

Traditional and modern transform

In Charles Dunlap's dining room, vintage velvet window panels partner with classic wainscoting and damask wallcovering, while a thoroughly modern chandelier hangs over the walnut table.



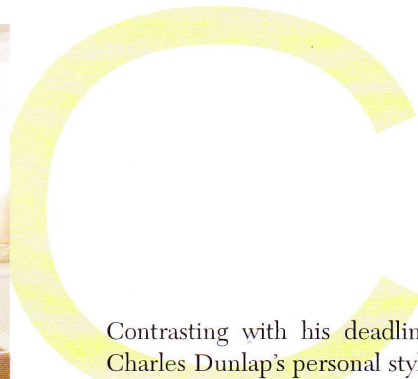
classical

By Brian Kramer. Photographer: Laurie Black. Designer: Charles Dunlap. Field Editor: Sandra L. Mohlmann.

a Georgian Colonial into an eclectic showplace.



evolution



Contrasting with his deadline-driven work with clients, interior designer Charles Dunlap's personal style has taken time—not to mention a respect for history and just a touch of playfulness. Indeed, reshaping the interior of his 1936 Colonial house into a warmly modern haven that also suits the home's classic bones is an ongoing project, more than seven years in the making.

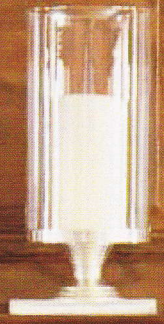
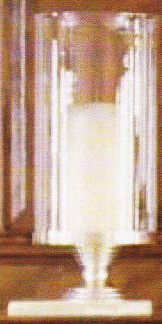
Charles and partner Lee Hart had long admired their current home while riding bikes through the shady streets of Pleasant Ridge, a small community just outside Detroit. "It was our dream house," Charles says. "We never thought it would be for sale, but then one day we got a call. It was just something that was meant to be."

After Charles and Lee moved in, however, the dream quickly became a complex project that required carefully refreshing and updating, while being true to the home's pedigree. The home was in excellent repair, but the vibrant red, pink, and orange color scheme needed immediate attention, and the baths and kitchen hadn't been updated since the 1950s.

After baths and kitchen were gutted and modernizing begun, Charles repainted the interior in warm neutrals that vary in intensity depending on how each room is used. For example, the dynamic living room is all about contrast,

This photo: "I wanted a focal wall that grabbed your attention," Charles says of the entry wallpaper that features a grid of contrasting pewter squares. **Opposite top:** The exterior's Georgian Revival lines set the stage for the home's balanced interior design. **Opposite bottom:** The home's open foyer features great bones and beautiful details, which Charles highlighted with a subtle neutral-on-neutral color scheme.





The French Garden



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—homeowner and designer Charles Dunlap

with light ceilings and walls and dark trim, while the more romantic dining room layers on several darker, richer hues for elegant evening meals.

With a soothing, versatile backdrop in place, Charles began introducing favorite fabrics, window treatments, rugs, and furnishings that he'd seen and acquired through his work as a commercial and residential designer. “Great rooms evolve; they are never just made,” he says. “I am constantly changing and adding things as my tastes change.”

This emphasis on evolution has allowed Charles considerable range in mixing periods, materials, and influences. In the living room, a steel library table and a concrete end table (originally intended for outdoor use) mingle with velvet sofas and chocolate-hue silk burlap draperies. A sleek, industrial-style dining room chandelier provides intriguing contrast with lushly puddling velvet window treatments, curvaceous leather chairs, and a serene Tibetan rug. “Homes should feel like they have a sense of history and show something about someone's life,” Charles says. “There is nothing more dull than a home that looks like a furniture showroom.”

Geometry is an important constant in the home's eclectic mix. Taking interior design cues from the home's neoclassical exterior, Charles relies on pairs of furniture and balanced groupings of art and accessories in nearly every room. The strong, simple lines of window treatments and key furniture pieces, such as the dining table and master platform bed, visually extend and expand the rooms, enhancing their modest proportions. The playful use of grids—in darkly painted window muntins, mod wallcoverings in the foyer, and quilted patterns on silk pillows—gives rooms subtle graphic appeal.

Organic elements provide softness and keep the interior from becoming too serious. Soft greens—a rich mossy shade in the dining room, touches of

A pair of sofas, upholstered in mushroom-color hobnail velvet, invite guests to linger by the living room fireplace. Original Verdi marble tiles lining the hearth inspired the grandly scaled faux-mahogany-and-marble tile surround.





This photo: Carefully balanced geometry and a few gentle curves make the living room perfectly balanced yet completely livable. **Opposite, clockwise from top left:** The library table is custom-fabricated from one continuous piece of steel. In the living room reading corner, a concrete table, molded and painted to resemble tree limbs, ensures the vintage wing chair's formality is never fussy. Charles relaxes in the home's garden. An open-back console bookcase made of ebony-stained ash offers storage without obstructing the view through the wall of leaded-glass panes.

spring green in the living room, and fresh sage in the kitchen—give vitality, while small punches of spicy orange and gold add warmth and interest in the master bedroom. Asian accessories, such as shoji screens hung in the living room, and outdoor pieces including garden sculpture and architectural salvage are incorporated into displays, hung as art, or are repurposed into occasional tables. “In Michigan, we don’t get much time to enjoy the outdoors,” Charles, also an avid gardener, explains. “Bringing the outdoors in is certainly a way to prolong the enjoyment of the outside.”

As beautifully tailored and balanced as his home currently seems, Charles still considers each room a work in progress. “My look is about perfectly editing a space so that there is not too much or too little,” he says. And Charles is definitely committed to the home for the long-term. Plans include large and small changes, such as working with new pieces of salvage and enhancing the connection between the interior and exterior by building a conservatory off the living room. “Hopefully 10 years from now,” he says, “it will be even closer to my vision.”

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This photo: Spice-color silks dress the linen-wrapped headboard in the master bedroom. Industrial-style reading lamps clamp on to matching side tables and offer flexible lighting.

Opposite: The reading nook is a modern, masculine take on a fainting couch, complete with an angular end table hewn from a block of wood.



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