

# Charmed Existence.

A backdrop of dramatic archways, vaulted ceilings, and wide-plank flooring lays an elegant foundation for a sumptuous interior makeover.



The dining room, which is located two steps up from the living room and through an archway, is a grand space for entertaining. It can accommodate as many as 14 people around the gracious antique table. The painting is by American artist Scott Hill.

# The goal was simple in theory:

Add more square footage to the home without losing any of its charm. That was Margaret and Holman Head's request of longtime friend and decorator Mary Evelyn McKee and architect Bill Ingram when the pair signed on to help the Heads remodel their 1920s Tudor Revival-style home in Birmingham, Alabama.

The front of the house featured a charming exaggerated roofline, chimney, and arched doorway, all of which the Heads wanted undisturbed, so Ingram looked to the back of the residence for add-on space. By demolishing a detached two-car garage, he was able to make way for a modest addition including an octagonal pavilion that houses a new master suite.

Ingram blended new with old seamlessly by using bricks from the razed structure to match the original home. He also smoothed the transition by enlarging a bluestone patio that now stretches the new length of the house and offers exterior living areas for dining, lounging, and conversation. Through such devices, Ingram was able to keep the scale of the addition modest while giving the Heads the space they wanted and also enhancing the home's original character.

Ingram and McKee approached the interiors with the same philosophy. "I try to keep a part of the original house in any renovation or redecorating," McKee says. The subtle blend of old and new is executed most eloquently in the living room. The space itself sits slightly askew, reflecting the gentle curve of the house. The original limestone fireplace remains the centerpiece of the room, but Ingram exaggerated the drama of the original barrel-vault ceiling by adding new cornice molding and gridlike fretwork.

McKee selected a sophisticated persimmon red to unify the living spaces. For furniture, she mixed traditional and contemporary pieces, including a pair of antique walnut armchairs, new slipper chairs, a Barbara Barry sofa, and a striking modern coffee table.

In the new library, Margaret requested a fireplace with a Gothic arch to lend the space an always-been-there look. With its overscale rough timber frame, the fireplace sets the tone for the room. A soaring vaulted ceiling of pecky cypress and walls of clear cypress, all of which have been stained and waxed for an aged look, enhance the library's cozy, lived-in feel. Comfortable seating around the fireplace and symmetrical bookcases on each side of the hearth further amplify the inviting effect.

Rough-sawn cypress also appears as rustic ceiling beams in the enlarged kitchen. The rest of the palette is light and bright, thanks to beige walls, pale wood cabinets, and light-color stone countertops. Custom leaded-glass windows in the kitchen, as well as in the library and the dining room, make brilliant focal points. Bluestone floors tie the space to the terrace outside, bringing the renovation full circle.



**This photo:** The arched fireplace in the new library was inspired by a picture that homeowner Margaret Head had found. Its large scale and low iron sconces create an intimate setting. **Opposite:** The master suite pavilion and the dining room's bay window anchor one end of the expanded bluestone terrace.





A red-pattern fabric screen makes a colorful backdrop for the living room's neutral contemporary furnishings and complements the fabric on a pair of matching antique armchairs. Generous folds of orange silk allow draperies to puddle ever-so-slightly and glamorously.





# After the remodel, sunlight is the star in

every room in the house, lighting and brightening each space.



**Opposite:** A large arched window allows light to stream into the master bath, while a freestanding screen provides privacy. **Left:** A curved banquette tucked between two cabinets and a pair of favorite chairs from the Heads' collection provide seating in the breakfast room off the kitchen. **Below:** With their sense of permanence and quality, the leaded-glass windows in the kitchen elevate the entire house, says architect Bill Ingram. For a clean look, Ingram designed exceptionally deep walls between the kitchen and the hall stairway so that large appliances could be set back into niches, leaving the kitchen clutter-free.

