

Southern Style™

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A photograph of a French home entrance. A bright blue door is slightly ajar, revealing a glimpse into a well-lit interior with a checkered floor, a red cushioned chair, and a small table. The door is set within a grey stone frame. Climbing roses with pink and white blossoms are trained over the door and the surrounding stone wall. A green hedge is visible on the right side of the entrance. The foreground shows a stone step and a cobblestone path.

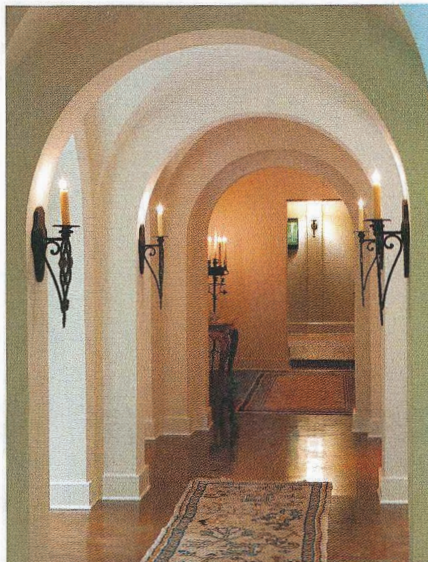
True to Form

A 1934 FRENCH HOME REFLECTS CONTEMPORARY APPEAL WHILE STAYING TRUE TO ITS DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURAL IDENTITY.





This historic home in the heart of Buckhead in Atlanta was designed by renowned New York architect Aymar Embury II, whose limited Southern work includes Mountain Brook Country Club in Birmingham. Designer Meridy King grew up just a couple of streets down from this house. She says she loves to see the older homes in the area restored to their "original look and shine." Though the home was still beautiful on the outside, Meridy says, its interior was a tragic tribute to the '80s. They traded the taupe walls and dated furnishings for a lighter, brighter feel throughout. A stunning chandelier in the living room became the catalyst for a nearly exclusive use of antique lighting in the rest of the residence.







MERIDY KING FELT STRONGLY ABOUT MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THIS HISTORICAL HOME'S IDENTITY IN HER DESIGN WORK. "I THINK THE CHALLENGE WAS MAKING IT TRUE TO THE SPIRIT OF THE HOME, YET TRUE TO THE HOMEOWNERS," SHE SAYS.

At the start of the process, Meridy recalls telling owners Barbara and Julian Sparkes, "Whoever does this house needs to respect it and bring it back to what it used to be." The dining room is original to the home, but it has been updated with pieces that support an aura of timeless elegance. "We made the old lighting and some of the antique furniture feel young and new," Meridy explains. "It still feels current." In addition to her efforts to stay true to the home's inherent formal feel, she also had to consider the couple's three children. "I had to take this very fine home and make it livable, childproof, and comfortable," Meridy says. "I went in with all of that in mind and just tried to make it a home that would not go out of style."





