



The living room was designed by Kelley Proxmire.



The front facade, by David Benton of Rill Architects.



The front entry, by Camille Saum.

SHOW HOUSE DAZZLE

The 2014 DC Design House infused a time-worn home with style and inspiration

BY JULIE SANDERS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGIE SECKINGER

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The 2014 DC Design House transformed a classic but dated 8,000-square-foot, stone center-hall Colonial located in Northwest DC's picturesque Forest Hills neighborhood. The house and grounds showcased the work of 27 area design teams whose innovative ideas and creative execution imparted 21st-century style to the traditional 1929 home. Sponsored in part by *Home & Design* and C2 Paint, the show house was open for tours from April 13 through May 11; in case you missed it, we highlight each room below. Now in its seventh year, the DC Design House benefits Children's National Health System.

A GLAMOROUS TOUCH

The era of the house dictated the living room's style for Kelley Proxmire, who blended traditional architectural elements with a glamorous, sophisticated vibe. "The metallic Bergamo pillows were a springboard for the room," she says. The walls were sprayed with a high-gloss gray lacquer and existing built-ins were painted white. Proxmire grouped a Pearson sofa and a David Iatesta coffee table below a colorful painting by March Avery from the Marin-Price Galleries. *Design: Kelley Proxmire, Kelley Interior Design.*

FIRST IMPRESSION

Architect David Benton and his team offset the home's traditional front façade by "brightening it up and making it friendlier and more approachable," he says. The French entry doors were painted vibrant Pond Shimmer blue, and new shutters now match the existing ones. A glass door in the vestibule admits light into the foyer while accessories, including planters and a bench, create an arrival space outside. *Design: David A. Benton, AIA, LEED Green Associate, Rill Architects, PC.*

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The dining room, by Marika Meyer.



The butler's pantry, by Nadia Subaran.



The kitchen, by Nadia Subaran.



The sitting area, by Victoria Sanchez.



The library, by Nestor Santa-Cruz.



MAKING AN ENTRANCE

According to Camille Saum, the foyer and stairwell were in need of “a bit of drama and timeless design.” She and her associate, Whitney Hansen, achieved this goal by extending glitzy, beaded wallpaper by Romo up to the third floor, and painting ceilings in high-gloss Viburnum from Barry Dixon’s The Naturals collection for C2 Paint. Plywood floors were painted in a large-scale checkerboard pattern and art from Merritt Gallery added bursts of color on every level. *Design: Camille Saum, ASID, [Camille Saum Interior Design, LLC](#).*

A CHIC SOIREE

Marika Meyer created a formal yet family-oriented dining room. “I was looking for a balance of form and function,” she says. “I wanted it to be approachable.” Chair rails were replaced with wainscoting, while subtly patterned wallpaper complemented touches of blue-and-white Chinoiserie. A vintage 22-karat gold-leaf chandelier hung above a distressed walnut table that was elegant yet durable, and vintage dining chairs upholstered in indoor-outdoor fabric kept the space kid-friendly. *Design: Marika Meyer, [Marika Meyer Interiors, LLC](#).*

LIFE OF THE PARTY

The butler’s pantry/wine room “was dedicated to entertaining,” says Nadia Subaran. An extension of the kitchen, it also connected to the dining room—thus requiring a more refined vibe. Subaran paired cabinetry from Wood-Mode in Vintage Navy with Carrara marble counters and floors. A distressed wood table, ready to serve as a buffet or prep area, occupied center stage. Thermador wine columns, glass-fronted cabinets displaying dishes and stemware and a Robert Abbey chandelier completed the space. *Design: Nadia N. Subaran, [Aidan Design](#).*

NEW TRADITIONAL

The scope of the work was the biggest challenge Nadia Subaran faced during her kitchen redesign—which included the removal of a large masonry wall that separated it from the sitting room. She paired Wood-Mode burnished-cherry cabinetry with soapstone countertops and a seamless, marble-like porcelain-tile backsplash. Porcelain tile floors resembled fieldstone. “I call it a ‘new traditional’ look,” says Subaran. “It has texture and warmth with minimal detailing.” *Design: Nadia N. Subaran, [Aidan Design](#).*

FAMILY AFFAIR

Victoria Sanchez created a comfortable, welcoming seating area in the relatively narrow space abutting the kitchen, ensuring that it would complement both the kitchen and adjoining butler’s pantry. She took her cues from the palette of wood and cream in the kitchen, installing a sectional sofa that emphasized the L-shaped walls of windows to “wrap around the space” and bring the outdoors in. Stylish furnishings and accessories were sourced from the designer’s Old Town Alexandria boutique, Victoria at Home. *Design: [Victoria Sanchez, ASID, IFDA, \[Victoria at Home, LLC\]\(#\).](#)*

