

Creating Contrast

NESTLED WITHIN A LIVELY AND GROWING COMMUNITY, A HOME WITH EUROPEAN ELEGANCE IS LAYERED WITH STORIED PIECES AND EXCITING DESIGNS.



TEXT LAUREN GENTRY WALKER
PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS LUKER



Elegant aesthetic goals, an appreciation for heritage and craftsmanship, and a need for practicality and function gave life to a sophisticated estate located in the residential haven of Cary, North Carolina. With French-inspired architecture and high ceilings, the homeowners had specific wants for creating livable, beautiful spaces within their expansive rooms. Interior designer and co-founder of Roux MacNeill Studio, Robert MacNeill, took on the project after working with the client to discover their design priorities. “Our client was very active in the

design process and brought a lot of ideas to the table,” says MacNeill. “It was our job to consolidate those ideas and collaborate with them to figure out what they needed the most.” The large, airy spaces of the home needed to be artfully layered and furnished to create an updated, modern vibe that was still comfortable for everyday use. MacNeill used his clients’ love of bold colors and high contrast to bring exciting and edgy design into the somewhat traditional setting of the house. The designer balanced the more unique pieces—like the black-and-white tiger stripe chenille sofa—with timeless details such as hand-painted cherry blossom wallpaper.

Previous pages: A custom staircase winds through the foyer of the home along with French limestone flooring. The plush sofa and small table serve as a place for the homeowner to enjoy morning coffee and prepare for her day. Opposite, clockwise, from above left: The formal living room’s focal point is the massive custom fireplace designed by Robert MacNeill. The exterior of the home evokes French elegance and includes breathtaking gardens. The family spends a lot of time in the walnut paneled study, and is an intimate, space for reading and relaxing.





The dining room has an architecturally interesting entry that was perfect for the beautiful custom wallpaper. The storage piece in the dining room houses an exotic arrangement of stone that can be backlit for ambience. The large table can comfortably seat eight, and florals from *The Watered Garden* in Raleigh add even more color and flair to the space.

Adding French elements and flair was kept a priority throughout the home. The basement was given a custom floor made out of stone imported from France and then cut in the US. MacNeill designed the massive living room fireplace—made out of French limestone—to be a show-piece for the space. The nearly six-foot-tall structure adds a formal air to the room, which also displays a stunning piece of artwork. “There’s a story behind a lot of the different materials we used,” says MacNeill. “The homeowners find it very important to understand the craft behind a piece and where it came from, and that adds to the elegance of their aesthetic.”

In the foyer, a curved, custom staircase draws the eye and encircles the multifunction space. Since entryways can sometimes feel empty and unused, MacNeill focused on giving this one a life of its own.



“This is a big house, so people are looking for more intimate spaces that they can feel good in,” he says. “My client has found a retreat within this space and loves to sit and read on the big, comfy sofa while enjoying morning coffee.”

The kitchen island was also custom created for the homeowners out of one piece of stone. The well-used space has a breakfast area and a neighboring seating area that has become a favorite gathering spot and comfortable extension of the kitchen for the family and their guests. “We wanted to add a bunch of color in an otherwise airy, bright space, so we had fun with the breakfast table, and it’s definitely a showpiece,” says MacNeill. “This is a very open plan for a traditional home. The spaces really flow together.” In the dining room, a large storage

cabinet displays more exotic stonework that can be backlit and creates a unique focal point.

The home’s lush and luxurious backyard is complete with rich landscaping and a sparkling swimming pool. Keeping with the French theme, a formal garden with flowing fountains also sits outside the house and includes raised beds for growing plenty of fresh vegetables and herbs. The gardens evoke a classic, European style, and as you walk through them, a lake that backs up to an amphitheater comes into view. The homeowners can sit under the stars and listen to the concert music from their own private oasis. “My clients imagined this home as a welcoming place that could serve as the center of their family,” says MacNeill. “It’s the perfect location to entertain and host loved ones.”

Opposite: The kitchen, breakfast area, and sitting room flow within one large space. Perfect for gathering with loved ones, the extension of the kitchen is kept comfortable with mirroring sofas and soft draperies. This page: An outdoor dining area is ideal for viewing the lush gardens while enjoying a candlelit meal.



Known as the lower level of the house, this moody, cozy space is perfect for TV viewing or hosting friends. The multi-function space was intentionally dressed in high contrast and more masculine tones. The designer wanted it to feel different from the rest of the house and set it apart with details like Art Deco-style wallpaper, unlacquered brass fixtures, and cabinetry with brass mesh. The beautiful bar seamlessly extends outdoors.

