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COMFORT ZONE

A TRADITIONAL HOME IN MEDINA WITH HINTS OF FORMALITY DRESSES DOWN TO CREATE A COMFORTABLE, TRANSITIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ITS OWNERS AND THEIR FAMILY.

WRITTEN BY **TERRI SAPIENZA** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOHN GRANEN**

INTERIOR DESIGN Marianne Simon, Marianne Simon Design | **ARCHITECTURE** Jim Dearth, Ripple Design Studio
HOME BUILDER Steve Bender, Bender Custom Construction | **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE** Scot Eckley, Scot Eckley, Inc.
BEDROOMS 6 | **BATHROOMS** 7 | **SQUARE FEET** 7,300

When a West Coast couple needed a new home for their family of five, they looked to the opposite side of the country for design inspiration and built a shingle-style Cape Cod in the heart of Medina. “They are a young, vibrant couple with great style,” says designer Marianne Simon. “They wanted a home that was timeless and beautiful but also livable for their family.”

A mutual friend introduced the couple to architect Jim Dearth, who designed the multilevel house to reflect his clients’ request for something traditional yet approachable. “It’s an updated version of a classic design,” says Dearth. “This isn’t your grandparents’ New England home.”

The interior layout is a thoughtful balance of proper entertaining spaces and rooms that are functional for a household with three small children. “The initial experience is very formal and structured, but as you work your way deeper into the house, spaces open up for casual family living,” says Dearth, who worked on the design along with associate Kelly McShane.

A gracious study, dining area and stair gallery greet guests at the front of the house while the informal gathering spaces—the great room, kitchen, breakfast room, and outdoor terrace—are accessed through a pair of pocket doors down the hall. Dearth also added behind-the-scenes spaces, including a home office, craft room, mudroom, butler’s pantry, and a second staircase leading to the children’s bedrooms. The master suite is also upstairs, and a media room and game room await in the basement. “You could have a dozen adults for a formal dinner party or a dozen kids for a birthday party,” Dearth says. “The house functions well for both.”



Kravet’s tête-à-tête, which is upholstered in handsome Schumacher fabric, divides the long living room into separate conversation areas; tufted lounge chairs by Hickory Chair offer hearthside seating. A leather ottoman also by Hickory Chair serves as a coffee table. The lighting is by Visual Comfort.