A MODERN TWIST

In his re-do of the library, Nestor Santa-Cruz was inspired by its 1970s paneling, which reminded him of rooms designed by Jean-Michel Frank in the late ‘20s. With their look of cerused oak, the panels provided a backdrop for a space that blended classical and modern Scandinavian elements. “Modern design is not about a particular period,” Santa-Cruz says. Beneath an abstract painting from Susan Calloway Fine Arts, a Hans Wegner sofa shared space with antique Louis XVI chairs. *Design: Nestor Santa-Cruz, IIDA, [Nestor Santa-Cruz Decoration](#).*

MARTINI, ANYONE?

Coordinating with the adjoining library, Tracy Morris conceived the diminutive library bar as “a throwback to an era” when enjoying cocktails in a private niche was in vogue. She left the room’s existing bar with its retro stainless-steel sink and countertop intact, but installed a limestone backsplash wall in a faux wood grain. An unlacquered brass Waterworks faucet, art from Susan Calloway Fine Arts and a mirror from Donghia completed the picture. *Design: Tracy Morris, [Tracy Morris Design, LLC](#).*

LOUNGE AROUND

“Tone on Tone” was the theme for the family room, according to Jeff Akseizer and Jamie Brown. The designers achieved a soothing vibe using textured wallpaper from Thibaut that evoked bleached wood and subtle window treatments by Romo. A custom sofa and a coffee table by Berman Rosetti faced a media wall that included shelving, a TV and a linear gas fireplace. The room opens out to the pool area through French doors that admit plenty of light. *Design: Jeff Akseizer & Jamie Brown, [Akseizer Design Group, LLC](#).*

MADE IN THE SHADE



The library bar, by Tracy Morris.



The family room, by Jeff Akseizer and Jamie Brown of Akseizer Design Group.



The pool area, by Naseera Moore-Lawrence and Nicolette Powell of Country Casual.



The powder room, by Joanne Fitzgerald.



The backyard, by Stephen Wlodarczyk of Botanical Decorators.

Tapped to dress up the pool area, the designers decided to make it “an extension of the family room,” Naseera Moore-Lawrence says. “We chose teak furniture because it is really high quality.” They employed seating arrangements that included the Havana club chairs, sofa and ottoman; Fiori coffee tables; and the Seneca dining table. Chaises and director’s chairs flanked the pool, while vibrant cushions and umbrellas in durable Sunbrella fabrics added the finishing touch. *Design: Naseera Moore-Lawrence & Nicolette Powell, [Country Casual](#).*

FRESH STYLE

When Joanne Fitzgerald embarked on a redesign of the dull, cramped powder room, she wanted it to be “the antithesis of what it was.” To inject a sense of drama without overpowering the space, she balanced an accent wall covered in a rich, shimmery peacock-themed wallpaper by Cole & Sons against a backsplash wall of iridescent stone, glass and metal tiles. A narrow Kohler Saile commode fit the space while a floating acrylic sink top kept the room light. *Design: Joanne Fitzgerald, [Gatéga Interior Design, LLC](#).*

BACK TO NATURE

To unify the jumbled backyard, Stephen Wlodarczyk designed a custom pergola that extends above the backyard patio. Steps curved up to the grassy lawn, while a gravel sitting area was anchored by glazed urns that echo the colors of the changing room inside. “To integrate the house with the yard,” Wlodarczyk coordinated with Christopher Cahill to build a centrally located door to the nearby pool dressing room. *Design: Stephen Wlodarczyk, [Botanical Decorators](#).*

STATELY APPROACH

When designing the entry garden, Gina Benincasa took her cues from the style of the house. “Our vision was to create a stately, traditional threshold that would match the home’s stature,” she says. Stonework and mature, manicured plantings created a classic feel while adding color and interest. A number of the existing plants were retained and revitalized—in particular, a decades-old heirloom azalea of sentimental value to the owners. *Design: Blake Dunlevy & Gina Benincasa, [D & A Dunlevy Landscapers, Inc.](#)*

