

May 2008

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The
HOME
Monthly

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Colonial To Queen Anne

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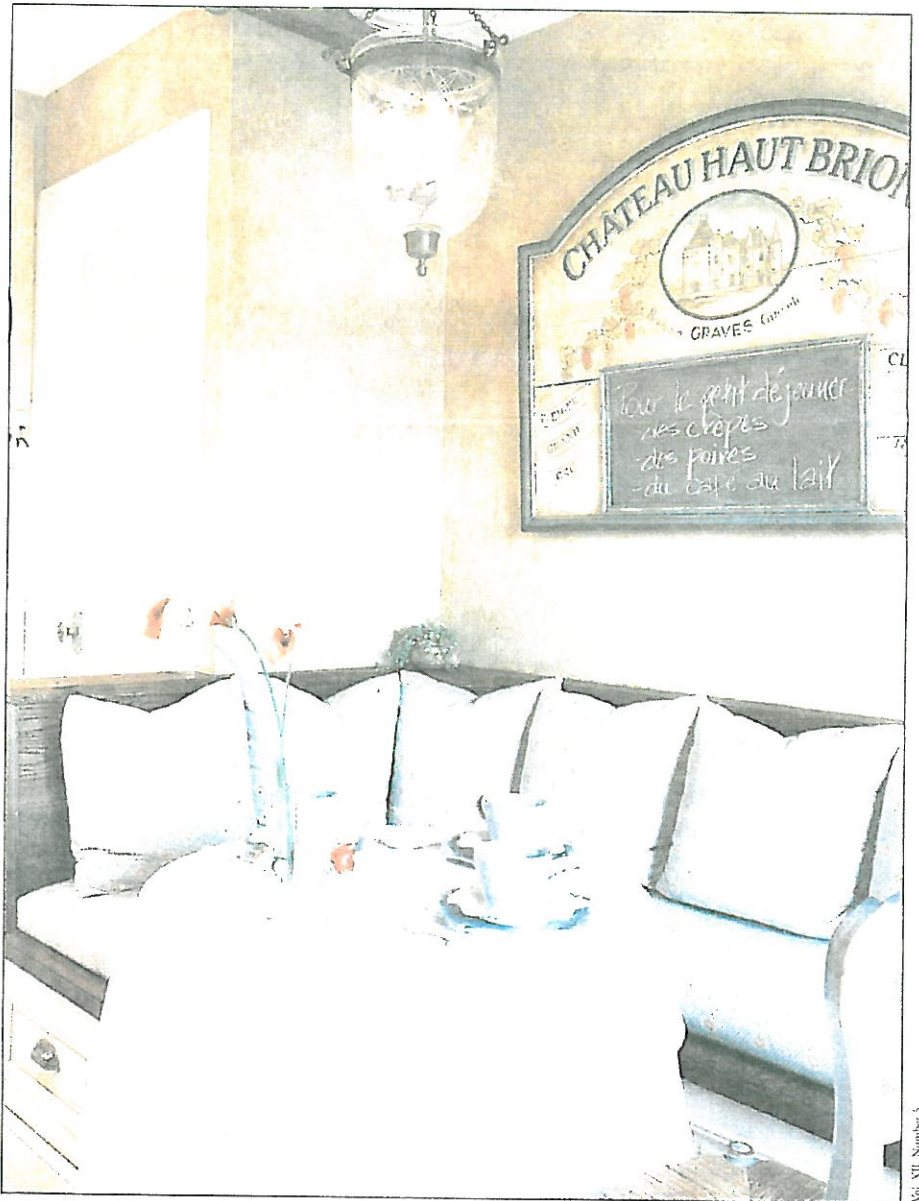
Home of the Month

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Greenwich Post	The Darien Times
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From a large but traditional Colonial, a Queen Anne evolved, with an arresting array of period details. What began as a kitchen makeover eventually included the entire house and the backyard, as well.



A royal restoration

by Jane K. Dove

Faced with the task of rejuvenating a stodgy 1980s colonial home in New Canaan, architect John Mاستera, AIA, rose to the challenge, completely transforming the large but pedestrian dwelling into a multi-faceted modern beauty abounding with turn-of-the-century Queen Anne details.

John, who heads John R. Mاستera + Associates Architects of New Canaan, said the job started with a new kitchen, but soon morphed into a renovation of the entire 6,000-square-foot home. On an open, level lot on Silvermine Road, the home is graced with mature trees and shrubs.

Starting Out

"The original house was a large rectangle with an ell," he said. "We decided to create a contemporary Queen Anne style complete with details, like the large turret over the kitchen."

The newly renovated and expanded home contains many special details, and a new arrangement of interior space to create a warm and intimate atmosphere even though the rooms are generous in size.

John started work on the house when owners Harold and Rita Rosser asked him to design a new kitchen and tie it in with outdoor living space.

"They told me the kitchen was old and tired, and they felt they were also not taking advantage of what they described as a 'no man's land' at the back of the house. The area was level and contained a pool, but was hot in summer and barren in the winter. I decided to design a new kitchen that would tie in with this outdoor space and make it attractive and usable."

John's plans for the kitchen included a 26-foot-high vaulted ceiling, and a "bell" dome to add volume and light to the formerly dark room. The renovated kitchen features a white limestone floor with Italian mosaic inlay and an enormous center island of honed Colonial Gold granite.

Ivory and honey-colored alder cabinets and woodwork harmonize perfectly, and a curved leather-upholstered seat fits neatly into the windowed cupola wall, providing comfortable seating at a large table. A pantry with stainless-steel shelves and granite counters and a full-sized mudroom are located off the kitchen.

