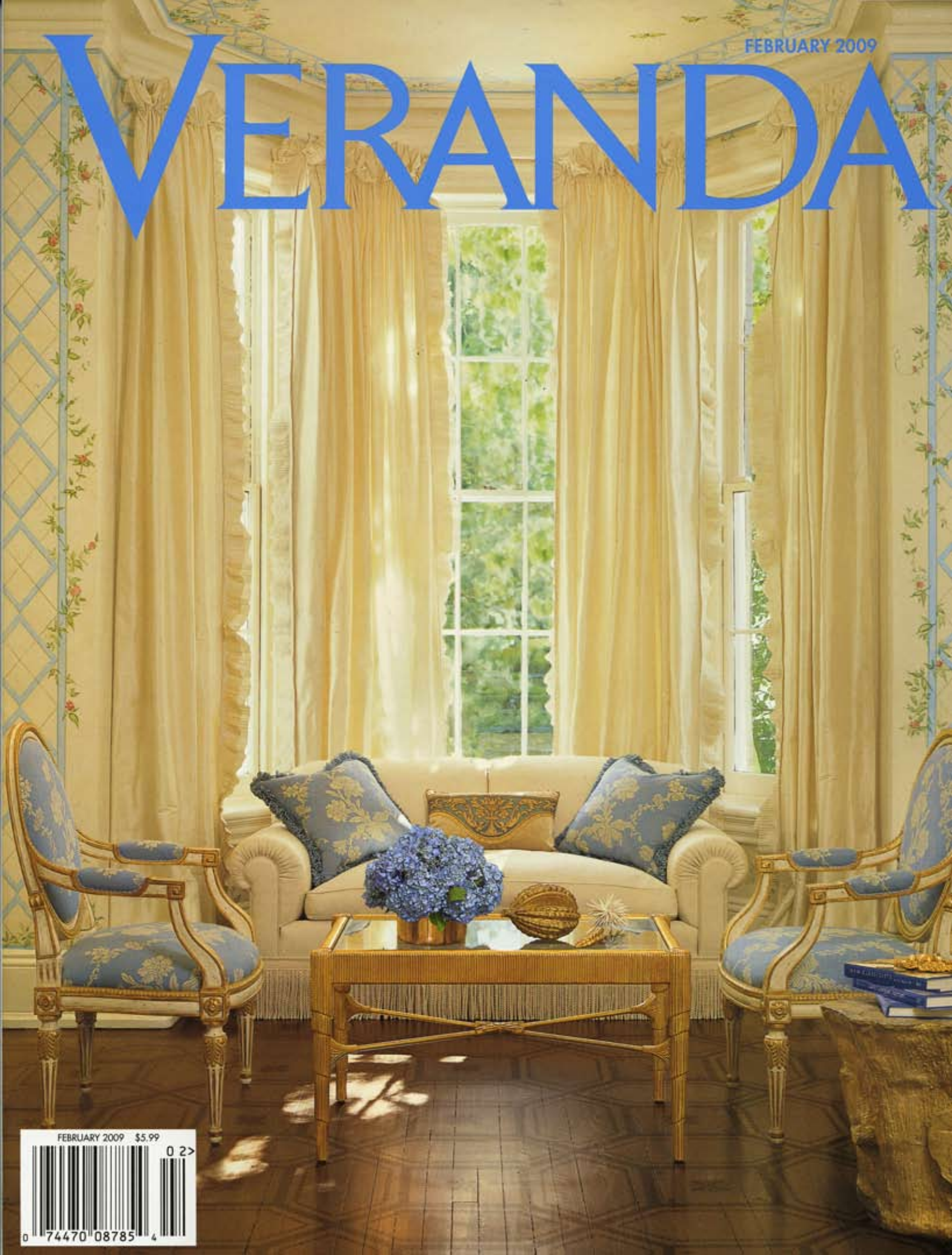


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ALL ORDER

A HOME IN GEORGETOWN

INTERIOR DESIGN BY MARY DOUGLAS DRYSDALE PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON BLUNT
PRODUCED AND WRITTEN BY CHARLES L. ROSS