ART DECO SPLASH

A reclaimed shower door with a South Beach, Miami, motif provided the inspiration for the Art Deco loggia and pool bath/dressing room. Christopher Cahill and Kerry Ann Rodriguez framed and back-lit the door and hung it in the dressing room, borrowing its vibrant colors for the loggia. “We wanted it to feel retro,” Cahill explains. Hand-cut vinyl floor tiles arranged in a Deco pattern and fish tile from Italo Ceramica in the adjoining bath (inset) reinforced the look. *Design: Christopher Cahill & Kerry Ann Rodriguez, [Cahill Design Build](#).*

CHILD'S PLAY

Intent on creating “a fun playroom for kids to engage without technology,” Katherine Vernot-Jonas filled the space with options for indoor physical activity—including a climbing wall, climbing ropes and hanging rings. Built-ins lined one side of the room, with space for storage and display and a cushioned window seat. A bold palette of primary colors was intended to stimulate creativity, while brightly hued rugs and furniture ensured a playful atmosphere. *Design: Katherine Vernot-Jonas, [Katherine Vernot-Jonas Designs, LLC](#).*

A STEP FORWARD

The design team combined bold paint colors with a panel of lively Thibaut fabric in shades of plum, lilac and spring green to lure visitors into taking the back stairs. “We wanted to use Radiant Orchid—Pantone’s Color of the Year,” says Teri Lohmann of the textured, paintable wallpaper they chose from York Wallcoverings to camouflage cracks in the home’s original plaster walls. A shelf was added and an existing light fixture repurposed for the space. *Design: Teri Lohmann, Lynne Parmele & Beth Boggs, ASID, [C2 Paint & Design Centers](#).*

BATHING BEAUTY

Allie Mann created “a timeless, chic look” in the second-floor guest bath, where large-scale Calacatta marble tiles in a six-by-12-inch herringbone pattern covered the floor and custom, white-painted vanities were topped with marble. Mirrored cabinet fronts made the room feel larger; all fixtures were new except the tub, which was re-glazed in a crisp, white hue. An acoustic showerhead from Kohler and Fizz bubble sconces from Troy Lighting conveyed a modern sensibility. *Design: Allie Mann, [Case Design/Remodeling Inc.](#)*

PRETTY IN PINK

“The wallpaper was our inspiration,” says Susan Donelson of the delicate Thibaut floral pattern that covered the walls of the first guest room, located on the second floor. The designers chose streamlined furniture to “make it a little less girly.” They painted the radiator cover in a raspberry hue that picked up the color inside the closet. A moss-green rug from Jaipur and a spring-green graphic print on the custom headboard channeled a fresh, outdoor sensibility. *Design: Susan Donelson & Sharon Bubenhofer, [Cleveland Hall Design](#).*

RESTFUL RETREAT



The entry garden, by Gina Benincasa and Blake Dunlevy of D & A Dunlevy Landscapers, Inc.



The pool room, by Chris Cahill and Kerry Ann Rodriguez of Cahill Design Build.



The bath adjoining the pool/dressing room, by Chris Cahill and Kerry Ann Rodriguez of Cahill Design Build.



The playroom, by Katherine Vernot-Jonas.

Nancy Colbert reconfigured the master bedroom, where a wall had been moved between the bedroom and bath to allow more bath and closet space. The designer chose a gray palette in this tranquil retreat, covering a blank wall that was “in need of detail” with silk draperies that grounded the four-poster bed from Hickory Chair. A hand-stenciled night table from Century, a whimsical garden stool from Made Goods and bedding from Emissary imparted interest and warmth. *Design: Nancy M. Colbert, NCIDQ, ASID, CID, [Design Partners, LLC](#).*

A DAY AT THE SPA

To expand the master bath and bring in natural light, Cindy McClure first eliminated a wall between the small, existing bath and an unused dressing room, creating a large, airy space. She envisioned a restful, beach-themed bath in neutrals. A wall of textured tiles with a seashell motif from Mosaic Tile created a focal point between the freestanding soaking tub and open shower. Travertine floor and wall tiles reinforced the light, sensual feel. *Design: Cindy Grossmueller McClure, ASID, MCR, CKD, GCP, [Grossmueller’s Design Consultants, Inc.](#)*

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

“We took a fairly small space and made it efficient as well as pretty,” says Deborah Brookerd, who designed the master closets. With “a woman’s important wardrobe” in mind, she created a space with high capacity that didn’t feel crowded, selecting storage solutions including a double-decker jewelry drawer and a display cabinet for scarves and necklaces. The melamine built-ins had a textured, neutral finish that complemented the bedroom. Two reach-in closets accommodated wardrobe storage. *Designer: Deborah Brookerd, ASID, [Closet Factory](#).*

