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Personal Treasure

IN A COMMUNITY ALL BUT FORGOTTEN BY THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF MODERN-DAY ATLANTA, BARBARA WESTBROOK COUNTS HER PERSONAL HOME AS THE PERFECT REPRIEVE

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Eclectic Delights

"I love being here," says Westbrook of her little home in The Whittier Mill Village, a quiet neighborhood on the Chamblee/Dunwoody line that dates back to 1955. "At first, I envisioned it being a temporary spot, but I've made it so cute that I've really enjoyed it. It's a very warm little community." The thing Westbrook loved in one of Westbrook's favorite places. "It was a surprise and I wanted one ever since I worked for Charles Gandy. I remember he used to have one in the conference room, and it was my first introduction to a Moultrie base!" she says. "So I finally bought one for myself! I just love that sleek shape in wood. It's kind of a nice contrast to the rustic coffee table and wall sconce alignment sofa." The antique French cone chair catches back like a cat, making it quite an exceptional find. "It's so beautiful; the original coating is in perfect condition and the staining is really beautiful."



Homey Hangout

left "The living room has really nice light," says Westbrook. "It's a great nighttime space but it's just as pretty in the daylight. I love to open up the window treatments; they're all just linen scrim and they filter everything." *below* A makeshift drafting nook—complete with a drafting stool and articulated vintage lamp—offers Westbrook the ideal spot to sit and sketch. A simple Roman shade makes it easy to adjust the light while a roomy leather club chair and wool throw provide a comfortable spot for contemplation.



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BARBARA WESTBROOK MAY BE KNOWN for creating some of the most breathtaking residences from Buckhead to West Palm Beach, but the abode she calls home—nestled humbly in the Chattahoochee River valley—is more unassuming than you'd expect. From the outside, it's a simple brick-and-clapboard structure. But inside, it's every indication of this designer's comfortable, layered style.

It was almost four years ago that Westbrook decided to leave behind a larger home in her suburban neighborhood to search for something a little smaller, somewhere slower in pace. Happily, one of her colleagues had recently purchased a home in just such a place, an oft-forgotten community known as the Whittier Mill Village Historic District, and made the suggestion that set things in motion. The aging village—laid out in a crescent around a turn-of-the-century cotton mill—was one of the first to rise from the ashes of the Civil War and survives today as one of Atlanta's oldest residential communities. While some of its structures have succumbed to the test of time, the storied mill houses and a few commercial buildings, like the old country store, remain. It is the latter that Westbrook has made her home.

Just nine miles from the designer's Buckhead office, it seems like a world away. And that's exactly what she's grown to love about it.

During the workweek, Buckhead is her stomping grounds—where she works, meets friends for dinner and attends church functions. But back home, she takes pleasure in daily strolls through the park, sketching cabinetry in her drafting nook, and curling up with favorite books and her two beloved cats.

With modest proportions but high ceilings, the 1,000-square-foot space allowed Westbrook the perfect opportunity to work her decorating magic. "I knew that I wanted to create privacy and delineate the space without losing the sense of volume," she explains. "Even though it's only 1,000 square feet, because of the tall ceilings it feels very open, not cramped." Getting straight to work, Westbrook completed much of the renovations in six short weeks, including the addition of a custom kitchen and two 8-foot floating walls to separate the living, sleeping and dining areas, plus a fresh coat of paint.

Because Westbrook had participated in many show houses over the years, she had a treasure trove of "gently used" pieces in storage, a few of which she knew would work beautifully in the space, so she took very little from her former home. In the breakfast room, the designer paired modern white Klismos chairs with a well-worn monk's leather tooling table for a smart juxtaposition of sleek and rustic



