



modern drama

BEHIND THE FAÇADE OF THIS UNSUSPECTING COTTAGE IN MIDTOWN, ARCHITECT JEFF JONES CREATES A FANTASY IN GLASS AND METAL THAT INDULGES HIS MODERNIST DREAM AND BRINGS A FORMER APARTMENT COMPLEX BACK INTO THE CHARACTER OF HIS NEIGHBORHOOD.

STORY BY ELIZABETH REH PHOTOGRAPHY BY MALI AZIMA PRODUCED BY GILL AUTREY

“THIS HOUSE IS ABOUT ‘PAINTING’ WITH IDEAS.”



bedroom, but it's always a logical progression. In this house, the foyer connects to the living room on one side and the dining room on the other, so that sense of formality is stripped away. It has another sense of transparency in that way, too."

The transparency is more than ideological. It becomes literal in a glassed-in catwalk on the second floor that—when moving from one side of the house to another—allows a clear view of the pool on one side and a rooftop garden (atop the front entry) on the other.

Beyond the fact that there was such great chemistry among the architect, the designer and the homeowners, Summerour takes particular pride in the fact that this is not a "typical" Atlanta project. "Here in Atlanta, I've been told that I do a lot of French Country. In Sea Island, I'm told that I do Mediterranean, and in Chicago, it's shingle-style architecture. But that's entirely untrue; we work all over the United States and have a great variety of styles. This is an

example of the breadth of work we do every day. This modernist-style structure has simply allowed us to design out of the local context."

Westbrook agrees—and is equally pleased. "It's something we don't get to do that often in Atlanta. To be able to work on a house that, architecturally, has such nice, pure lines was wonderful for us."

DESIGN DETAILS

INTERIOR DESIGN

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ARCHITECTURE

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ASK JEFF JONES WHAT DRIVES HIM TO RENOVATE HOME AFTER HOME, and he just smiles and chalks it up to "the insane pain." Then he corrects himself: "It's just the creative part of me." The architect, artist and former antiques-shop owner is also an incredible visionary, as evidenced by the modernist home he carved out of the front half of a 1950's apartment building—while creating a façade in keeping with the traditional character of the Midtown neighborhood.

"The previous structure was a rectangular concrete block in battleship gray with a flat roof that looked like it was just dropped on to the property," he says. And he should know—he and his partner, Mike Boykin, actually lived in the house next door (which, coincidentally won an urban design award for "best fit" in the neighborhood) when the building went on the market. Jones, in fact, had built the shingle-style house from the ground up. Although initially the pair looked into buying as a way of

A traditional façade betrays a thoroughly modern interior in architect Jeff Jones' Midtown home, formerly the front half of a 1950's apartment building. He and his partner, Mike Boykin, had lived in a loft downtown for two years during construction, and they wanted to find a way to replicate the open, contemporary space in their new home—but without simply dropping a modern project in the area. ■ At night, the interior section of the house comes to life. The foyer is the connector between living and dining areas, work and sleeping spaces. On the staircase, railings made from the antique quarter-sawn French oak lead down to 2-by-2-foot, 3/4-inch-thick Portuguese limestone flooring. Limestone, Traditions In Tile, (404) 281-3424. Antique oak, Bo Childs of Wyatt Childs, (404) 281-3424.



controlling what happened to the property next door, Jones soon caught the urge to renovate (it tends to hit the architect every two years or so) and began planning, using the original footprint of the eight-unit building.

Working within this footprint proved difficult, as the square footage kept coming in too high, forcing Jones to explore other possibilities. And the solution came to him—at two in the morning—when he decided to scoop out the entire middle section of the plan and create an interior courtyard (where the building's staircase used to be), giving him the necessary square footage to continue and creating the drama necessary for a contemporary design.

It's Jones' attention to architectural detail that makes this house special. "A traditional facade in Midtown dictates a grand Southern front porch," says Jones. The



columns, railings and pickets of the L-shaped, wrap-around porch are all exact replicas of the work of mid-20th-century New Orleans architect A. Haynes Town, and are carved at an angle so that rainwater flows away from the house. The front door is a refurbished 200-year-old French oak door; restoration involved removing, etching and tempering the glass. A blue doorbell hints that what's modern is still to come.

The door opens into the courtyard and onto a bar-grating bridge, offering views into the entire house through 10-foot glass panels on each level. "You come through the front door and it's like someone just made a slice with a butter knife, and the whole perspective changes," says Jones. "The exterior facades were designed around and built upon the original footprint of the old building. New spaces were created within the old building's footprint by using new structural systems, footers and such."

Jones (background) and Boykin are greeted by their two Jack Russell terriers, Dot and Spark, and their rescued Cockapoo, Chauncey, on the entry bridge leading from the traditional front door to the contemporary entry foyer. ■ In the living room, antique pieces and flea-market finds complement a mix of contemporary furnishings and unique works of art, such as a framed paint-blotting pad from Mexican artist Muñoz Ocasta and Helen Durant's post-9/11 piece, "Hope." The 10-foot glass panels slide open to the bridge and courtyard and are screened to protect from the elements. Antique quarter-sawn French woods from Bo Childs grace the floors. Fans, Y Lighting, yighting.com.