

housetrends

Fun in the Sun:
**WINDING DOWN
IN CHESTERFIELD**

**Monument
Avenue Gem**

Kitchen Trends:

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Countertops**

Furnishing Trends:

Magic Televisions



A photograph of a grand, ornate wooden staircase with a curved banister and decorative balusters. The stairs are made of dark wood and lead up to a second floor. A large, patterned rug with a floral and geometric design is laid out on the floor in the foreground. The background shows a doorway with a glass insert and a painting on the wall.

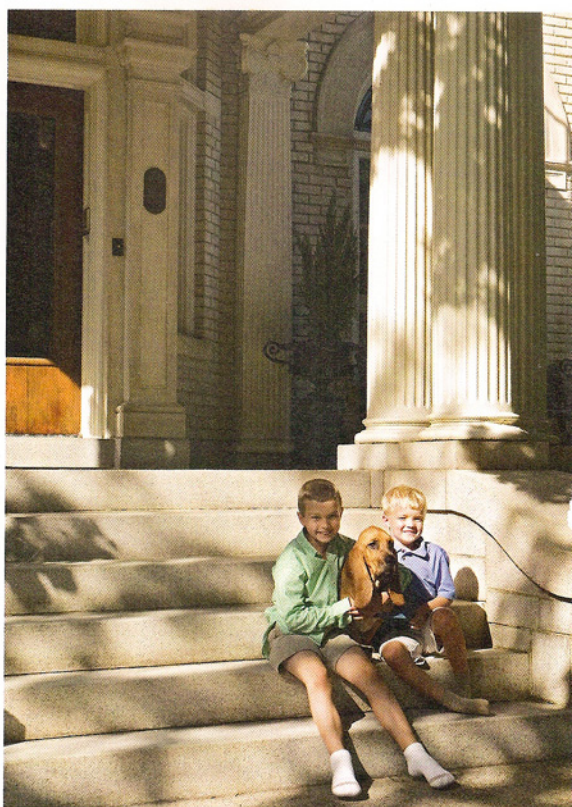
Evolution of a Classic

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VENERABLE MONUMENT AVENUE HOME

a testament to Richmond history

By Shannon Dowling | Photos by John Magor



WALKING into the Monument Avenue home of Ellen and Orrin Brown feels like stepping into a showroom of early twentieth-century design and craftsmanship. As Monument Avenue was developed from 1907 to 1930, architects such as D. Wiley Anderson, William Lawrence Bottomley, Duncan Lee and John Russell Pope created town homes and mansions in a variety of styles including Colonial Revival, Spanish Colonial, Tudors, French and Italian Renaissance. In addition, local craftsmen were hired to build the homes in order to showcase their talents to the city's wealthy citizens who resided along its grandest boulevard. As a result, many residences in this neighborhood are trimmed both inside and out with ornate woodworking, beautiful stone details, and lofty glass openings.



Wainscoting and crown molding pop against the sage-colored wallpaper in the dining room. OPPOSITE LEFT: The house combines elements of Italian Renaissance, Craftsman and Art Nouveau. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Read and Drew Brown enjoy some down time on the front porch of their Monument Avenue home.

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A charming history

One of the local craftsmen of the age was a glassmaker named Moses Binswanger, vice president of the prestigious Richmond glass company that today is a national leader in the business. The Binswanger family worked on four homes on Monument Avenue, including the Browns' current residence. The house, designed by D. Wiley Anderson, was not designed in accordance with a specific architectural style, but combined elements of Italian Renaissance, Craftsman, and Art Nouveau throughout the interior in a manner that allowed Binswanger creative freedom on his glasswork designs.

In 2004, Ellen and Orrin, along with their sons, Read and Drew, relocated from Short Pump to Monument Avenue after they were charmed by the home's history and detail. "At the walk through, instead of feeling buyer's remorse, I was noticing new details that I had not previously seen when viewing the home," remarks Ellen as she points out a pair of French doors with prairie-style stained glass.





Unlike many of the century-old houses in the area that have undergone extensive renovations, the Brown residence had never been structurally altered from its initial floor plan as a single-family residence, making the renovation a relatively easy task centered around cosmetic upgrades. For this, the Browns enlisted Franko-LaFratta for the construction and Susan Jamieson of Bridget Beari Designs for the interior design and furnishings. Already a spacious house at 5,000 square feet, the remodel did not add or reorganize space, it simply transformed the house into their home. "The design set out to enhance the architecture," Jamieson comments about working on such an architecturally-significant home. "It was a historic house, but they were a modern family with little kids, so we made it feel warm by accentuating what was already there."

