

Southern Accents

BEAUTIFUL HOMES, GRACIOUS LIVING, A SENSE OF PLACE

summer
CHIC

Sunny Retreats
Elegant Outdoor Rooms
Cheerful Table Settings



Display Until August 26
www.southernaccents.com



A FINE BALANCE

Armed with a palette of cool taupes, soft grays, and dreamy blues, Atlanta designer Barbara Westbrook confidently mixes traditional pieces with unexpected accents in a Buckhead house



The challenge for designer Barbara Westbrook was a tall one—literally. A client's home in Atlanta's Buckhead community was certainly elegant enough, but with its soaring ceilings and air of grandiosity, it needed to be brought down to a more human scale.

"We wanted it to feel intimate without being overdone," Westbrook explains. "The client called for the house to be warmer, somewhere she and her husband could relax, but have touches of glamour and sophistication at the same time."

To that end, the clients called in residential designer Charles Heydt of Pak Heydt & Associates. "The house was originally large expanses of drywall," says Westbrook, "but Charles added details to make it feel architecturally important." From one vantage point, for instance, the view is of one doorway after another—four in all. Heydt gave each one a unique surround, causing the eye to stop, if only momentarily, to consider the stylistic diversity.

In fact, that single architectural aspect sets the tone for the house: elegant but never expected, with a lighthearted



ABOVE: Though designer Barbara Westbrook can fashion many different looks, the living room shows her characteristically clean style. Here, classic furnishings mix with contemporary accents. OPPOSITE PAGE: The scale and color of the painting by Maggie Hasbrouck adds an unexpected touch of drama to the living room's soft palette. PREVIOUS PAGES: At the foot of the stairs just outside the dining room, Westbrook created a seating area with a half-round banquette; an antique bronze clock seems to float on an acrylic stand. In the dining room, an intricately carved fireplace and a grand chandelier could have set the stage for a predictable scheme, but Westbrook took a different turn. Traditional chairs get a twist, their floral-strewn backs prominent against a table skirt that's just a shade lighter than the gray-brown walls.



"I don't like a traditional room to feel dated or stale. It should feel fresh."

—designer *Barbara Westbrook*



LEFT: All white with stainless steel accents, the new kitchen is simple but sophisticated. The scheme started, says Westbrook, with a La Cornue range that the owner—who loves to cook—was dying to have. White cabinetry and walls covered with oversize subway tiles create a space with a refreshingly crisp, light quality. **Above:** Though it shares space with the kitchen, the breakfast room is defined by the slightly darker hue on the walls. The putty color teams up with natural linen curtains to let the dining table stand out like a piece of sculpture. Still, the white from the kitchen shows up in slipcovers on the chairs. **Below:** Westbrook has a knack for amassing furnishings that look as if they've been collected over time, infusing personality into a space in the process. In the family room, the dark-stained coffee table and three-legged stools lend a timeworn patina to a sophisticated but relaxed room.





Balance is important in terms of size and scale and, in this home, in terms of traditional and contemporary elements. But Westbrook believes light and dark hues need equilibrium as well. "Otherwise," says the designer, "it becomes boring." There's no chance of that in this master retreat, where a bed upholstered in a pale taupe contrasts with a Regency chaise covered in a deep chocolate brown velvet.

ambience. "We didn't want the interiors to be stuffy," Westbrook says, "but we did hope to enhance the architectural integrity." She applied that approach not only to furniture but also to fabrics. For the most part, the designer points out, she used solids, which aren't "so serious," instead of patterns.

The home's informal formality is apparent from the moment you step through the front door. The overall color scheme is soft, with subtle variations keeping it from being staid. "I like to take the same colors and use different tones or mix them differently in various spaces," says Westbrook of the primarily neutral palette. To basic creams and whites, she added pale blue in the living room, chocolate brown in the dining room, and a putty color at the bottom of the stairs. What's more, the common colors keep the individual spaces from looking disjointed. "I like people to have a 'wow' reaction to the interiors without feeling uncomfortable. I prefer strong focal points in art and architecture, so your eye knows where to rest when you walk into a room," she adds.

It's equally important to mix textures, particularly when working with a subdued scheme, says the designer, because it adds depth. In the nearby living room, for instance, a pair of angle-armed sofas are wrapped in velvet and are accented by tapestry pillows, while gilt and acrylic tables and a sisal carpet make their way into the mix. The neutral furnishings could have fallen flat, however, were it not for the pale-blue hue of the walls. Not only does the color add a fresh quality, but it also accentuates the room's architectural details.

In a house that's all about contrast, the dining room is the perfect yin to the living room's yang. Completely swathed in a dark gray-brown, the formal space is nothing short of dramatic. "I don't like a traditional room to feel dated or stale. It should feel fresh," says Westbrook. "We painted the trim the same color as the walls to give it a more modern feel. This way, it doesn't chop up the space. Instead, you feel surrounded by the dark, warm color." Yet another unexpected touch comes from the chairs. Though strictly traditional in style, they feature graphic flowers, taking the oh-so-serious edge off the room and putting it in a playful mood.

Not surprisingly, the most soothing palette is reserved for the master bedroom. A monochromatic masterpiece, this retreat gets its glamour from sparkling silver and crystal accents. "The piece to the left of the bed is one my absolute favorites," says Westbrook. "It has an amazing silver-leaf finish that gives it an aged, sophisticated patina that's not forced." A description, it seems, that could just as well be applied to the entire house. ♦
For details, see *Sourcebook*, page 134.