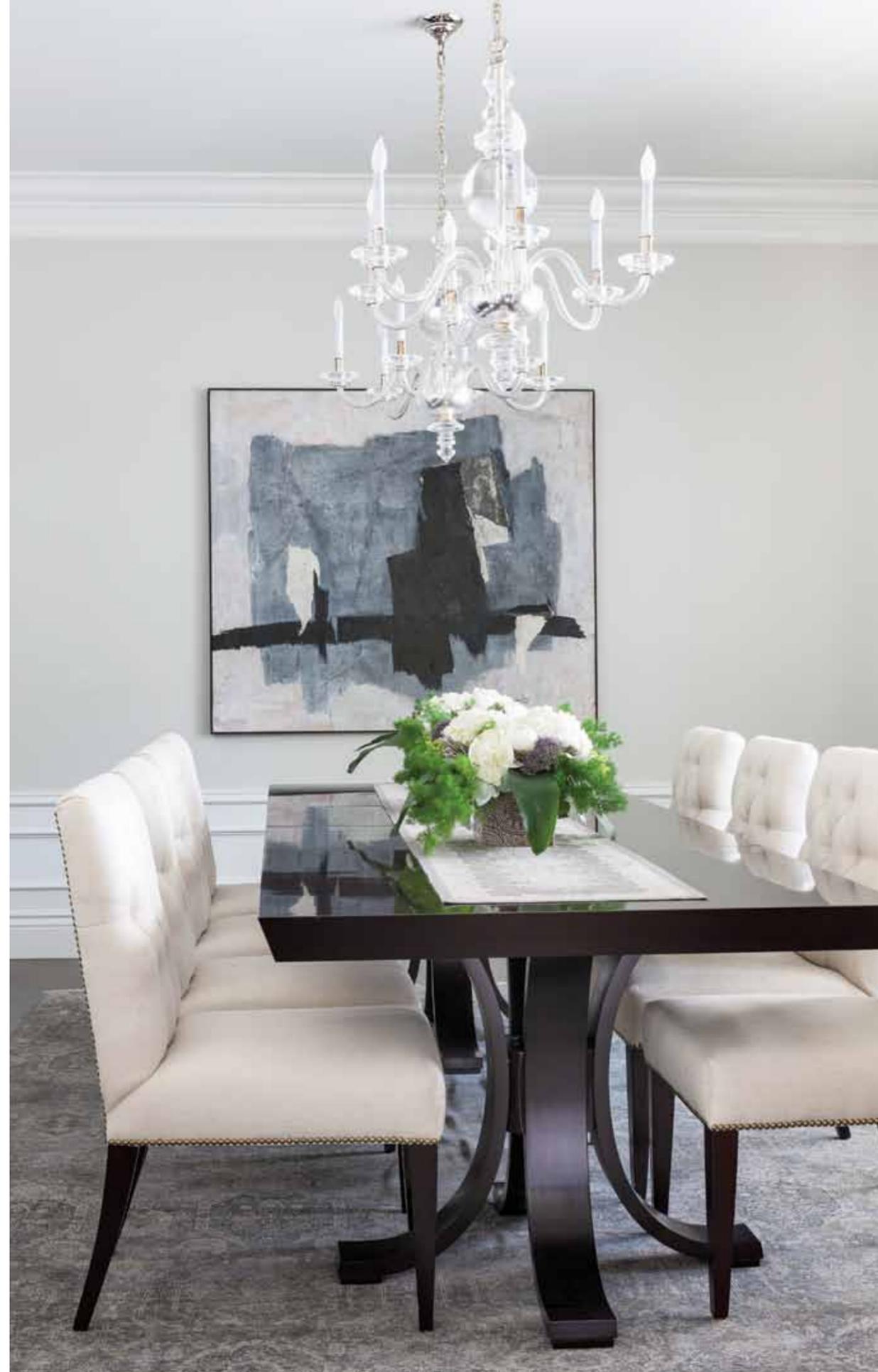


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At the wife's request, extensive millwork, painted a custom white, was added throughout, providing a crisp contrast to the wide-plank white-oak floors stained a rich espresso. The atypical proportions of the wainscoting give the classic detail a contemporary edge. The challenge, says Dearth, was "balancing both the casual and the elegant components of the house so it didn't push too far either way. Both sides ride the knife-edge because they are comfortable and beautiful. Marianne gets a lot of credit for that."

Simon worked with the neutral palette preferred by her clients—shades of greige, slate, charcoal, and blue equalize all the white—and mixed cherished furnishings from the owners' collection with new and custom pieces to offer the newly built house a more lived-in feel. The clients, avid art collectors, "love mixing modern art with antiques, which makes the spaces fresh and fitting for a young family," says Simon. "I wanted the interiors to reflect their style, which is East Coast classic—the wife's jewelry of choice is always pearls."

A trio of polished-nickel pendants by Visual Comfort hangs above a kitchen island topped with marble from Pental Granite & Marble; the perimeter countertops are soapstone from Meta Marble & Granite. Hickory Chair stools with antique brass nailhead trim provide extra seating. Appliances are from Arnold's Appliance.



An abstract painting by Paul Horiuchi is the focal point in the dining room, where two crystal chandeliers from Visual Comfort add drama overhead. The ebony stain on the table and chair legs contrasts with the pale shades of blue, gray and cream found in the space, including the floorcovering from Andonian Rugs.