TOP: Moses Binswanger installed all of the stained glass found throughout the home. BOTTOM: A massive bay window seat brings a sense of coziness to the dining room. OPPOSITE TOP: The home's original floor plan has never been altered, despite numerous owners. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: A painting by Richmond artist Bill Fisher hangs above the living room fireplace.



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ABOVE: The white beaded inset cabinetry soars to the ceiling and is adorned with horizontal bands of walnut. OPPOSITE: The backsplash is comprised of olive-toned glass tile, while the cabinets are topped with matte black granite countertops.

Approaching from the exterior, this Queen-Anne style façade with its innate window detailing and tiled dormers, looks very similar today as it did when it was completed in 1915. The craftsmanship and creativity are apparent as you notice the proportion, rhythm and geometry of the individual architectural elements. Large, circular stained-glass transoms lightly dance up the façade as decorative round Ionic columns anchor the entrance to the street.

The detail continues and you walk through the entryway and step into the home. A formal foyer to the left,

WHEN ELLEN FOUND AN ANTIQUE HUTCH she wanted in the space, Jamieson tied the look into the room with a series of horizontal walnut bands running through the white cabinets.

trimmed with dark oak paneling, centers around a large, sculpted mantle with a marble surround, complemented by a sculptural stairwell that winds into the space and opens out into the room. The subtle colors and patterns of the furnishings lead your eyes around the room as you pick up every well-planned architectural detail, from the patterned border that highlights the parquet wood floors to the playfully geometric coffered ceiling.

Adjacent to the foyer, a bright and welcoming living room leads into an open floor plan beyond. A modern oil and wax painting by Richmond artist Bill Fisher hangs above the hearth of the living room between two of the more traditional patterns of stained-glass windows. "We used artwork throughout the space to play off the colors and geometries of the original stained glass windows," Jamieson explains.

A light and airy palette of greens, blues and creams, repeated throughout the home, tie the rooms together while accentuating the individual character of each of the spaces. "Each room uses the same colors, but juxtaposed with each other through different fabrics, patterns and textures," she adds.

Original to the house, the floors in each room display

a different parquet pattern complemented by a unique wood border, so carefully chosen rugs in each room respond to the individual geometries. Wallpaper and drapery frame the elegant glass windows and ornately molded built-ins. A sage wallpaper in the dining room has an iridescent tone that complements the patterned ceiling above. "When the chandelier is on at night, it gives the wallpaper a glistering effect," Jamieson says. "The dining room was accented with the wallpaper to make it pop."

Blending old and new

Though the Browns tend to be most fond of historic houses, antique furniture and traditional artwork, they allowed Jamieson to add contemporary elements and found objects to pull the design together. The renovated kitchen was designed with white, traditional beaded inset cabinetry inspired by the original cabinets in the butcher's pantry. When Ellen found an antique hutch she wanted in the space, Jamieson tied the look into the room with a series of horizontal walnut bands running through the white cabinets. "I used the wood trim to tone down the whiteness and pick up the oak in the foyer," she says.

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The master bedroom successfully combines striped and floral patterns in soft blue hues.

The new arrangement has a series of tall, vertical cabinetry centered on a small but highly functional island custom-designed for the family. Since the new design keeps within the footprint of the original kitchen, the square footage of the room is smaller than a modern-day kitchen, however the floor-to-ceiling cabinets and the soft coloring give the room a very open airy feel. Glass tiles in an olive hue and matte black granite countertops add extra warmth and a modern feel to the space while

chic found objects in bright colors tie the elements together.

Throughout the rooms, whether dressed with modern art and furniture or period-style lamps and antiques, the original style and glamour of the Binswanger craft shines. By successfully accomplishing this, the Browns were able to adapt a historic house with a storied past into an elegant but comfortable home for modern living. "This is an old house with a flair of being updated," Susan commented. "It doesn't feel so overwhelming." 🍷

RESOURCES

Interior designer: Susan Jamieson, ASID, Bridget Beari Designs; **Architect:** Wiley Anderson; **Kitchen contractor:** Franko-LaFratta Construction, Inc.; **Flooring:** Heart pine; oak parquet; **Kitchen cabinetry:** Vanguard Woodworks; **Kitchen countertops:** Honed Absolute Black granite; **Kitchen backsplash:** Glass tile, Walker Zanger; **Faucets:** Kohler; **Appliances:** Bosch dishwasher; Wolf cooktop and oven; Sub-Zero refrigerator; **Living room artwork:** Bill Fisher; **Foyer chairs:** Antique chairs, Stroheim fabric; **Dining room wallpaper:** Stroheim; **Master bedroom drapery:** Robert Allen

web bonus

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