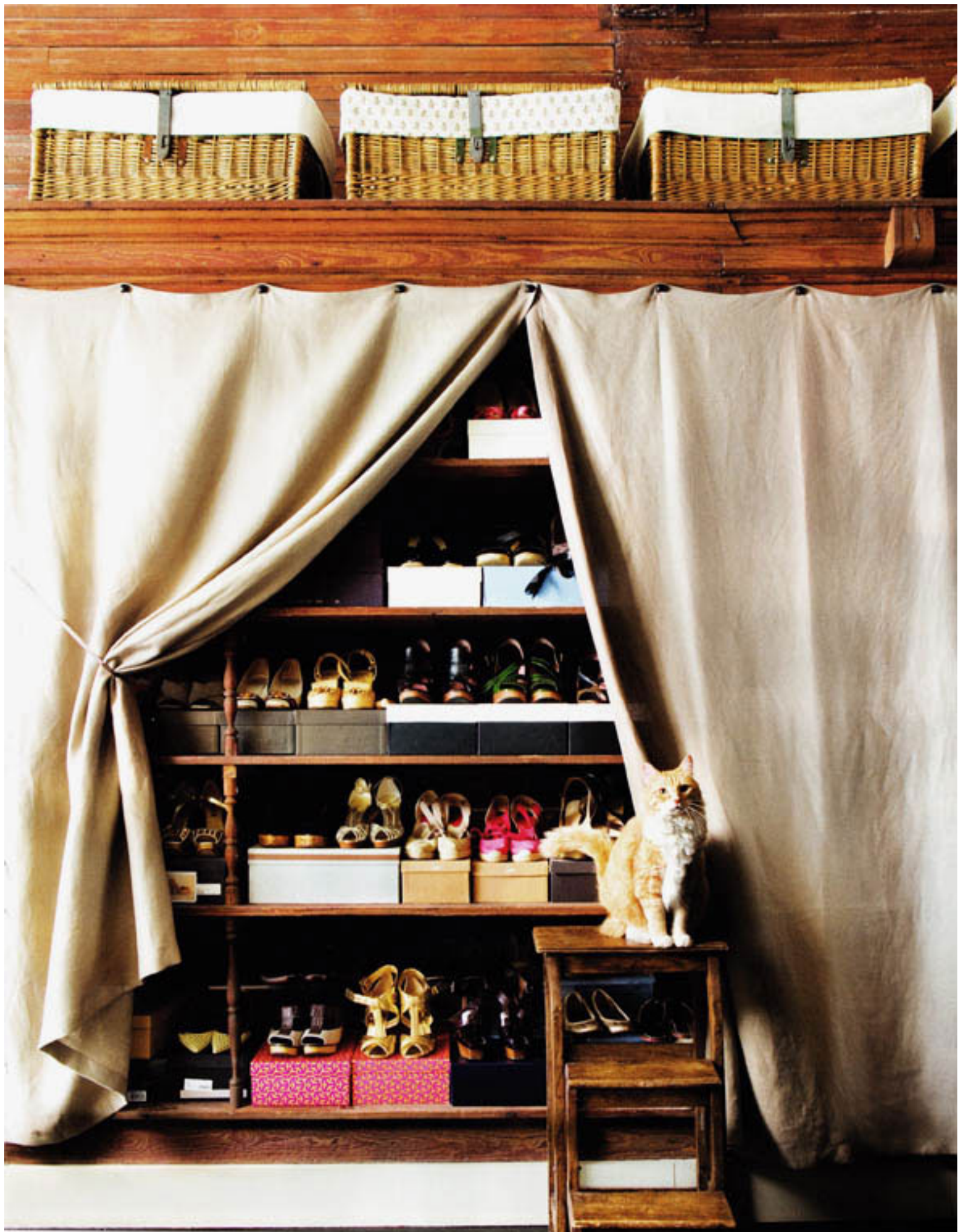
Marks of Distinction

A blue Swedish armoire contains Westbrook's collection of coats; its crackly finish serves as the perfect foil for a petrified wood table, nailhead-trimmed chairs and a pair of intricately adorned pillows from South of Market. A lampshade with an architectural illustration speaks to the designer's love for historically sound design, while a collection of art above represents her most individual tastes. "Art is always incredibly personal, for clients and for myself," she says. "Usually, there's a little memory attached to each piece. I enjoy having that at home."



Rustic Glamour

In the breakfast room, a rusted iron lantern feels right at home amid the rugged interior walls. Westbrook keeps a matching fixture at her Buckhead office, and says it generates so many inquiries that she's thinking about having reproductions made. The Swedish wedding cabinet holds her household paperwork on the bottom and everyday supplies on top. The modern white Klismos chairs are from Donghia. Antique leather tooling table, through J. Tribble Antiques. Linen panels conceal pair-upon-pair of coverable footwear. A petite step ladder helps make the most of the vertical space, granting access to storage above and serving as a frequent perch for Westbrook's orange tabby, Okie.





Elegant Retreat

The bedroom is practical but pretty, thanks to a directly iron bed and glamorous Art Deco chair with gilt accents, heavily upholstered to breathe gray wool. The functional recessed wardrobe is more than deep enough to contain all of the designer's clothes, but the gorgeous froth is just a bonus. The walls throughout the home are awash in Farrow & Ball, a secret Sherrill Williams reveal that Westbook says goes with just about anything, except Westbook may not have the luxury of traditional bookshelves in her small space but that hasn't stopped her from displaying books at every turn. Stacked atop and under tables, the books overflow spaces to how we really live today. "Books give you such a sense of who a person is and add warmth to a space," notes the designer. "I love to see stacks and stacks of them."



while, next to her bed, she piled a round Art Deco table high with stacks of magazines and books, plus a few sophisticated tortoiseshell boxes for storing odds and ends. "I like anything glamorous," she notes. "Even though this space is a little rough around the edges, I thrive in a little glamour."

It's also a case study in maximizing a small space. Fortunately, the building's previous life as a general store gave Westbook 18 feet of shelving in which to store the essentials. Draped casually with linen, they provide a place for almost everything from cleaning supplies to baskets of sweaters to the owner's prized collection of shoes. "I have a little bit of a shoe fetish," she laughs.

Beyond that, she's filled the space with a number of handsome case pieces. One standout is a red painted chest with bronze edging from Linda Harsley Antiques, which cleverly doubles as a bedside table. "It's my favorite piece," says the designer. "I love everything about it, and I think I'll love it the rest of my life."

Additionally, in lieu of closet space, armoires and wardrobes contain clothes, coats and an array of household necessities. "I think the thing about a space like this, where storage is limited, is that it keeps you from collecting too many things you don't need," notes Westbook. "You have to put things back where you found them—there's a spot for everything and, if not, it's chaos. You aren't tempted to accumulate things like you would in a house with a big basement, when many times you don't even know what's down there."

Like a luxurious approach to loft style, her home evades a scaled-down, modern way of living—an unexpected mix in a building as historical as this. Still, it maintains the comfortable, inviting style this designer brings to all of her projects. One thousand square feet may not seem like much at first measure but, for Westbook, it's turned out to be the perfect fit. **BY BRISAN, SEE US**