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Home Design

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# Designer takes a page from clients' life & loves

By Anh-Minh Le | February 26, 2016 | Updated: February 26, 2016 12:40pm

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Photo: Eric Rorer

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Designer Laura Martin Bovard's renovation of a historic Piedmont home. Photo by Eric Rorer

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When interior designer Laura Martin Bovard’s clients purchased their Piedmont residence two years ago, they saw themselves as its stewards. And preserving the architectural integrity of the Houghton Sawyer-designed Jacobian Tudor was of utmost importance.

The 1923 home — with its procession of masonry stairs leading to a grand front door, intricate woodworking and an elegantly arched entry hall — had charm to spare. So Martin Bovard and her team, including project manager Darshan LaBang, focused on cosmetic updates that would complement the original character while also reflecting its current occupants’ taste. “The clients really wanted to warm it up and give it a new traditional feeling,” says Martin Bovard, referring to a style that is at once classic and fresh.

The clients, a couple with a young son and a second child on the way, spent the first year of their marriage traversing the globe. Their affinity for travel, along with music and literature — they met through their work with the nonprofit Room to Read — guided Martin Bovard’s scheme.

Take the living room, which she likens to a salon. Opposite a seating arrangement composed of a Hickory Chair sofa and a couple of spindle chairs, is the husband’s baby grand piano. The soothing palette is punched up with colorful abstract works by Betty Merken. For decorative accents, Martin Bovard relied on Rose Tarlow fabrics; they impart a “global elegance” — the designer’s summation of the homeowners’ aesthetic.

The objects displayed under the glass top of the Madeline Stuart coffee

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table, which currently include reminders of trips to India and Africa, can easily be changed. The fireplace is flanked by recessed shelving that offers additional opportunities to highlight memorabilia and store books.



In the dining room, a Bausman & Co. round Starburst table is surrounded by curved custom chairs. “They’re so comfortable,” says Martin Bovard, “and the shape — it’s like you’re getting a hug.” Overhead, an Ochre light fixture from Coup D’Etat had a lead time of 12 to 14 weeks, but “was worth the wait,” she says. “It’s like jewelry in the room. A good chandelier can make or break a room.” Art by Silvia Poloto and Nicholas Coley lends a contemporary note.



Photo: Eric Rorer

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In the dining room, a Bausman & Co. round Starburst table is surrounded by custom chairs. An Ochre light fixture from Coup D'Etat is "like jewelry in the room," says designer Laura Martin Bovard. Artwork is by Silvia Poloto and Nicholas Coley.

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The adjacent family room exudes relaxation. The terra-cotta flooring is topped with a wool Stark carpet. The custom built-in, fabricated by McCutcheon Construction, consists of cubbies of varying sizes that accommodate books and travel mementos such as an urn and a carved giraffe statue. The art above the fireplace is a commissioned piece by an artist in Bhutan.

A sectional by Lee Industries, from Witford, anchors the room. But it is a light-filled corner appointed with a pair of plump A. Rudin armchairs that Martin Bovard is particularly fond of: “I don’t think we can ever have enough nooks — places that beckon us to just sit and take a break,” she says.

No surprise then that she put an area on the second floor, at the top of the stairs, to good use as exactly that: another place to linger and lounge. The window seat looks out onto a magnolia tree. Bookcases and bookshelves, also the handiwork of McCutcheon, line the walls — helping the space reach its full potential.