Outside, John linked the kitchen to the terrace and the pool, and added a gateway between the main house and the pool house. The arched gateway, with its solid mahogany gate, traditional columns and stone floor, connects the front and rear yards, providing easy access from the attached garage with space for five cars.

Two graceful columned porticos overlooking the pool provide shade above the new Venetian granite paving. There is now plenty of room for relaxing and dining away from the rays of the sun.

"The whole area became a functional outside living room," John said. "Everything is now linked together and a large gas grill installed at the top of the stone steps just outside the kitchen makes cooking easy. I also added an outdoor fireplace under one of the porticos and a gas-operated fire pit near poolside."

Creative Detail

Once the design for the kitchen and adjacent patio was completed, the owners were so pleased with the concept, they gave John the "green light" to completely transform the entire house.

"The house had a lot of space, but it was very standard," John said. "The owners wanted something that would make it special, so we decided to go with using design details from the Queen Anne period, around the turn of the 20th Century."

The result is a one-of-a-kind home that soars gracefully upward from its stone foundation. "The design of the roof swoop and the apron of the siding halfway down the face are all details pulled from Queen Anne architecture," John said.

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The home's windows are mostly nine panes over one, another detail drawn from the period. John also made generous use of French doors and lunette windows to admit extra light into the second-floor rooms. "The windows have custom muntins in traditional rectangular patterns or gothic arched patterns," John said. "The roof is special Alaskan yellow cedar, a hardy wood known for its ability to weather well over time."

John said special care was taken to use trim and moldings that provide detail, shape and shadow. "I chose every piece,



Architectural details are a standout.

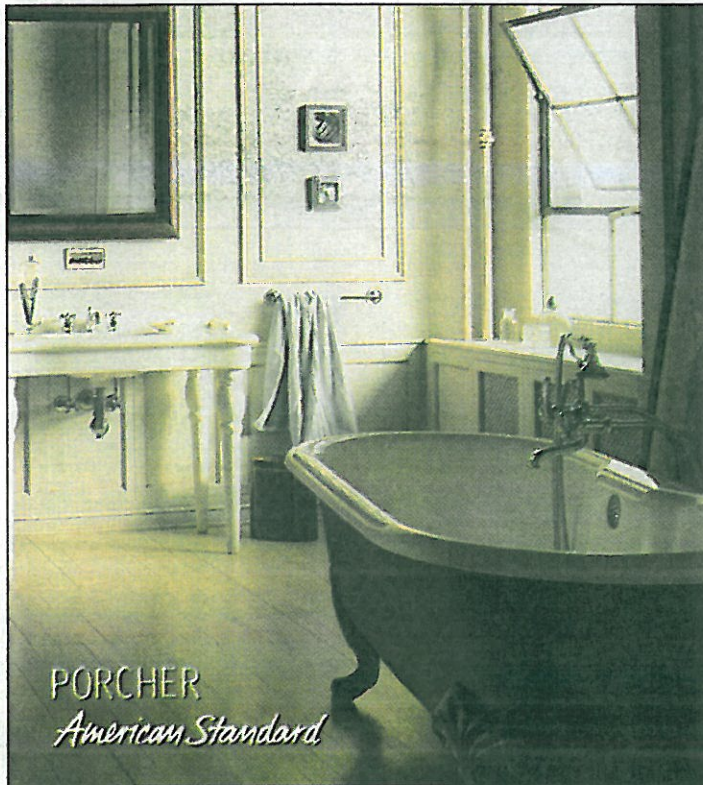
and each one had a specific purpose. Some trim needs to be flat against the building to frame objects. Other pieces need to cantilever out from the façade to create shadow and textures. Still others need to have perfect curves and inflections to create a sense of movement. Traditional columns are also important to the overall look of the home."

John's diligent efforts paid off. The exterior of the home exudes an air of serene majesty thanks to its wealth of authentic and meticulously executed architectural detail.

Interior Features

Inside, the home is also filled with architectural interest and detail. Stepping past the mahogany front door, visitors see a Victorian staircase and marble flooring with a diamond pattern.

The spacious public rooms open to the left and right of the entry and include a

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living room, sunroom, dining room, family room, game room, and the kitchen. The first floor layout presents a smooth flow for everyday living and entertaining, with the rooms looping gracefully into one another, and the family room's French doors opening to the new outside living area.

Moving upstairs, John added several new features. "One is a new addition of an office and exercise room that bridges the new gateway," John said. "The office is the owner's command center. With Venetian plaster walls designed by Victoria Linnartz, an interior designer, and a cathedral ceiling pierced by lunette windows, the room is a showpiece for any executive who needs to be productive at home."

The office includes a fireplace, sitting area, a spacious desk and computer area. It also features a concealed doorway to provide a quick getaway into a private room.

The fully equipped exercise room, additional two-tiered space for family activities, four family bedrooms with marble baths, and a large master suite complete the second floor.

The master suite contains his-and-her marble bathrooms along with large, fully fitted, walk-in closets. The suite, which has access to a porch over the columned portico, overlooks the pool and patio.

Satisfaction

John said he enjoyed the challenge of this very special renovation. "The owners had some excellent ideas and gave me good direction while allowing me plenty of creative freedom," he said. "The entire process took about 16 months, and I was fortunate to work with an outstanding contractor, Hobbs, Inc."

John said he enjoyed "breaking the mold" of the limits of the original home. "Sometimes it's difficult to work within an existing structure that is devoid of any real interest," he said.

"I worked hard on this project to achieve a special feeling through the architectural details that were added. Each design element was crafted for quality, aesthetics and longevity. The owners can now enjoy their re-invigorated house as a new work of architecture for years to come. I believe it's a classic design that will hold up very well to future scrutiny."

For more information, call 203-966-6696 or visit the Web site, MasteraArchitects.com. ■

May 2008

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