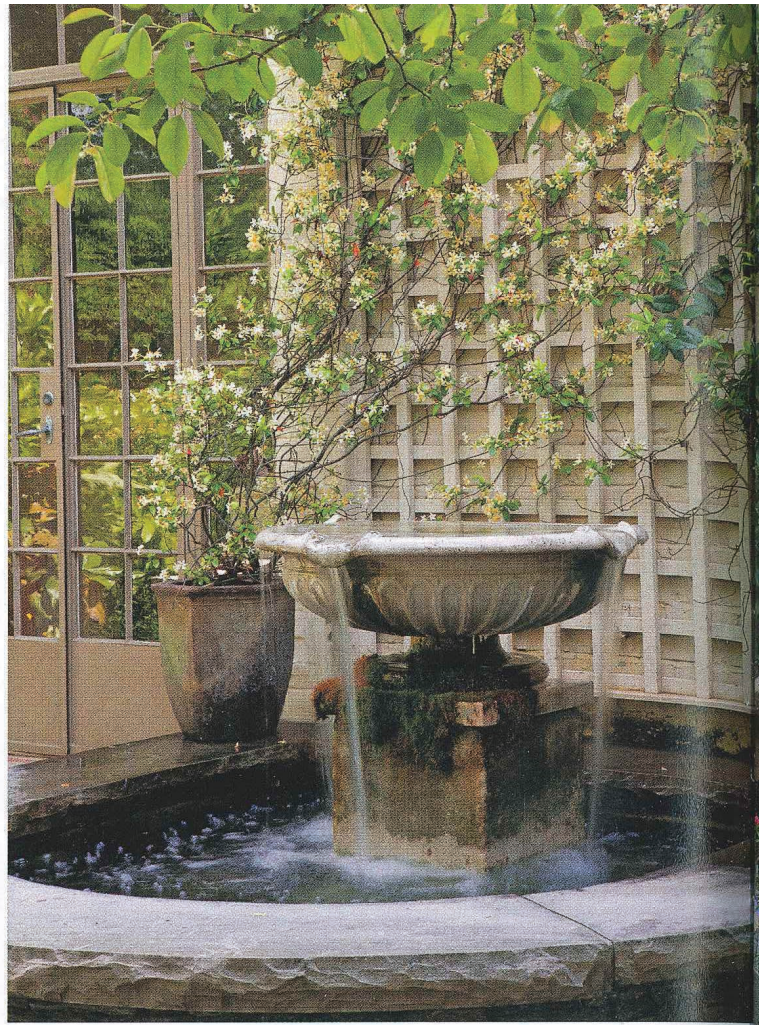
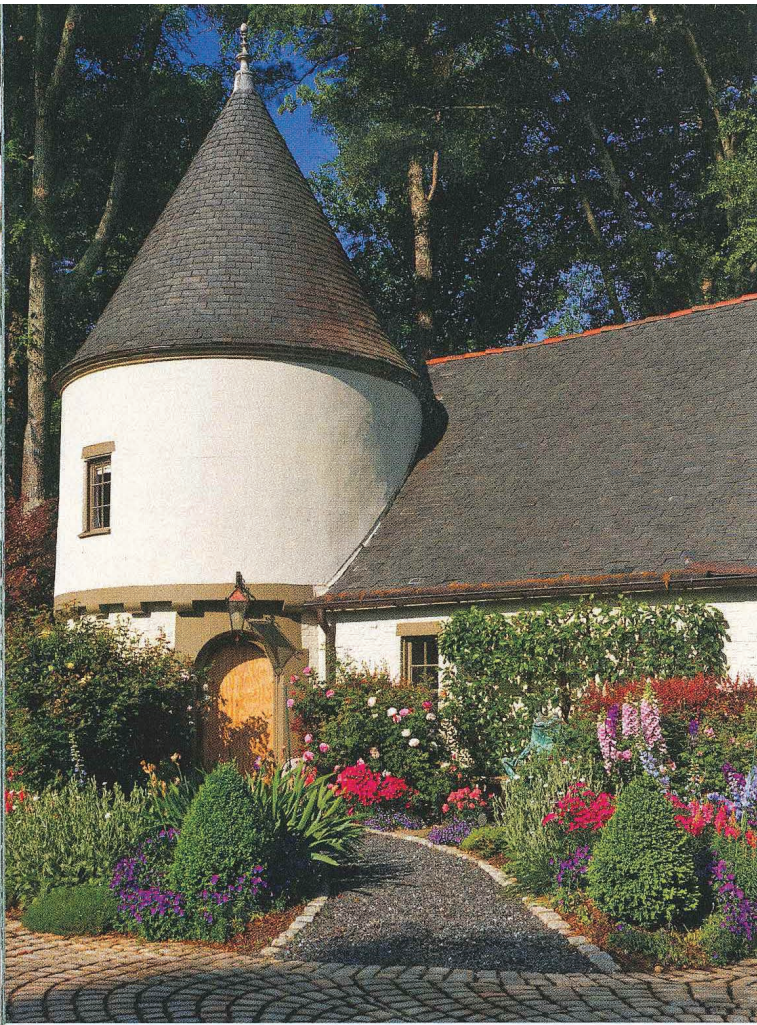


A testament to its 1930s origin, the kitchen started out with a small galley layout. The Sparkes family opened it up to include a spacious butler's pantry and breakfast room. Harrison Design worked on the updates and additions and made every effort to replicate the existing architecture in a fluid way. "We all asked for it never to be recognized as an addition," Meridy says. "They were spot-on."

Also original to the home is the screened-in porch, which features Florida native Barbara's love of color—especially blue. Meridy worked to create chic comfort in the space with high-style elements that still encourage laid-back living.







"What makes this home unique is the architecture," Meridy says. "It's not the design of a home you would build today." The turret, which houses a playroom upstairs and a potting shed below, imparts a backdrop of Old-World wonder to the garden, brimming with natural beauty. Barbara called on David Dempsey of Viridis Garden Design, Inc., to overhaul the landscaping that is now a picturesque mix of kitchen herbs, annuals, and perennials, as well as more than 25 varieties of David Austin English roses. Arching over windows, rambling over the grounds, and espaliered along walls, the colorful blooms enhance the architecture of the distinctive French home while adding a measure of delightful Southern personality.