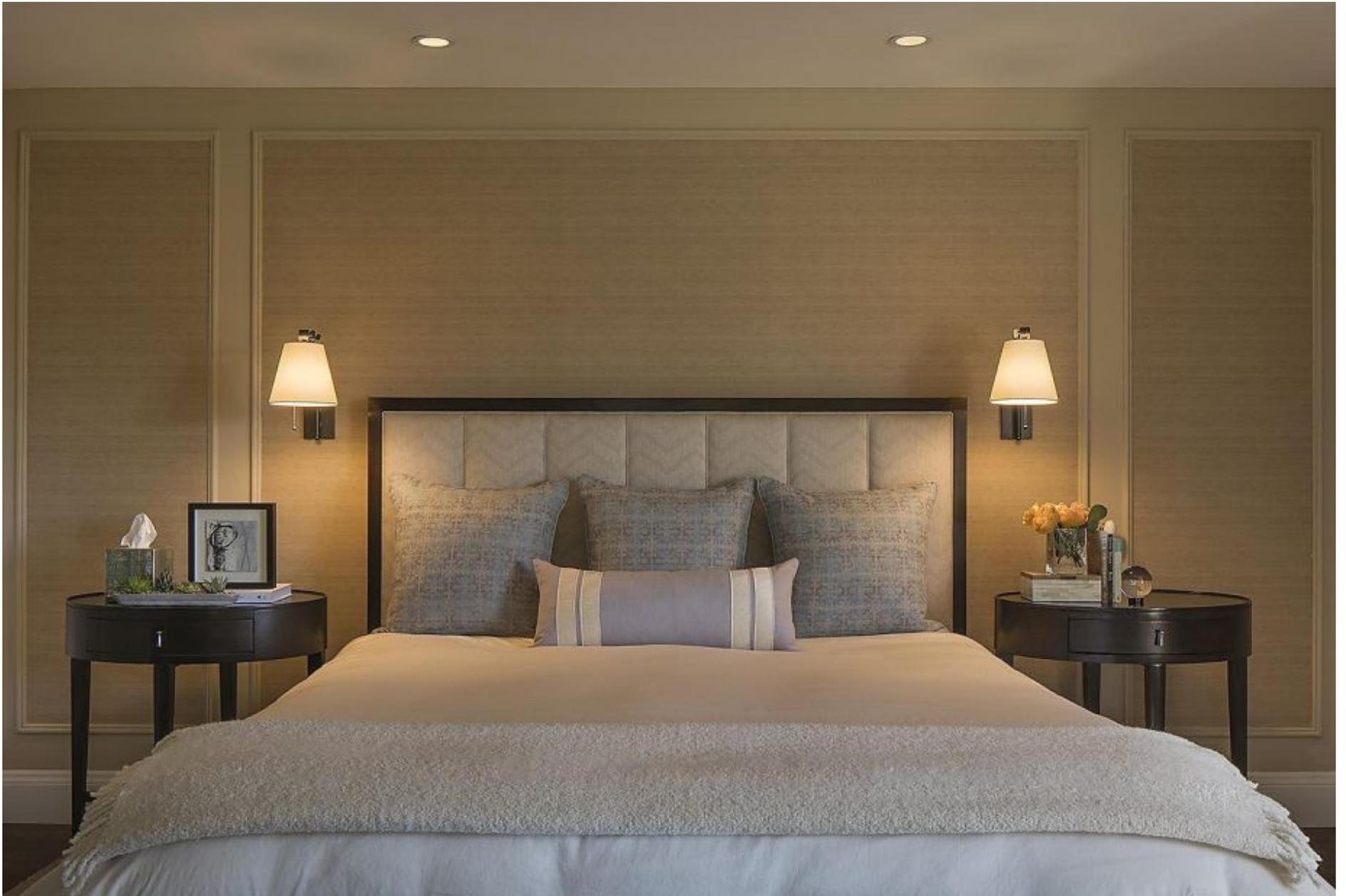


Photo: Eric Rorer

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Master bedroom in renovated historic Piedmont home.

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In the master bedroom, a bronze-hued hemp Donghia wallcovering elevates the surface behind the custom A. Rudin headboard. The bed is dressed in Hodson McKenzie and Robert Allen textiles, and the Rosemary Hallgarten alpaca blanket at the end of the bed is “the most luscious thing to curl up with,” enthuses Martin Bovard (it is available through De Sousa Hughes).

Now that phase one of the home is complete — the kitchen will likely be done next — the designer marvels at the “authentic connection” between the interiors and her clients. “This was such a collaborative project,” she says. “It really does feel like them.”





Photo: Eric Rorer

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IMAGE 1 OF 10

Big windows let in plenty of natural light to this historic Piedmont home.

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## **Design rules**

For interior designer Laura Martin Bovard, a few simple rules can help create an inspired home.

“The entry tells your guests a story about who you are and is an opportunity to make them feel welcome. The more inviting it is the more they will relax and be themselves on their visit with you. Keep your entry uncluttered and styled with great art, a landing zone for your keys and theirs and a place to put their things like a bench.”

“I always tell my clients, ‘Make sure everything in your home is something you love.’ Our house should be filled with

things that bring us joy and have meaning. It's not to say everything has to be a rare object, but you should love looking at it. If you don't, pass it along to someone else and create space for things you do love to come along. To curate your collections so they don't feel like a bunch of tchotchkes, hold things back and rotate them occasionally. Keep them in storage, and then when you feel inspired or need a change you can swap them out. Keeping the energy moving in the space keeps us connected with our homes."

"Nothing motivates us more to refresh our homes and feel inspired by our space than getting ready for a party. It's an opportunity to get rid of stuff, move things around and bring in fresh flowers. I do this almost every Sunday — a trip to the farmers' market, fresh flowers and a whole house pick-up gets my home ready for me to enjoy for the week. So when I return home from work, I feel welcomed and invited to let the day go and connect with my family."



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