



LET IN THE LIGHT

By Jenny Seyfried
Photography by Steven B. Smith



The step-down family room has original horizontal boarded walls, painted white and wall to wall sea-grass carpeting which creates a beachy feel. A large chandelier from Niermann Weeks in Atlanta anchors the 14 foot ceilings. A collection of Chinese Export vases, various period antiques, and an late 19th century oil painting of a seascape finish the room.

Left: The front entry features a custom made lantern from Tennessee. The lanterns are utilized throughout the exterior of the home in varying sizes.

A knowledgeable, tasteful, and motivated couple of experts unafraid of a challenge approached the interior décor and renovation of their newest home with the skills and savvy of professionals, and it shows. Steve and Valerie Engel, the couple in question, are both professional real estate agents with Janet McAfee and

have a passion for antiques and an eye for great design. The couple's current residence is a remodeled farmhouse in Creve Coeur that showcases both their professional talents and personal style.

The original Dutch Colonial Revival farmhouse which was built in the 1850's and later added on to, sits atop a small hill surrounded by green grass and several manicured boxwood hedges, and only becomes visible after

rounding the corner of the tree lined drive. This is one of the reasons the homeowners fell in love with the property says Steve Engel. "We loved the house for the setting, the light, and the pool." The potential of the property may not have been obvious to everyone, but with Steve and Valerie's interests, experience, and contacts purchasing the home and beginning renovations was a no brainer.



With the original staircase from its days as a farmhouse and a James Loder painting hanging on the wall, the entryway to the home is extremely inviting.



The dining room perfectly blends contemporary tastes with antique collectables. The chairs carved to resemble bamboo and finished in a white wash play well against the antique sconces and dark wood oval dining table.



Above: With pale icy blue walls and chrome fixtures, the guest bathroom is refreshingly bright, accented with an antique mirror and open shelving filled with various antique possessions.

Left: A breakfast nook, placed along a bay window, adds charm to the updated kitchen with white wood cabinetry and granite countertops.



The living room balances the couple's 18th century antique furniture with a modern sofa and matching chairs. The robin's egg blue lamps and pale blue throw pillows add color to the room. Linen drapes puddle on the natural wide-planked northeastern pine floors.

Due to the home's age, the remodel was an organic experience. Every step along the way the couple uncovered something unexpected, but unlike most, they faced each discovery with the calm and creativity of pros. When installing a fireplace in the living room the couple was pleasantly surprised with the pair of original small round windows that had been previously covered by walls. However, other surprises weren't as well received. While uncovering four layers of old flooring, the Engel's discovered

concrete foundation in parts of the home where porches had been when the home was still a working farm. "The brick flooring came out of that," Steve explains, "We couldn't put anything on top of the concrete and still have level flooring, so we decided to use brick instead." What started as a last minute solution ended up being a genius point of visual interest throughout the house. The home is a well balanced mix of antique collectables and sophisticated modern pieces. Steve admits that the couple, "worried about the

home feeling like a museum," on account of the couple's impressive quantity of collected antiques, which is a shared hobby for the duo, and is greatly fostered by Robert Morrissey (Clark Graves Antiques). Beautifully melding the 18th century antiques with their 21st century lifestyle, the couple incorporated plenty of modern accents and tried to, "bring the antiques into a contemporary setting." What results from their efforts is an elegant fusion of the two distinct styles.

Nowhere in the home better highlights this aesthetic than the living room. Flanked by two sets of large windows, the room is flooded with natural light enhancing the warm gold tones of the natural northeastern pine floors which came from Vermont and are preserved with Tung Oil. Atop the wide-planked floors sit contemporary chairs and a sofa, upholstered in a gorgeous cream, accented with cool pale blue pillows and anchored with a sea grass area rug. When asked the details of these textiles, Steve laughs a bit,

saying, "they were taken care of by Frank Patton Interiors." The modern lines of the furniture, and simple linen drapes which beautifully frame the large windows, play wonderfully against the antiques scattered throughout the room, like the Queen Anne side table or the Boston highboy, both from the 18th century. Grounding the bright room, and adding visual interest, the antiques play against the modern lines and pale colors resulting with a subtlety elegant, and an ever so inviting space.

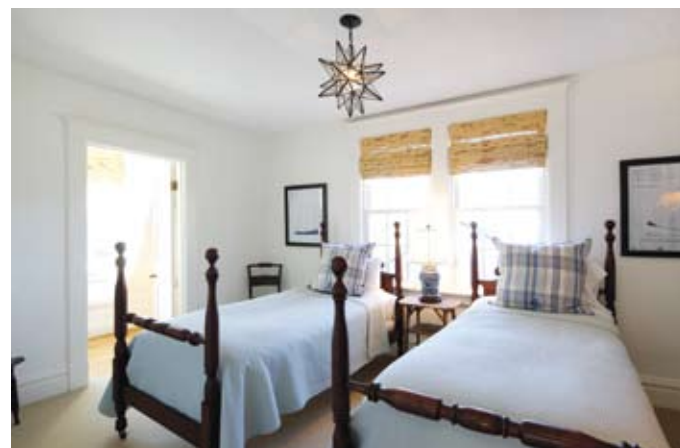
A similar allure is achieved in the dining room, it's simplicity abounds with complex style. An oval table surrounded by the visually intriguing solid wood frame chairs handcrafted to resemble

Upper Left: The brick landing, just off the kitchen leads to the family room as well as outside to the garden and pool areas. With large French doors and exposed brick floors, covered with an oriental area rug, the space is decorated with antique American flag prints and a pair of chairs.

Lower Left: Playful accents like the oversized red clock and personal collectables placed on the built in shelves create a fun and functional home office space.



Located on the first floor with French doors leading outside to a fern garden, the master bedroom is a luxurious escape. The four poster bed is flanked with antique side tables and matching Chinese export inspired lamps. With white-washed herringbone floors and pale blue walls, the room is bright, restful and airy.



bamboo and finished in a white wash; the dining room is straightforward and clean. The unexpected mixture of a classic dining table, with more modern chairs adds a whimsical quality to the room, counteracting the seriousness of the antiques. Also balancing the dark wood antiques, and the pair of stunning 19th century

Above Left: The first guest room features antique twin beds, a large window and pale blue coverlets.

Lower Right: A 19th century maple four poster bed done in the Federal style highlights the antique feel of the second guest bedroom.



glass sconces from Rhode Island, are two contemporary paintings by Mara Plotkin, an artist who the owners know little of, but whose paintings they had to have, Steve says.

Another painting which the couple had to have resides on the wall along the stairwell which retains a farm-like charm with its steps painted a glossy black. The large oil painting by James Loder is from Ziern's and Steve recalls how he and his wife, "walked by it for two years until we caved and bought it." Like the other one of kind pieces in the home, the painting creates depth and interest against the pale ivory walls.



Keeping the colors light was intentional on the part of the Engel's who used the same color throughout the entire home, except for the kitchen and the master bedroom, their walls were covered with the palest blue. The creamy monochromatic walls create an open, airy space that seems to absorb and transform the natural light which is in abundance throughout the home. Approached with skill, experience and unquestionably good taste, the balance of old and new is expertly achieved in every room in the Engel's renovated farmhouse. ❖

Above: The 45 foot lap pool is lined by boxwood hedges and weathered teak furniture and has great views of the home and gardens.

Right: The original outbuildings serve as a backdrop to the pool area.

