



A Doric-style decorative column—one of six—anchors a corner of the living room (above). An abstract canvas pops against a dining-room wall embellished with a lavender glaze by Twin Diamond Studios (opposite). Cove lighting creates a soft glow.

VINTAGE CHARM

Joe Ireland puts a fresh face on classic style in a
turn-of-the-century Washington home

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Photography by ANGIE SECKINGER





Ireland repurposed the owners' eclectic dining-room furniture (above), recovering the chairs in a Kerry Joyce fabric. The fireplace in the living room (opposite) was re-clad in Fantasy White marble; kidskin-covered chairs by Josef Frank sit near a Biedermeier side table that holds a French, circa-1940s hand-blown glass lamp (below).

When it comes to real estate, the word “development” conjures images of bland neighborhoods stocked with cookie-cutter houses. Yet the DC area brims with charming residential enclaves that are, in fact, developments. Representing eras ranging from late-Victorian to Mid-Century Modern, many boast their own architectural vernacular. Case in point: a wide, tree-shaded street in Northwest DC lined with foursquare, post-Victorian homes. All are clad in painted stucco, adorned with gracious porches and bordered by picturesque picket fences.

A couple purchased one of these abodes in the mid-1980s, hired DC architect David Schwarz to update it, then got on with the chaotic business of raising four daughters. It wasn't until the girls were grown and gone that they were ready to embark on a real change.

“When we had little kids, we didn't want to invest in anything,” explains the wife, a photographer. “And when they were teenagers we felt the same. Things never really got pulled together.”

She and her husband, a lawyer, tapped designer Joe Ireland to redesign the interiors, requesting a fresh aesthetic that would maintain the spirit of their five-bedroom, circa-1908 home. “We went for classic style, but updated with a younger feel,” Ireland says.

Interior Design: **Joe Ireland**, JD Ireland Interior Architecture & Design, Washington, DC. Contractor: BOWA, McLean, Virginia.





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—JOE IRELAND



Leaving the layout intact, he and his team transformed the house from the ground up, gutting and redesigning the basement, bathrooms and kitchen, adding architectural flourishes and furnishing many spaces anew. “We introduced elements of the designs created by the architect into other rooms to keep the look consistent,” Ireland notes. “Consistency was one of the springboards for the design.”

For instance, the designer and his team brought cove lighting from the dining room into the living and family rooms and duplicated cabinet-door styles on additional built-ins. They squared off an archway that bisected the living room to match the openings to the entry hall, which are flanked by decorative columns—then added the same columns to the living room.

The stucco house (right), painted pale yellow, commands its corner lot. Ireland repainted existing wicker furniture on the porch (above) and recovered the seat cushions and pillows with vibrant fabrics by Pindler and Sunbrella. In the entry hall (opposite), a panoramic painting depicts the view from the owners’ weekend beach retreat.









Ireland relied on clean-lined, classic furnishings in the living room (these pages), which encompasses two seating areas. A custom brass-and-parchment coffee table (left) unites one grouping, which features delicate Art Nouveau chairs and Biedermeier chests (above), and carefully lit photographs (above and top) taken by the wife.



Stairs lead down from the living room to the family room (above), where a Minotti sectional faces a wall of shelves housing the TV and displaying ceramics made years ago by the owners' children. Ireland revamped the outdated kitchen (opposite, top) with sleek anigré cabinetry and marble countertops. The breakfast nook (opposite, bottom) boasts a table by A. Rudin and chairs and bar stools by Thos. Moser.



Ireland and his clients also took an editor's approach to the material palette. The four-and-a-half baths all feature vertical-grain, honey-hued oak cabinetry, White Fantasy marble countertops and white-stone mosaic tile from Architectural Ceramics on the floors and tub and shower surrounds. The same marble also tops the anigré kitchen cabinets and clads the living room fireplace.

With new architectural elements in place, Ireland tackled the décor. Influenced by the wife's penchant for purple, he introduced soft lavender, gray and cream, creating an understated backdrop for elegant yet comfortable furnishings. Twin Diamond Studios faux-finished the living and dining room walls: cream in the living room with a touch of mica to give it a little sparkle, and lavender glaze in the dining room to complement a large-scale, abstract canvas on one wall. Like the rest of the house, the dining room windows are dressed with both wood shutters and Roman shades.

Though his clients were ready to replace much of their furniture, Ireland found ways to incorporate a number of old favorites. In the living room, he took cues from matching Biedermeier chests already belonging to the owners that, he says, "exemplified their style." At one end of the room, a Holly Hunt sofa faces a silk-velvet sofa and matching kidskin chairs by Josef Frank. At the other end, another Holly Hunt sofa pulls up to a custom coffee table with a sofa and chairs from The Bright Group in an abstract stripe. "We took things that were classic and put an updated spin on them," Ireland explains. "We went contemporary but in a subtle way."



Accent pieces from the online antiques resource 1stdibs enhance the classically refined feel. These include Biedermeier occasional tables, Art Nouveau wood-framed chairs, graceful floor and table lamps and an Edwardian-era, glass-fronted cabinet beside the fireplace. A carpet by Stark was customized to fit the irregular space.

Ireland's understated design allows the owners' artwork—including a wealth of family and travel photography by the wife—to take center stage. The designer uniformly framed and hung pieces in galleries throughout the house.

Despite its formality, the home comfortably welcomes frequent visits from family members, including grandchildren. The guest bedrooms and renovated basement feature built-in daybeds. The sunken family room is all about comfort, with a Minotti sectional for TV viewing and a shag rug from Georgetown Carpet.

The owners are happy with the results of their makeover, which perfectly fits their changing needs as well as their idyllic, time-honored neighborhood. ■

SOURCES OF NOTE

Paint: benjaminmoore.com. Dining Room Shades: hollyhunt.com, stroheim.com through fabricut.com. Pillows: pindler.com. Living Room Window Treatments: romo.com. Trim on Living Room Chairs: samuelandsons.com through hines company.com. For a complete list of sources, see homeanddesign.com.



Ireland custom-designed the eucalyptus bedstead, nightstands and dresser to fit a bay window in the master bedroom (opposite and top); the walnut bench is also Ireland's design. The master bath (above) now encompasses a soaking tub, a walk-in shower, marble counters and oak vanities with Nanz hardware. An adjoining dressing room contains a built-in vanity.