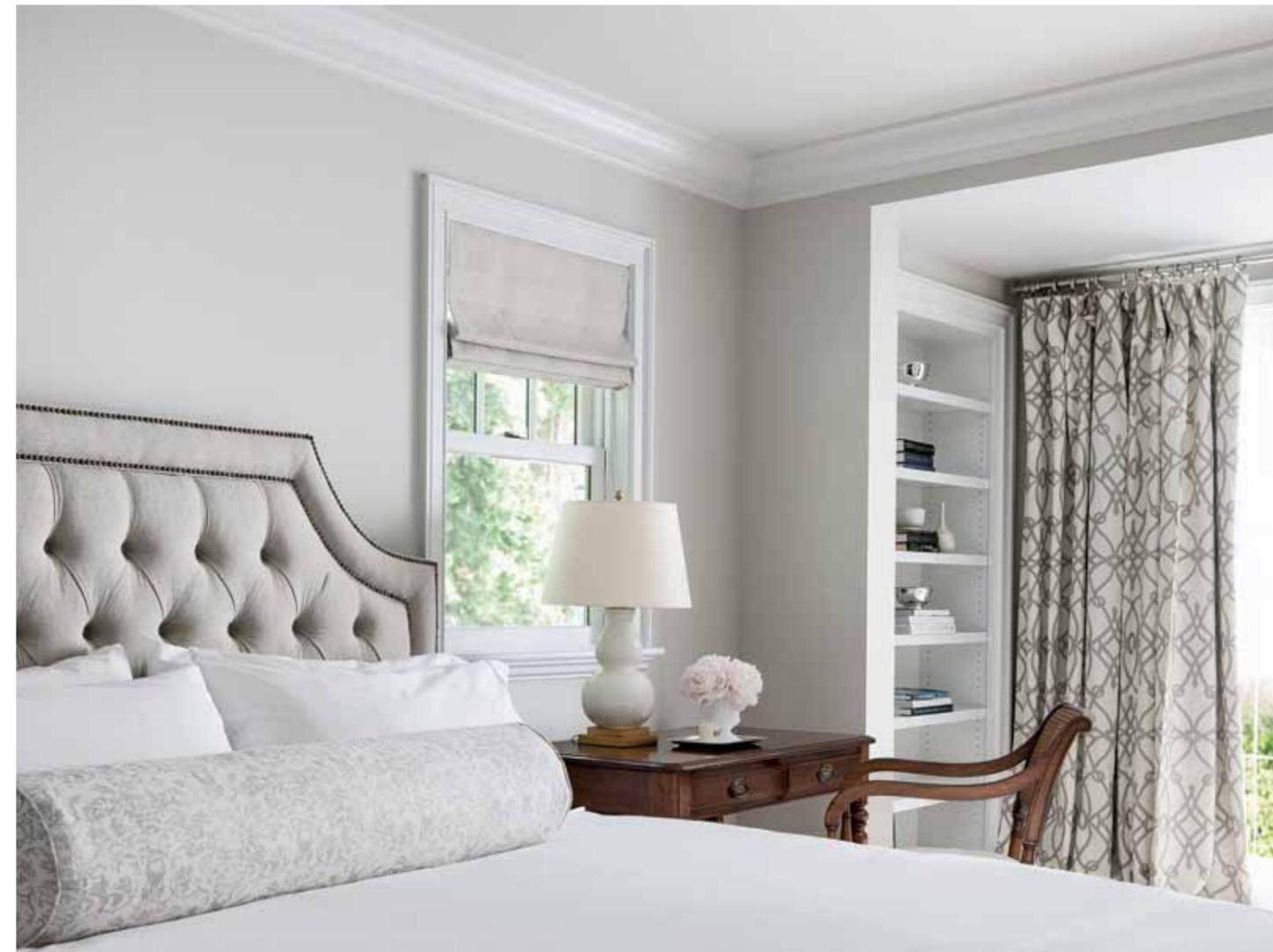
PHOTO: RYAN DEARTH.



The rear façade shows off the exterior's classic East Coast vibe. A covered terrace houses a teak dining table and chairs from Adams Furniture in High Point, North Carolina, and Kingsley-Bate head chairs. Custom bifolding Marvin doors from Goldfinch Brothers open to connect the indoors and outdoors.



Visual Comfort's gilded-iron light fixture acts as a piece of jewelry in the study against velvet draperies made using JAB Anstoetz fabric. The leather chair is by Lee Industries; the desk and credenza are by Hickory Chair. Brass lamps are also by Visual Comfort, and the shell sculptures are from Restoration Hardware.

