

SLEEK RETREAT

This Buckhead homeowner trusted her instincts, and her design team, to create spectacular in-town living quarters

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The homeowner and the designer of the Buckhead residence took more than a professional relationship; they were friends that "just gave me a great advantage when it came to understanding the needs and the very great and unusual," says designer Sherry Day. The major business is a perfect example. The home was located in the heart of the city and had a great view from a high-rise building. (404) 991-1111



Accessories in the living room are just as minimal as the overall look of the space, primarily consisting of artwork and sculpture collected through the years. Couch and black leather chair by Ironstone. Coffee table and end table from Cruise and Barrett, (804) 239-0008. FACED. The homeowner's traditional facade. "I had an awesome architect," says the homeowner. "He was the fourth one that I worked with, but the only one with a plan that I was willing to invest money in."



IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN REAL VISION

for anyone to see the possibilities in this 53-year-old brick ranch in Buckhead's Peachtree Park. But the owner had the advantage of four sets of eyes—architect Brian Bethel Smith, contractor Michael Laddis, landscape architect Evan Rogers and interior designer Sherry Hart.

"Their combined goal was to create a peaceful retreat. 'I saved 30 weeks out of the year,' says the homeowner, "and I wanted to create a haven, a place where I could renew my energies."

To create an exterior that said Welcome Home, the facade was renovated to incorporate stone, wrought iron and cedar into the original painted brick. The cedar entrance is a good example of how this team pooled their creativity: General Custom Woodworks, hired to do the kitchen cabinetry, took the architect's plans and turned them into reality. "The entire renovation was truly a work in progress," the homeowner says. "The process was one of everyone bringing their ideas to the table."

Once inside, the interior living space is much bigger than its exterior indicates. The original two-bedroom, one-bath residence now encompasses four bedrooms and three-and-a-half baths, despite the fact that only 750 square feet were

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added (not including the screened porch). Additionally, 20-foot ceilings create a sense of voluminous space.

Case in point, the living room seems to soar sky high, yet an intimate seating group brings it right back down to earth. "80% of the furniture was delivered one day, and, to have it ready for a big party, the whole house was decorated in a week," says designer Hart. "When I arrived, [the owner] had arranged the living room in a traditional way facing the fireplace. So I asked, 'Do you mind if I play with it?' Everything in this room is square, so I wanted to add a little interest."

Now slightly on the angle, the arrangement is more than a decorative departure. It allows every occupant to enjoy the south-facing focal point—a niche that looks as if it were custom made for the grand piano (though it was originally the master closet), a set her hand-crafted by Lee Harris of Madison Mills Custom Woodwork. French doors that open onto the screened porch and, out of view, a fireplace that separates the living room from the dining room.

Equally important to the success of this space, and to every other room in the house, was the innovative use of textures—a "must" when you're working exclusively with natural hues. Here, a call to late-colonial style and a black leather chair anchor the dining area. Between the two, another armchair was originally Mack, as well, but Hart



Cast-iron bolt glows in the dining room is an elegant look for a seat that can be converted to a chair. (Left to right) glass cabinet, by Lee Harris of Madison Mills Custom Woodwork, and the perfect example of a chair, the set is made of oak and is the perfect example of a chair that easily anchors the room. (Right) Mack Design Center, (770) 913-0111.



The island is a "kitchen within a kitchen," says the designer. It features a built-in sink, a cooktop, and a microwave. The island also has a built-in storage cabinet on the other side of the island.

"I found a stone mason working behind Phipps Plaza and sent my builder over to recruit him on the spot."

agreement is to provide a little more color contrast in the room. Inexpensive cubes, covered in fabric that almost takes on a grassy texture, provide an element of fun, while sleek tabletops and treasured artwork in gilded frames bring the room back to its subtle roots.

In the adjoining dining room, a polished table and its upholstered chairs take center stage. "She has a total of 12 of these chairs that she can pull in whenever necessary, which is often because she loves to entertain," says Hart. What's more, guests can spill over onto the patio, just through the French doors. "This is such a wonderful neighborhood, it's a family-friendly place," says the homeowner. "I wanted a front porch where I could hang out with my dogs, watch people go by, and take in my beautiful front yard."

While the kitchen is outfitted with practical, commercial-grade appliances fit for the gourmet cook, an innovative mix of materials and finishes prove that the owner places creativity on the floor burner. Pale marble is beautifully juxtaposed against black-painted cabinetry, accented by stainless and granite countertops. Even the floor mixes things up a little, pieces of polished stone are separated with wood planking. But the backsplash was the biggest surprise. "I had run out of money and creative juices," says the homeowner, "so I looked at my contractor and asked, 'Do we have anything left over?' We ended up taking leftover tile from the bath and leftover stone from the kitchen floor, then cutting them up into little squares."



The landscaping on this one-acre lot was started well before the house itself. For the most part, trees were already in place but were enhanced with outdoor elements such as fountains and shrubs, as well as the terraces, stonework and water feature. The result is precisely what the owner envisioned—her own private park. Landscaping by Evan Rodgers, Scapes, (770) 976-7777.

"When it comes to pure rest and relaxation, this area leads to the spa-like master bedroom, done in soft cream and chocolate tones. "That's my quiet space; it's very peaceful," she says. Every inch of the room features lush fabrics and furnishings. The bed is tucked out to three different sides, picked up in Bangkok long before the owner had any idea what she would do with them. When she wants to curl up with a good book, the chaise-covered chair nestled near the fireplace provides the perfect place.

As for her other favorite corner? The screened porch, with its distinct "mountain cabin" appeal. "There wasn't even a dining list for the porch when we started the renovation," says the owner. "Michael just came up with the idea, and I loved it." The ceiling has hand-stained beams and is lined with tin, and the fireplace is a great mix of materials—tin from the ceiling, stone slings from the main entrance, glass from the kitchen, even leftover landscaping stones. "It all came together while I was on the road, and this is what I came home to," the owner says. "I allowed these very creative people to take some ownership of the house, and they stayed on it. My vision for the renovation changed every day, but not even I thought it would end up as beautiful as it is." ❀

Every aspect of this porch recalls the perfect mountain retreat. A pair of bamboo leaf chairs and a stone-topped table provide comfortable seating.

