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FAMILY *Ties*

DARRYL CARTER HONORED THE SPIRIT OF AN OLD FAMILIAL HOUSE WHEN DESIGNING THE ROOMS OF A NEW ONE ALONG THE BANKS OF THE POTOMAC

INTERIOR DESIGN BY *Darryl Carter*
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MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE Darryl Carter was born and raised and continues to work in Washington, D.C. that he understands the art of diplomacy. Or, more likely, it's also in his nature, as one of the nation's leading and most prolific interior designers, to accommodate the wishes of clients while remaining true to his artistic ideals. After completing the interior design for a multi-bedroom house atop a bluff overlooking the Potomac River, in Maryland, Carter, diplomatically but genuinely, thanks a number of people and factors.

"I have to laud the architect of this house," he begins, "because it always fascinates me how practitioners of that profession are able to orient a home, in this case to cite it so that it captures river views from every room. It's beautifully engaged with the landscape."

Carter gives more than a nod, too, to the very pedigree of the house. While it was completed just in 2013, the house references a familial house dating back generations. "The house is ambitious in scale and in what it has achieved as a legacy in the family."

And as for the homeowners themselves, a couple with several children, Carter makes a key distinction. "I have clients and I have patrons. I call these people patrons. I have done multiple properties for members of the extended family and I am just so ever grateful for the support of this entire family. It's a relationship that is profound."

As the homeowner explains, "I had not worked with Darryl before, though my sister-in-law had. The moment my husband and I met him, we were so impressed—with what we could immediately see was his creativity. He really saved the home from the direction it might have gone. He's created truly classical and timeless interiors for us."

While Darryl Carter's many residential projects emphatically reflect his well-honed aesthetics and design directives, he understands the need to collaborate. "Interior design is always collaborative," he stresses. "It has to be a collaboration for it to be an expression of its occupants." The homeowner verifies that dynamic by adding, "We had weekly meetings with Darryl and his staff and he presented options to us that he had already narrowed. He has the organizational skills of a lawyer," she adds, referencing Carter's law degree, "and the artistic abilities of a designer."

> "If there is great architecture, then you have a responsibility as a designer to honor it."
>
> *—Darryl Carter*

In fact, Carter relates a favorite story where he learned much, all at once, about his chosen profession. "Long ago when I first met the famous designer Albert Hadley, I told him how wonderful it must be to be able to do whatever he wanted as a designer. 'Dear boy,' he said to me, 'There is no such thing as being able do exactly what you want. It's always collaborative.' I loved that man because he was so gifted and unpretentious."

As he does with every home, Carter established here a sense of procession through the rooms that begins the moment a person enters into the foyer. In keeping to a neutral, or what Carter calls a "bare" palette, and a careful mapping out of the interior topography of a home, he created a coherence. "These rooms bleed together," he stresses.

Opening pages: Darryl Carter designed the interiors of a home in Bethesda, using shades of Benjamin Moore paint throughout. The living room features Gustavian armchairs upholstered in Kravet faux leather, a sofa using a Holland and Sherry wool/flannel, Vaughan sconces, and a Darryl Carter–designed coffee table. This page: A view from the living room into the dining room reveals Carter's interest in creating a seamless progression of spaces.

"I'm very religious about doing that." And while he might balk at being labeled so, Carter is also a kind of philosopher of interior design. "A house has to be an experience of the whole rather than of its parts. A designer and the clients have to know how they live in the home."

Among the conspicuous indications of his penchant to show restraint are the many windows and French doors and transoms left untreated. In a rotunda-like breakfast room, defined by a rhythm of narrow floor-to-ceiling windows, for instance, he has left them unadorned. "I am always deferential to the architecture of a house. Why block the views here or detract from the circularity of the space? Keeping the windows here, and elsewhere in the house, free of draperies or shades when privacy is not an issue, suggests that a house

In the home's dining room, Carter placed an English Regency-period mahogany table, circa 1815, along with eighteenth-century French painted chairs, upholstered in Elmo leather. The wallcovering is Colefax and Fowler. Above: An Italian Baroque mirror is positioned over a Regency mahogany sideboard, topped with an array of flow-blue English dishes.

Left: In the light-filled rotunda-like breakfast nook, Carter designed a curved settee, upholstered in his own private label faux leather. The antique ebonized armchairs feature a ticking stripe fabric from Perennials. Above: The mudroom is bright with Benjamin Moore's Simply White; the countertop and backsplash Pietra Cardosa. The flooring is bluestone.

This page: The library in the home is painted with Benjamin Moore's Gray Owl. The Wessex wing chair is a Darryl Carter design covered in faux leather from his private label. The draperies are made of linen from Lee Jofa. The area rug is an antique Turkish oushak. Opposite: The home's gallery features floor-to-ceiling built-in bookcases, each set of which is illuminated by its own lighting source.

Right: Lee Jofa's Garden Peony wallcovering is used in the master bedroom. The bed is made up with Dessin Fournir and Legacy linens and fabrics. The vintage French cane porter chair is set next to a sidetable from Baker Furniture's Darryl Carter for Milling Road line. Opposite: Her portion of the master bath features walls clad in calacatta marble. The bathtub's French-style sconce is Circa Lighting.