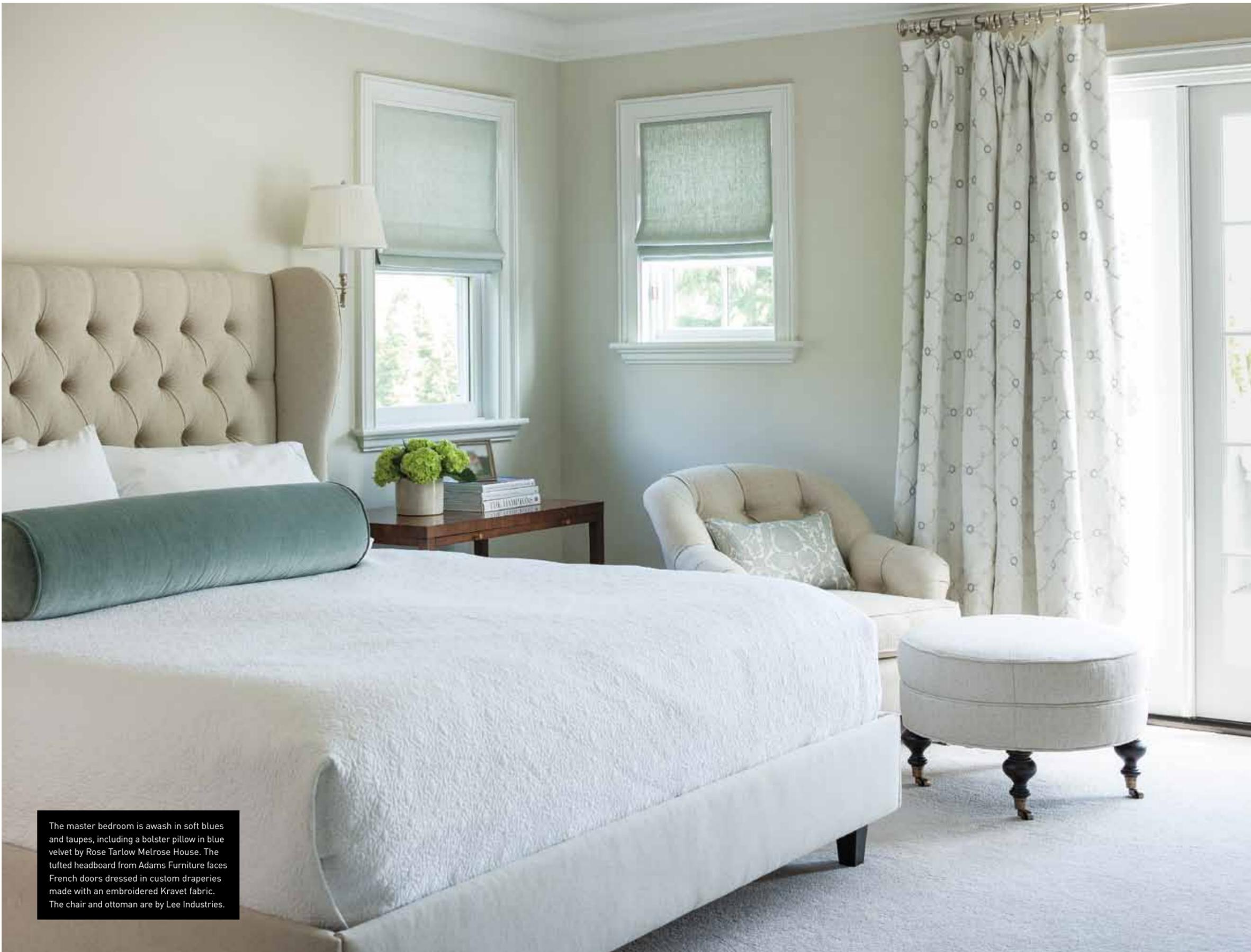


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In the study, the pairing of dark wood furniture and lush navy velvet draperies supplies instant warmth and sophistication. The graceful curves of an antique brass light fixture add softness and lead the eye up to the clerestory windows, which flood the room with natural light. That warmth continues in the great room, where Simon's use of patterns and textures, such as herringbone linen, mohair pillows and bamboo, lend interest to the quiet colors that again allow the architectural details to shine.

The intricate box-beam ceiling detail of the great room extends to the terrace, visually connecting the inside and outside living areas. "The integration of the indoor and outdoor spaces is one of the things that makes this house special," says builder Steve Bender, who teamed with colleague Kimberly Scott for the project. "The trim and millwork outside have the same level of quality and detailing found inside."

Custom draperies using Pindler fabric create visual interest in the guest suite. A duvet from Restoration Hardware and a custom bolster made with Weitzner fabric complement the linen headboard from Adams Furniture. An antique writing desk serves as a bedside table along with a chair from Ebanista.



The master bedroom is awash in soft blues and taupes, including a bolster pillow in blue velvet by Rose Tarlow Melrose House. The tufted headboard from Adams Furniture faces French doors dressed in custom draperies made with an embroidered Kravet fabric. The chair and ottoman are by Lee Industries.



A custom vanity by Warner's Cabinets sits on marble basket-weave flooring from Statements Tile in the guest bathroom; the polished-nickel sconces by Visual Comfort add sparkle, and an oversize custom mirror reflects the natural light. The designer wanted to choose pieces that would stand the test of time.

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The grounds, too, were designed to look beautiful year-round, thanks to landscape designer Scot Eckley. "There is always something to appreciate out there," he says, especially for the children. In addition to the sizable lawn in the backyard, there is a play cave made of stones, adventure trails and a jungle gym. "You always see evidence of kids running around and their toys dotted throughout the landscape."

Working on the project, and with the clients, was a dream, according to the entire team, and the proof is in the result: a welcoming family home rooted in history but brimming with new life. "When you walk in the house you feel calm and relaxed and immediately at ease," says Simon. "It's like a breath of fresh air." **L**