

ARCHITECTURE / KEM HINTON, TUCK-HINTON ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN
INTERIOR DESIGN / ROBIN RAINS, ROBIN RAINS INTERIOR DESIGN
HOME BUILDER / SALEM FORSYTHE, INNOVATIVE BUILDING SPECIALTIES, INC
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Yours, Mine & Ours

NASHVILLIAN CLIENTS UPDATE THEIR
LONGTIME FAMILY HOME, CREATING
SPACES UNIQUE TO THEM BOTH.

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Call it an opportunity born of disaster. Damage from a felled tree was what convinced one Nashville couple to reevaluate their long-beloved home, located in a shady enclave of Belle Meade. The near-century-old abode had fit them well in younger years, but with their children grown and eyes on their future together, the pair saw a moment worth seizing. As repairs gave rise to renovations, leading to modern architectural updates that support aging in place, the home's interiors came to inspire a greater focus on wellness, with rooms designed for family gatherings, plus spaces where the husband and wife each can retreat and recharge. "The homeowners have uniquely different tastes," notes their designer, Robin Rains. "He prefers uncluttered contemporary; she's drawn to tradition and opulence. What they shared was the desire to embrace contrast and explore common ground."

The husband and wife—both business owners active in the nonprofit community—turned to architect Kem Hinton, whom they already knew through a previous commission and civic projects around Nashville, to head up the home's renovation. "The challenge was to give the owners options while keeping the home's wonderful historic ambience," explains Hinton, who worked with project manager Steve Johnson and project designer Katie Woods to add an elevator, redesign the kitchen and bathrooms with more forgiving footprints, create enclosed porches and convert a guesthouse into the husband's office.



To connect the rear volumes to the main house, Hinton devised a clever addition: to one side is a glazed corridor overlooking the courtyard and, to the other, a contemporary guest suite that may one day transition to a ground-floor master suite. "It's accessible design without compromising character; the addition honors the scale and materials of the house," says the architect, who followed the home's original roof forms but added steel windows for transparency. For efficiency's sake, Hinton and builder Salem Forsythe excavated the couple's adjacent land for new geothermal systems, providing landscape architect Chris Barkley and landscape designer Hannah Goodgion the chance to enhance the entire property.

While the husband's clean-lined preferences are more evident along the architectural envelope, the wife's tastes and interests are better revealed within it. "I've never met anyone so passionate about all things beautiful," Rains says of her client. "Flea market finds, fine antiques, all of it; she loves to tell stories of how she found each piece." A collection this vast required careful analysis to determine display and storage needs. There are silver pieces, ceramics ("She has an enormous collection of Chinese, European and even dime-store blue-and-white porcelain," Rains adds), boxes in numerous luxe materials, mirrors, photographs, etchings and sketches sourced from Wyoming, where the couple has a home. There are paintings, too, including several by local artist Kit Reuther.

In the entryway of this Nashville home, a pale blue ceiling visually heightens the space. Designer Robin Rains deftly anchored the area with an antique French chest, gilt Italian mirror and Sheraton chairs with chartreuse seats sourced from the Franklin Antique Mall. This room's artworks, as those throughout the house, were hung by Alexander Brindley Fine Art.



Rains chose to replicate the living room's former mirrored walls, creating a chic backdrop for an expressive Kit Reuther work. The Stewart Furniture sofa supports pillows in sumptuous Fortuny textiles and is joined by a forged-iron-and-glass cocktail table Rains had custom made. The Louis XV stools and Regency side table are from Spalding Way.



The dining room is defined by its scenic wallcovering, Arcadia by Schumacher, with vistas inspired by the paintings of French Baroque artist Nicolas Poussin. Here, Rains paired a 19th-century Italian table with a set of Louis XV-style cane chairs upholstered in a Schumacher damask. The large gothic mirror was found at Made in France and the carved-wood pedestals came from Canterbury Cottage Antiques.

Below, left: A midcentury brass bar cart from the Franklin Antique Mall adds a hint of gleam to one corner of the dining room. The vintage French sconces, as with many of the home's antiques, came from Rains' eponymous showroom.

Below, right: One of a pair, a Regency-style armchair from Marymont Plantation Antiques & Interiors was selected to function as a host chair when needed. The mirror is antique Italian. A neutral tone-on-tone Schumacher damask was used for the draperies and the rich wood floors were sourced from François & Co.





A vibrant pair of Louis XVI armchairs from The Belle Meade Shoppes, where Rains also sourced the vintage sofa, sounds an uplifting note in the meditation room. A classic tripod table, or *gueridon*, sits between them. Scalamandré's iconic tiger print and a florid Fortuny velvet grace throw pillows. The framed painting is by Paul Harmon.

To link elements together visually, Rains kept walls white and floors neutral, employing burnished gold tones as a continuous thread throughout. "We chose neutral fabrics for larger pieces in the living room, as we knew we'd be layering Fortuny fabrics with various color tones, but we kept some antiques in their original fabrics," explains the designer, who worked with Hinton to adjust architectural details as needed. For example, the living room's mantle was removed for a pared-down look, while wainscoting was added for interest. Rains also selected mirrored paneling similar to that present in the room's previous iteration because "it brought depth and enthusiasm to the space," with the added effect of amplifying the opposing dining room's dramatic new wallcovering. "The wife says it reminded her of their home in Italy," notes the designer, who purposely eschewed a rug and chandelier so as not to distract from the Arcadian scene.

Liaising with team members Kate Ladd Chlebowski, Jenna Miller and Haley Davis, Rains continued in the same decorative vein, painting a pale blue-and-white checkerboard pattern on the kitchen floor, papering the master bedroom in an exotic animal print and coating the library in a rich dark green. "I think we've forgotten that a house needs a library, Rains posits. "It reminds us to embrace the joy of unwinding with a good read." The wife's personal meditation room, for that matter, is her sanctuary. "It's where she reflects, prays, reads and recharges," Rains says. "This room is about nourishing the soul. We all need spaces like these right now." Antique Himalayan singing bowls, bird feathers and photos of her grandchildren are just a few items that help center her.

"The home exudes this couple's life story," Rains concludes. "They respect each other's tastes and embraced the challenge of blending them. I was given the ability to layer, not match, with no rules. There was something very freeing about that." ■



Left: Rains infused warmth into the master bathroom with a Oushak rug and Louis XVI chair from the Franklin Antique Mall. Honed Calacatta marble herringbone floors and wall tiles from Proctor Marble & Granite highlight the space's improved sense of expansiveness. The brass Water Street hardware and California Faucets fittings are from Kenny & Company.

Opposite: The master bedroom is bedecked in Pierre Frey's exotic Jardin de Mysore wallpaper—a pattern that plays to bed linens by John Robshaw and Matouk, topped with yet another Fortuny pillow. The painted nightstand is from G&G Interiors, joined by a country French vintage bench with a rush top. The sisal rug is by Fibreworks.