OPENING PAGES AND COVER: Floral-motif murals by Matthew Willey complement high ceilings in a home in Georgetown. Sphinx, 19th c., on custom Louis XVI-style demilune. Custom loveseat in fabric by Nancy Corzine; Rogers Custom Trims fringe. Dennis & Leen chairs flank Nancy Corzine table and two pillows, all in fabric by Brunswick & Fils. Chair by Dennis & Leen in Bergamo stripe. Custom trunk table. Curtains in Scalamandré silk. Adam-style mantel for art: English 18th-c. mirror. Sconces, English chest and chairs, and French clock, all 19th c.

LEFT AND RIGHT: Custom chairs and Dennis & Leen chairs in Bergamo fabric. Sheraton-style table. Seashells on custom chest. Adam-style 19th-c. mirror. Paroche Designs chandelier. Settee by Niemann Works in fabric by Nancy Corzine.







LOOK UP. IF A LIVING ROOM IS NOT VERY WIDE BUT RISES TO AN EXCEPTIONAL HEIGHT,

a designer might conjure the illusion of more width by decorating the walls with horizontal trompe l'oeil or by painting the ceiling a dark color to visually lower it.

Not Mary Douglas Drysdale. The Washington, D.C., designer emphasized the height.

"It was essential to bring the eye up," she says of the elegant, painted-brick home she decorated in Georgetown. "The best feature of this Victorian rowhouse is its very tall ceilings. The challenge was figuring out how to create the impression of luxury of space while having actual dimensions that lean toward narrow."

First, Drysdale anchored the room with a deep-brown floor that was hand-stenciled in a subdued, hexagonal key pattern. From that solid base, the walls could soar. Then, working with artist Matthew Willey, she commissioned hand-painted murals of flower-festooned trellises and vines to climb the walls. "The elaborate trelliswork, which carries over into the dining room, is delicate and feminine, but the artist gave structure to the floral motif by painting vertical panels." The trellis design continues above the crown molding, hinting at three dimensions and further enhancing the height of the room.

"The wall treatment completes the room," Drysdale continues, "so there is no need for a huge amount of furniture, which the narrow space could not bear. But with so much detail, there is a sense of richness. The contrast between the walls' pastel imagery and the floor's depth of color makes the space even more striking."

The home also has a hallway that doubles as a foyer and leads to the back of the house as well as the upstairs. It, too, is narrow, allowing for only minimal furnishings. To avoid a tunnel effect, Drysdale employed hand-painted walls once more. "It is a lovely limestone pattern, beautifully detailed, and again it illustrates that you can fill a space by treating the walls. Both ideas—the floral panels and limestone walls—are European in inspiration."

The master bedroom and its adjacent sitting room allude to the home's Victorian legacy. The latter is dominated by a colorful, sumptuous Clarence House fabric that drapes a bay of three windows. Glazed walls, plump upholstery and pattern-on-pattern evoke an updated Victorian retreat. Stylistic eclecticism, another period trait, is evident in the mix of a ceramic vessel from Germany and Robert Allen candlesticks on a George III oval desk.

"This room feels layered and balanced. It's all about the twist of a tassel, the turn of a table, the tufting of a chair. Rounded forms, led by the oval desk, sink into the bay and soften angular edges. I try to create useful beauty."

The sitting room's palette of lush red and brown is unusual, as is its juxtaposition with the adjoining bedroom's hue. "We used a dazzling color: a vivid French green. You have to be self-confident to use these rich, rich colors, and the homeowner is very self-confident. She has traveled extensively and loves the expression of elegance and charm."

The room's focal point is a Louis XV-style bombé chest with a giltwood mirror. Drysdale believes this vignette reflects the lady of the house: "polished, dressy, definite and bold."

So, too, is the entire home. □