

Southern home

Beautiful
STYLE
*indoors
& out*



PERFECTLY PARISIAN

French antiques and
fresh furnishings
give this Virginia
home the
je ne sais quoi
it lacked.



Previous pages: An overscale chandelier adds dramatic elegance above the dining table. Host-and-hostess chairs stand out from their side companions with a medallion-printed linen. These pages, above: The drawing room features a linen sectional topped in hand-dyed velvet pillows. An old linen basket adds another textural element, making a unique cocktail table. Antique hand-colored botanicals by artist Abraham Munting hang on the wall to the right. Left: A corner of the drawing room is graced by a German Biedermeier secretary. The soft linen curtains are in the same hue as the walls. Far left: The homeowners' collection of Bernardaud fine china pays tribute to their love of all things French.

For most homeowners looking to redecorate, hiring a designer 4,000 miles away across the Atlantic Ocean might be considered a major obstacle—or, at the very least, a minor inconvenience. But not so for Lisa and David Stewart, who sought out Paris-based American interior designer Kathryn Ivey to help redecorate their home in Potomac Falls, Virginia. Fortunately, Ivey also maintains an office in nearby Old Town Alexandria, which made her a little more accessible at times.

“We travel a lot and are total Francophiles,” says Lisa of her family that also consists of two teenage daughters. “For the redesign, we wanted our home to have that Old-World feeling we’d experienced overseas. We actually loved that Kathryn lived in Paris and really understood the look that we wanted to create.”

The six-bedroom, 6,000-square-foot house was built in 2004 by Great Falls Construction, who



Above left: An oversized cocktail table and an area rug ground the family room, which is open to the kitchen. Above right: Windsor chairs set about a custom table define the eat-in nook, where the family enjoys most of their meals. Opposite: The kitchen kept its basic bones, with cabinets refreshed in paint and new hardware. Statuary marble countertops and backsplashes were added, imparting an instant Old-World feel. Below: An area rug and settee create a cozy nook for pause in the foyer. An antique tapestry pillow brings an element of age.



also worked on the renovation. When the Stewarts bought it in 2008, they were busy raising young girls and did little to the house at the time. And while they loved the residence, they never felt completely at home in the traditional Virginia décor, with its stark white moldings, red-damask wallpaper in the dining room, sunken master bathtub, glazed-ivory kitchen cabinets, and black granite counters.

“In my earliest meetings with the Stewarts, it became clear that they wanted a warm house that felt collected over time,” says Ivey, who quickly set about sourcing mostly French antiques for the home. “They were also drawn to a cooler palette of grays and blues and were less about pattern and more about texture.”

Almost with a gallerist’s approach to creating

“THIS PROJECT IS A TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF CHANGING OUT PAINTS, FINISHES, LIGHTING, AND HARDWARE TO ELEVATE A HOME.”

—KATHRYN IVEY



Opposite: Ivey sourced an Art Deco-style, vintage Italian desk for David's office, which skews more masculine in spirit and appearance. Above and left: Artful wallpaper by de Gournay inspired the palette for Lisa's sitting room (off the master bedroom), which features custom built-ins with reading sconces. An antique Oushak carpet sits underfoot. Ivey paired a slipper chair in mossy green velvet with a Louis XVI antique desk to create a place for writing correspondence or working on a laptop.

a clean display space, Ivey repainted and refinished all the floors, walls, and moldings in soothing, monochromatic, neutral colors, with similarly hued window treatments in any given room. "The foyer, dining, and drawing rooms are all open to each other," she says. "We wanted to blur the lines with our chosen palette. And rather than emphasize moldings and curtains, we wanted them to provide a bit of texture yet otherwise disappear."

With the serene stage set, Ivey then layered in the furnishings. In the drawing room, she installed a soft linen, roll-armed sectional as the primary seating, pairing it with an antique wicker basket topped with glass for a cocktail table. Three wall-mounted reading sconces with custom-painted blue lamp shades add to the warm ambiance. "We also



Above: Comfortable armchairs flanking a leather ottoman create a cozy seating area in the master bedroom's bay window. Opposite top: Clean-lined, wooden nightstands add a punch of masculinity to the otherwise feminine master bedroom, which also features custom brass reading sconces on either side of the bed. Opposite bottom, left and right: A French antique Louis XV vitrine holds spare towels in the master bathroom, which has a freestanding bathtub. Custom mirror frames hang from the ceiling above his-and-her vanities.

brought in a bit of color with hand-dyed pillows in rose and yellow velvet," says the designer.

Across the way from the central foyer hall, the dining room offers plenty of space for large gatherings. "The Stewarts both have family in the area, and they often host dinner parties, especially during the holidays, so we wanted to maximize seating with an oval table that extends to easily seat 12," says Ivey. An antique French armoire that houses heirloom china adds age and history to the room's newer elements, such as the linen-slipcovered dining chairs. For lighting, an over-scale contemporary chandelier, with sheaf of wheat detailing, pairs well with double antique gilt candle sconces, which are similarly detailed.

Though the architectural bones of the home remained largely the same, every surface was refinished and each fixture replaced. Hand-picked, mostly French antique furnishings also provide interest and contrast with newly sourced items throughout.

"Once we moved back in after the redesign, we immediately felt connected and comfortable," says Lisa. "The calm palette really allows us to see all the pieces we love, including several things we bought on a special trip to Paris with Kathryn, who guided us around the flea market." Adds Ivey, "The home really represents this family's love of Europe, the way they live their life, and the time they spend together."

