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TRENDS





Grand and gracious

Appearances can be deceiving. The reserved front façade of this stately, expansive home is a case in point



One of the characteristics of today's luxury houses is that they often include separate private living areas as well as formal spaces designed for entertaining. Balancing these requirements with the need for a moderate, welcoming scale and a sense of proportion on the exterior can be a challenge.

Such was the case for architect Keith Summerour, who designed this Connecticut farmhouse-style home located on a wooded site overlooking a lake.

"It was particularly important that visitors coming down the driveway would not perceive



Above: The volume of this seven-bedroom house becomes apparent from the rear elevation. Here, the main living areas open onto a covered porch overlooking the swimming pool. To create the pool's muted blue color, a Pebble-Tech finish was applied to the interior.

Left: Nested dormers on the front façade disguise the home's two-storied mass.



Above: To create a sense of arrival in the foyer, the architect and the interior designer used innovative techniques. These include a keystone above the archway and a Greek key pattern on the floor.

Facing page and following pages: Used primarily for entertaining, the salon can also be viewed from balconies on the upper floor.

the house as too large," says Summerour.

"As a result, the front elevation has been carefully designed to trick the eye, and conceal the home's total 17,000ft² mass."

Summerour says nested dormers give the illusion that the house is a traditional one-and-a-half storey structure instead of the two-level home it actually is. Certain parts of the house, such as the master bedroom wing, family room and garage – are angled to accentuate this perception. A long covered porch teamed with triple hung windows helps to bring the roof line down. The house sits relatively low, with only three steps between the

porch and the ground. This means an extensive basement containing a wine cellar, games room, media room, dancing hall, theatre, spa, sauna and gym is well concealed.

In keeping with the home's 10-acre park-like setting, landscaping has been kept deliberately simple at the front of the house. Boxwood with a ground cover of mondo provides a sense of formality, complementing rather than detracting from the home's traditional façade.

The front door opens to reveal a spacious foyer. Summerour has used a keystone at the top of the arch, extending it to the ceiling to create









Above: A comfortable, casual approach was used to create the family room décor. For continuity, red checked fabric features both here and in the kitchen, where it appears on the doors of the upper cabinetry.

Right: Chocolate brown walls and a 150-year-old chandelier give the formal dining room a plush, luxurious look, both day and night.



a strong sense of proportion in the molding. Emphasis on proportion was important in each room of the house, he says. A Greek key pattern gives bold visual interest to the white oak floors, says interior designer Barbara Westbrook, who collaborated with Summerour on the project.

"A classical red rosette adds a touch of drama in each corner of the key. Red appears as an accent color throughout the décor which evokes a youthful feel without being stuffy," she says.

To this end, Westbrook has applied a blend of antique furniture and contemporary art to keep the overall look current and refreshing.



Architect: Keith Summerour, Summerour & Associates (Atlanta)

Interior designer: Barbara Westbrook, Westbrook Interiors

Kitchen manufacturer: Morgan Creek Cabinet Co

Builder: The Garrett Group

Structural engineer: Starzer Brady Fagan Associates

Siding: Cypress from Simpson Millworks

Roof: Vermont slate

Window/door joinery: Accent Architectural Millworks

Lighting: Lightolier

Heating: Lennox

Kitchen cabinets: Painted maple from Morgan Creek Cabinets

Countertops: G & L Marble

Backsplash: Renaissance Tile & Bath

Basin (master bathroom): Carlton in Biscuit

Faucets and showers: Georgian by Phylrich

Foyer floor key border: Scarlett Jimison

Foyer dome pendant: Paul Ferrante from Ainsworth Noah

Foyer table: Travis & Company

Salon furniture and accessories: Chairs supplied by Jerry Pair and Ainsworth Noah; sofa Mattaliano from Renfroe; Fabrics supplied by Jim Thompson, Jerry Pair, Charles Osborne and Suitt Park Solutions; Ottoman supplied by Ainsworth Noah; Tables supplied by Interiors Market II and Jerry Pair; Lamps supplied by Parc Monceau and Jerry Pair

Living room (blue room) furniture: Sofa designed by Westbrook Interiors, fabricated by Swenson Upholstery; armchairs by Swenson Upholstery; chairs by William Word; shells supplied by Belvedere and Jerry Pair; window treatment finials from Grizzel & Mann

Dining room chandelier: Italian wood and crystal, 19th century-style from Regalo Antiques

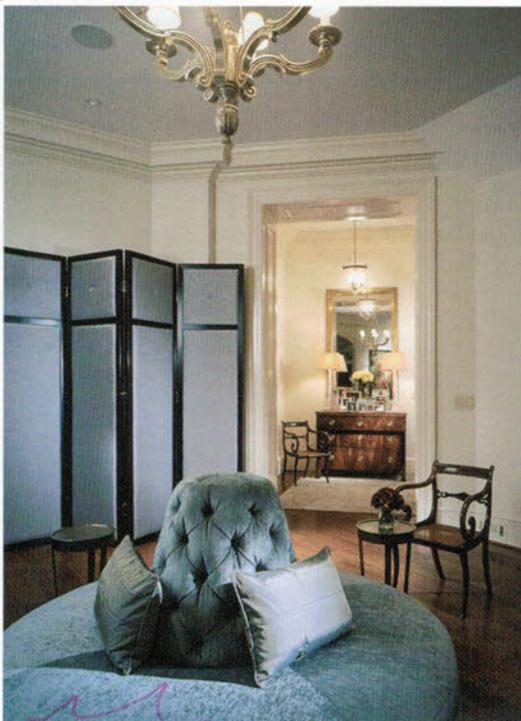
Art: Supplied by Marcia Wood Gallery, Lowe Gallery, Belvedere and Jackson Fine Art

Photography by John Umberger

Top and top right: Silver, gray and blue tones give the formal living area a glamorous look. Walls with a soft hand-rubbed finish provide the backdrop for a variety of furniture.

Above left: A banquette takes center stage in a vestibule off the hallway.

Above right: The tub in the master bathroom sits under a window for optimum views.



This intent is well-illustrated in the salon, an expansive space designed for entertaining. A curved ceiling gives the room human scale and accentuates the effect of the natural light from the dormers. The slender columns flanking either side of the space continue the rhythm of those found on the exterior of the house. Ivory-colored walls and windows dressed with overscaled balloon shades offset the selection of antique furniture which Westbrook describes as "elegant, sophisticated and a little glamorous." The furniture has been finished with a range of fabrics from leather to chenille to create a rich, textured look and a timeless feel.

In the family room, red checked fabric, a large comfortable sofa and chaise, and a stone fireplace are keys to a soft, intimate atmosphere, says Westbrook.

This relaxed ambiance continues in the kitchen, thanks to certain architectural features and decorative detailing. The exhaust hood, contained in a custom-designed cabinet, forms the focal point of a massive arched window at one end of the space. Set against a backsplash of tumbled stone and encircled by glass, the hood appears as if it is floating, says Summerour. A border of French words highlights the putty colored walls.



"The owners came up with three cheery, positive phrases that were translated into French. The words scroll above the arched window and along the walls, adding a highly personal touch to the room."

All the main living areas spill onto a long covered porch, or promenade which overlooks an expansive courtyard as well as the swimming pool and spa. Window treatments made of waterproof fabric ensure the verandah can be used no matter what the weather. Teak and metal outdoor furniture, chosen with comfort in mind, complement the long narrow proportions of the porch.



Above: At the rear of the house, the long covered porch includes an open fire that provides warmth and a sense of intimacy.

Left: Wood, slate and stone ensure the public face of the house blends into the surrounding woodlands.