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# VERANDA



# NOSTALGIA

## A CHILDHOOD UPDATED

INTERIOR DESIGN BY BETH BOSWELL ERVIN  
ARCHITECTURAL RENOVATION BY JACK DAVIS  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY LOUISE POER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID SCHILLING  
TEXT BY LINDA E. CLOPTON



OPPOSITE: For designer Beth Ervin, the neighborhood of her 1937 Colonial Revival home evokes childhood memories. ABOVE: Inside, antiques blend and comfort reigns. Napoleon III armchairs and ottoman, all from a Paris hotel, are upholstered in muslin with Aubusson pillows. Colefax & Fowler silk on antique bench pairs with 18th-c. fruitwood desk. Jane Shelton chintz curtains are banded in Travers plaid with Scalamandr  silk trim. Topiaries flank pastoral painting by Charles Mann. Farrow & Ball stria wallpaper. Floorcovering from Carpets of Distinction. FOLLOWING PAGES: Same Jane Shelton chintz brightens Louis XVI-style antique walnut armchairs. Creamware collection and 19th-c. gilt wood starburst mirror are arrayed above Travis sofa in Fonhill linen velvet. Pillows wear Brunshwig & Fils animal print and Travers silk. In the corner, 18th-c. Dutch pine cabinet featuring bowed glass hangs above table dressed in Bergamo silk. Both antique tole tray table and 18th-c. clock are Swedish.



ABOVE: In the family room, Chinese export blue and white porcelain tops pine shelf carved by Brian Young. Colefax & Fowler slipcovers and Bennison linen pillow enhance coziness. French provincial armchairs in Colefax & Fowler plaid face Pierre Deux coffee table. English lithograph of King Charles Spaniel by Gill Evans and contemporary oil, *Night Crabbing*, by Susie Pryor, grace Brunswick & Fils wallpaper. Stark carpet. OPPOSITE: Custom Portuguese needlepoint rug from Rugs by Robinson unifies dining room. Rose Cumming silk curtains. Régence-style carved chairs, c. 1880, wear Fonthill linen velvet with Scalamandré trim. French 18th-c. mirror overlooks antique oak demilune table. Niemann Weeks chandelier hovers above 19th-c. French burl walnut table.

**D**esigner Beth Ervin savors memories of childhood, especially of the neighborhood where she and her playmates shared carefree times. So when she and her husband, Jeff, decided they wanted a larger home for their growing family, she looked for a hospitable house in a neighborhood with similar charm.

She found the latter in Atlanta's Peachtree Battle area, a mellow oasis sheltered by large trees with 1940s homes facing quiet streets with sidewalks. Ervin felt a wave of nostalgia. She knew that small children could play outdoors here—ride bikes, run through lawn sprinklers, laugh

and shout to each other in a safe, friendly environment. She fell in love with the neighborhood.

She was not, however, ready to love the house. It needed work. But Ervin has never shirked a challenge. "You have to get the bones right first," she says. "Don't do shortcuts, because you're going to end up regretting it." Built in 1937, the Colonial Revival home had been perfectly maintained but never updated. Everything in it was original—a plus when it came to the pegged hardwood floors and the foyer but a definite minus when one considered the vintage bath and kitchen, old wiring and small rooms.







PRECEDING PAGES: Serene master bedroom features Cowtan and Tout toile with cream stria wallpaper from Travers. Small Aubusson pillow nestles among bed linens of embroidered matelassé. Louis XVI fruitwood chaise flanks 18th-c. French writing table. Antique watercolors depict beds. Wilton wool carpet from Stark. ABOVE LEFT: In breakfast room, country French vassier, 1800s, showcases early French pottery. ABOVE RIGHT: Custom kitchen cabinets made by Childs Millwork. David Roper painted wood floor in diamond pattern of coffee bean brown and cream. Brown and white transferware mingles with French green pottery. OPPOSITE: Picket fence encloses side garden designed by Louise Poer.

"Basically, this is just a two-story, white clapboard house—a box. But it was a house I could go into and do my thing. I knew I could make it charming." She even had visions of a white picket fence.

Working with architect Jack Davis, Ervin began to enlarge and modernize the structure. They added a breakfast room with a bedroom and bath above it. Another bedroom became a master bath with walk-in closets. They enclosed a side porch to expand the family room.

In ground-floor living areas, Ervin and Davis kept the original footprint but did some judicious editing. "We didn't chop off the whole back of the house," explains Davis. "We made rooms flow better into each other by creating wider openings, but instead of taking down a whole twelve-foot wall, we kind of grew four feet here, two feet there and four feet somewhere else. So the house went through a progression of maturing. By doing things more on the conservative side, we were able to keep the spirit of the house the way it would have been back when it was built. The spaces are still small but extremely livable."

Once the structural dust had settled, Ervin began to make rooms cozy and comfortable, starting with the

kitchen, breakfast room and family room. "Those are the three rooms we live in and entertain in," she explains. She has developed an organized approach to decorating, built on a simple rule: Finish one room at a time. "Don't stop with the basic furniture," she says. "Accessorize, put the lamps in there, complete every detail before moving on."

Ervin likes traditional style for comfort but admires eclectic pieces, things that look as if they've lived a bit. She advises clients of Beth Ervin Interiors to buy things they love, and she follows her own advice.

"If you pick out something great and unique, it will look good anywhere in the house," a truth she learned from designer Jane Williamson, who helped her choose antiques. "Jane taught me how to mix things. She has impeccable taste and is such an inspiration. I like really pretty pieces that have a timeless quality. Fabrics and furniture change, but fine furniture is never trendy."

Her ultimate goal is to create neat rooms that radiate comfort, that embrace. "When you walk in, I want you to feel warm, not notice a specific fabric or piece. I want my house always to be welcoming."

And, yes, she did get that white picket fence. □