



GEORGIAN
ON MY MIND

How a remodeled Southern-style home in the city became a sweet retreat from the suburbs.

BY JENNIFER BLAISE KRAMER
PHOTOS BY KAREN MELVIN



CLOCKWISE, BEGINNING LEFT: The Southern-style sunroom is outfitted with a traditional blue "porch ceiling" in Benjamin Moore Jamestown Blue and Nuevo Castillo encaustic floor tiles from Villa Lagoon. • The kitchen's backsplash is done in Ann Sacks Medina terra cotta tiles and a Marrakech border in white and pale blue—colors that set the tone throughout the house. Around the kitchen table is an L-shaped banquette done in rough-and-ready, family-friendly faux leather. • In the dining room, Engler revived the couple's heirloom rug and added a 12-foot extension table for large family gatherings and a custom buffet.

Most of us look to escape the city to cool, calm cabins or getaway homes. But for one family, moving away from the western suburbs to a city block in southwest Minneapolis was exactly the exit plan they needed.

After looking at nearly a dozen homes, a couple and their two young sons fell for a Georgian-style home near Lake Harriet. They were instantly in love with the location—being able to ditch their cars for walks or bike rides to breakfast—as well as the period details throughout the home. However, the house had endured years of neglect and needed some major design therapy to open up its dark and narrow hallways and reorient the floor plan for modern family life. Enlisting what one showroom owner dubbed "The Dream Team," the homeowners hired Peterssen/Keller Architecture, Streeter & Associates, and Engler Studio to open up their dream home.

"The bones of this house were fantastic; it just needed a lot of light," says Bob Near,



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senior project manager for Streeter & Associates. "The house felt classic, but it had unique elements," adds Gabriel Keller, principal with Peterssen/Keller.

The team immediately opened up the main floor with an addition, allowing for a new family room, mudroom, and a big, bright eat-in kitchen, creating flow and access to the spacious backyard. Adding a detached garage on the vast lot meant they wouldn't have to sacrifice space—or light—in the kitchen. "I'm not a big fan of upper

kitchen cabinets," Keller adds, who prefers scrapping them for more windows to enhance the quality of light. For storage they use clever pot and plate peg-drawers to keep everything tucked below the countertops.

Using a mix of modern and historic materials, such as icebox cabinet latches, a solid walnut island, and zinc countertops in the bar area, the home garnered a timeless look and feel. The team gave a nod to traditional details by repositioning original light fixtures

LEFT: The team (from left): Carl Olson, associate with Peterssen Keller Architecture; Linda Engler; Gabriel Keller; Bob Near; Lars Peterssen; and Emily Thull, design associate with Engler Studio Interior Design. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** In the living room Engler softened formal silhouettes with casual gray tones and fabrics. • The grand staircase gained a new window seat flanked by original sconces from the dining room. • In the master bedroom, Engler used Benjamin Moore Sea Pearl for a "quiet blue" and floral unlined Ralph Lauren drapes, which allow the morning sun to filter in. • The master bath boasts period details, such as a clawfoot tub and a medicine cabinet from Restoration Hardware.

and leaded glass doors and maintaining rich dark floors, while modernizing the rest of the house with larger casings and lighter woodwork.

"We left everything you touch with your feet or hands dark and painted the rest white," Keller says. "Another goal was to bring in the subtle curves from the front of the house as a theme without overdoing it," Keller says. "Nothing is contrived; this is not a gimmicky house," adds Linda Engler, ASID designer and owner of Engler Studio.

In keeping with the homeowners' motto of "stealth nice," nothing could be too grand, pretentious, or flashy. Working with a palette of gray, white, and blue with hints of red and tumeric, Engler used Benjamin Moore Classic Gray for the walls and added deeper shades of the tone in casual fabrics to juxtapose formal furniture frames—"kind of like wearing high heels with jeans," she says.

Like a true Georgian, the home boasts several formal spaces, but Engler helped give them a more relaxed feel. The master bedroom is floral and romantic for "her" with plenty of functional built-ins for "him." In the dining room, Engler kept things from getting too serious and stuffy by adding a series of egg prints and splashes of pink to the stately 12-foot table, long drapery, and restored heirloom rug. For the Southern-style sunroom, they found a vintage bench and comfy reading chairs with windows all around to watch the world, or at the least this slice of the city, go by.

"It's the best of Minneapolis living," Engler says. "You can walk to coffee shops and still have a big yard and beautiful house." ☪