REST & RELAXATION

In the upstairs sitting room, the designers used the movement and reflective color of water to convey a sense of relaxation. “We wanted to create a calm space where people could relax and Zen out,” says Dennese Guadeloupe Rojas. Faux-painted walls by Christine Barnette evoked water and sand, while a ceiling relief panel added interest. A Michael-Cleary sofa and armchairs from Urban Essentials surrounded a glass coffee table from J. Lambeth. *Design: Dennese Guadeloupe Rojas, Interiors by Design, LLC, & Diane S. Taitt, ASID, Associate AIA, [DE Space Designs, LLC](#).*

RETRO LOOK

Cindy McClure and her design team improved the cramped second-floor guest bath by borrowing space from an adjacent closet. In the reconfigured room, McClure took inspiration from the home’s 1920s origins to create “a fun, retro look” that would reflect its era. Black marble and tile selections in the tub area and on the floor offset crisp white fixtures and polished chrome accents. Dark purple walls conveyed a bold yet feminine vibe. *Design: Cindy Grossmueller McClure, ASID, MCR, CKD, GCP, [Grossmueller’s Design Consultants, Inc.](#)*

THINK TANK

Chad Alan describes his vision for the third-floor office as “structure meets sculpture.” Dormers formed a slanted ceiling that the designer had to work around. He installed a row of bookshelves at the base of the dormer wall that decreased the floor space in the room but created more options for furniture placement. He designed a desk to fit conveniently into the room, while an “inside out bookcase,” also of his own design, imparted a whimsical note. *Design: Chad Alan, [Chad Alan Designs, LLC](#).*

BRIGHT SPOT

Anne Wenzel was constrained by the need to retain the existing fixtures and tile in the third-floor bath off the guest suite. “It all had to be original yet modernized and youthful,” she says. She covered the walls with a bold, eye-catching fabric called Dara by Manuel Canovas that de-emphasized the more antiquated aspects of the room. She embellished the bathroom closet with a low-key, complementary fabric by the same designer. *Design: Anne Wenzel, [Anne Walsh Design, LLC](#).*

HOME SWEET HOME

Tucked away on the third floor, the guest suite was inspired by Cheryl Lynn Doyle’s grandmother, remembered as “a great hostess who believed in every amenity and made guests feel at home.” The room included a bed with a valance from GP & J Baker and—separated visually by a decorative screen from Cote Jardin Antiques—a sitting area with a loveseat. Doyle combined antique and contemporary pieces to create an unstuffy, welcoming vibe. *Design: Cheryl Lynn Doyle, [Doyle Interiors, LLC](#).*

PLAYFUL PERCH

The third-floor guest bedroom was inspired by Victoria Larson’s bold, vibrant Peacock fabric, which Melissa McClay chose for the custom headboard and bed skirt. She used the same palette of red, brown, spring green and blue throughout the room, applying a band of red on the walls that highlighted the room’s quirky architectural lines. “It’s a fresh, happy, chic space,” McClay says. “It’s intended to be fun for a sophisticated teenager or an adult.” *Design: Melissa McClay, Allied ASID, [Melissa McClay Interiors](#).*

STREAMLINED STYLE

The third-floor guest bath was designed through iBBY, a remodeling company owned by Case Design and launched by TJ Monahan that offers online bath



The back stairs, by Teri Lohmann, Lynn Parmele and Beth Boggs of C2 Paint & Design Centers.



The second-floor guest bath, by Allie Mann of Case Design/Remodeling Inc.



The first guest room, by Susan Donelson and Sharon Bubenhofer of Cleveland Hall Design.



The master bedroom, by Nancy Colbert of Design Partners, LLC.

remodeling tools. In this space, Monahan selected chocolate porcelain tiles, a white ceramic-tile accent wall and a visually unifying, dark-stained floating vanity. "It's a modern space where everything is high quality," says Monahan. *Design: TJ Monahan, LEED AP, iBBY.*



The master bathroom, by Cindy McClure of Grossmueller's Design Consultants, Inc.



The master closet, by Deborah Broockerd of Closet Factory.



The upstairs sitting room, by Dennese Guadeloupe Rojas of Interiors by Design; and Diane S. Taitt of DE Space Designs.



The second-floor guest bath, by Cindy McClure of Grossmueller's Design Consultants.



The third-floor office, by Chad Alan.



The third-floor bath, by Ann Wenzel of Anne Walsh Design.



The guest suite, by Cheryl Lynn Doyle.



The third-floor guest bedroom, by Melissa McClay.



The third-floor guest bath, by T.J. Monahan of iBBY.

