

HOME & DESIGN

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TREASURE TROVE

Amid lush finishes and rich hues, a Virginia collector's art and antiques take center stage

Text by SUSAN BODIKER | Photography by DAVID BURROUGHS

Tall paned windows and doors welcome nature into a light-filled office furnished with a custom marble conference table from Stone International, Roberta Schilling leather-covered chairs and an inviting Gabby settee. A round Fine Art chandelier balances the sculptural brass-and-wood staircase rising through the house.



It is not exactly a “stairway to heaven,” but it comes pretty close. Rising to a rooftop conservatory, a sculptural brass-and-wood floating staircase artfully bisects this three-story Arlington home, visually connecting spaces on either side while allowing each its moment to shine.

The staircase is just one of the many bold design choices architect Robert Shutler and designer Arlene Critzos of Interior Concepts, Inc., made for this unique property. The owner, a longtime child health advocate, art collector and historical preservationist, “was not afraid of drama,” Critzos recalls.

It’s a good thing, too, because the site itself offered its share of theatrics: The house sits atop a steep slope that runs down to a creek. “It was a challenge,” admits Shutler. “There was just a tiny triangle of buildable area on top of this 27,000-square-foot lot.”

Architecture: Robert Shutler, Shutler Architects, Arlington, Virginia. Interior Design: Arlene Critzos, principal; Andrea Blamphin; Megan Ligday, Interior Concepts, Inc., Annapolis, Maryland. Kitchen Design: Petra Stone Gallery, Fairfax, Virginia. Builder: Tommy Staats, Staats Developers, Vienna, Virginia. Home Automation: Streamline Custom AV, Great Falls, Virginia.

Moody blues and metallics bathe the living room (above) in a subtle sheen, highlighting its 18th-century art and antiques. Venetian plaster covers the walls while a Corbett crystal chandelier plays up the Baker zebra-patterned sofa. The French-inspired dining room (opposite) glows with antique lanterns, a brass mirror and a bronze Global Views console.



Off the office, a reading nook (below) sports a Fabrica rug anchoring wine-colored Precedent chairs and custom shelving, with a Fine Art chandelier overhead. In the kitchen (right), metallic lacquer cabinetry in Anthracite and Ottone from Petra Stone Gallery features Calacatta Miele marble countertops and backsplash. Cluster pendants from Hammerton Studio illuminate the island near a Caracole table and Theodore Alexander chairs.



To accommodate its unusual dimensions, he divided the home's frontage into three equal turret-like bays—it resembles a streamlined château—and ran a continuous deck across the back to amplify the triangular footprint. Hidden behind the middle gable, a glass greenhouse mimics the home's shape and directs light all the way down the stairs.

Given the elevation, panoramic views of woodlands and hillside trees offer the owner much-needed tranquility and connection. And the land's protected status ensures she will be able to enjoy its seasonal vistas for years to come.

The home features 5,320 square feet of luxe living, entertaining and work space, all open to the great outdoors via decks, balconies and walls of glass. On the roof, a firepit, hot tub, sky bar and intimate seating beckon year-round. The first floor houses the living, dining, family rooms and kitchen, while two bedrooms with ensuite baths, an office and a library reside on the second floor. The lower level includes a sauna, theater, bedroom and bath.



“Everything is lush, powerfully finished and juxtaposed with shimmer.”

—ARLENE CRITZOS

In the living room to the left of the entry, antique and modern elements preside harmoniously. While the owner describes her previous home as traditional, here she was open to mixing cherished vintage pieces with new, more contemporary finds. That blend inspired what Critzos calls “a maximalist aesthetic of vibrant tones, shimmery metallics and layered finishings” that reflected her client’s personality and interests. “She’s a world traveler who’s active in her community and loves to entertain,” says the designer. Critzos and team covered the living room walls in saturated tones of cerulean blue, setting off pewter and chartreuse accents throughout the high-intensity space. A bronze-finished ceiling highlights a crystal chandelier and custom metal cubist cocktail table, while an antique Chinoiserie secretary converses across centuries with a contemporary, black high-back chair.

At the back of the house, checkerboard marble flooring extends from dining room to terrace past a wall of paned glass. Antique French lanterns and a brass mirror accentuate the hanging bronze console and wood dining table.

An open, airy space to the right of the dining room welcomes guests to a combination family room and kitchen, graced by floor-to-ceiling paned windows and doors, and rustic but sophisticated wood beams. The functional kitchen, says the owner, has “reignited” her love of cooking, thanks to its streamlined design enhanced by lacquered black cabinets, brass hardware and honed marble counters. The family room opens onto a triangular back deck and echoes the woods outside with its cool tones of chartreuse and taupe. Cantilevered black tables flank a mitered stone fireplace.

The second-floor office overlooking the trees is designed for convening and creative contemplation. A marble-topped table sits below a bubble-glass chandelier while a light plum rug ties all the pieces—desk, loveseat and pillow—together in a calming palette. Also on this floor is the library with built-in bookcases, wine-colored seating and a circular brass cocktail table. Located at the front of the house, it opens to a spacious balcony.



The family room has a tranquil vibe with restful shades of taupe, pewter and a pop of chartreuse. Baker sofas with fringe trim sit on either side of the fireplace, separated by an ebonized black cantilevered table, also from Baker. A velvet green settee lends an arboreal touch. The ring chandelier is from Hammerton Studio.



In the grand primary suite, a contemporary bath lined with refined stone, crystal and brushed-brass fixtures contrasts with the bedroom's soft layered textures and traditional furnishings. A carved canopy bed nestles beneath a beamed cathedral ceiling; its custom, European linens in silvery blue silk are set against a clouded bronze wall covering. An Austrian rock-crystal chandelier draws attention to a playful leopard-patterned chair by the marble hearth. Unsurprisingly, it is the resident's favorite room, "a serene retreat" reminiscent of past travels to Switzerland and representing what she calls a "sparkling symbol of hope and new beginnings."

Designed and built during the pandemic when the world stood still, the home marked a fresh start for the owner, revealing a new chapter of her life. She credits the experience with inspiring her to create a place that embodied "joy, vitality and well-being." And she's grateful to the architect and design team for their ability to bring her vision to life, respecting her desire to "weave together treasures I had collected over more than 35 years—artifacts of family, travels and passions—while also crafting something wholly new and personal. It became a way of honoring the past while reimagining the future where every memory and object could evolve into part of this new story." ♦

SOURCES OF NOTE: Office & Bedroom Rugs: carpetcreations.com. Living Room Sofa Fabric: jimthompsonfabrics.com. Kitchen & Bath Faucets: ferguson.com. Family Room Chandelier: studio.hammerton.com. Bedroom Armchair Fabric: scalamandre.com. For a complete list of resources, visit homeanddesign.com.



Sand, stone and crisp white create a soothing backdrop in the primary bath (above), brightened by Visual Comfort sconces and a Fine Art glass-and-brass chandelier. Topping the vanity and lining the shower is richly veined marble-effect porcelain from Level. The bedroom (opposite) is a dream-come-true retreat, anchored by a bed with a traditional English canopy in Alfonso Marina fabric; the carved-wood base is dressed in luscious silk bedding. The nearby antique armchair wears a Scalamandrè textile.