunroom and a new stone terrace. Exterior pillars received the same architectural detailing as the interior ones. Left: Peacockblue lacquer paint, a mirrored vanity, and a spumet metal circular light fixture transform the powder room into a jewel box of a space. In the sink, an etched floral pattern and a leaf motif claim one whimsical references to a lily pond. Opposite: The master bath was transformed by reconfiguring existing space and adding new finishes and forms rather than significantly adding square footage. The new marble backsplash and recessed mirror within the arch echo the classical detailing of the kitchen.

