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VOLUME 11, NO. 02 • $10.99 US
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ELEGANT ECLECTIC. The eclectic living room features an attractive blend of furniture, combining modern elements in the sofa and armchairs with the more traditional wooden dressers and soapstone fireplace. The brass lantern pendant is a dramatic touch, combining the old-fashioned allure of taper candles with a bold shape.

"Intentional design elements were incorporated **to give the house a fresh and timeless presence."**

—Massey and Franck

BY STEPHANIE AGNES-CROCKETT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ATLANTIC ARCHIVES, INC./RICHARD LEO JOHNSON

Seeing Double

Twin townhouses get fresh life by reviving their historical roots.

A HANDSOME FIT. The largely trichromatic den features a palette of orange, blue and white. The mirrored wall hangings and lamp create a delightful parallel aesthetic surrounding the sofa, while the blues complement the orange hues well. The tufted armchair and overstuffed look of the sofa make the room feel luxurious yet casual, despite its small size and traditional arrangement.

|BELOW|PLUSH SEATING. Cozy twin armchairs rest invitingly on either side of the fireplace, with a small table in between. Note the effectiveness of the cream and tan color scheme, as well as the crisp pop of red in the small tabletop collection. The white furniture ushers in the future, while the small gilded porthole mirror brings a period vibe into the space.

In 2014, the five dilapidated apartments on West Waldburg Street, which had been boarded up for 20 years, were a far cry from the gorgeous twin townhouses that Barnard Tully and William H. Grady had constructed back in the 1870s. Between 1871 and 2014, the building, which now sat squarely in the historic area of downtown Savannah, Georgia, transitioned from being two grand townhouses, to a quintuple apartment complex, which had fallen out of use. The townhouses were altered throughout the 140-year period, with walls added to separate the living spaces, and kitchens and bathrooms added to each of the five apartments. By the time architects Michael Franck and Jay Massey decided to undertake restoration of the twin homes, much of the historical integrity of the architecture had been compromised, making the project an architectural, and financial, challenge.

A PLACE TO PAUSE. This chic stair landing is more than a means to an end. Thanks to the well-placed sofa, complete with cushions, the landing is an area to rest, relax and drink in the view. The chandelier, vase and suitcase admit the historical elements of the home, while the green plant embraces the lively present.

FINDING THE FOOTPRINTS

When Franck (of Franck & Lohsen Architects) teamed up with Massey (of Massey Martin Design) the two had one vision: "to bring the townhouses back to their use as single-family residences." This meant removing noncontributing features: those aspects of the houses that were nonhistorical and not conducive to the restoration. While certain features were modernized, the architects primarily stuck to the original plan of the homes, without adding unnecessary modern conveniences.

Splitting the project in half by townhouse, the two got to work on their respective sides. Each architect brought in backup to complete the interior design on his side. Franck worked with William Miller, and Massey brought on his business partner, James Martin. With Franck's experience in traditional architecture, and Massey's expert know-how in historic restoration, the two began their efforts to find the homes' "original footprints" by contacting Georgia's Historical Society. Their research led them to remove the individual kitchens and bathrooms within the apartments. After consulting with the Historic District Review Board, Massey also removed a substantial wing of the house. He recalls, "A double story wing off the back was literally falling apart and causing damage to the original house." The Board also permitted Massey and Franck to open the recently enclosed porches, which were on both the first and second stories of the house.

|**ABOVE**| **BREATHING ROOM.** The large fiddle leaf fern commands the room and sets an airy indoor-outdoor tone to the decor. The plant infuses personality into the room without becoming overwhelming. Tailored seating imbues the room with classic sophistication.

|**LEFT**| **RE-ENTRY.** The other half of the townhouse dons the same door color, uniting the two projects together. Lighting contributes to the timeless feel of the space. Whereas the bust, cabinet and dresser are a nod to the venerable age of the house, the hanging lighting is a more modern feature.

VINTAGE EDGE. This sitting room is a pleasant blend of compare and contrast. While the glowing burl wood frames on the far wall are a picture of contrast, the complementary tones of the urns and the arm-chair on the right are a visual comparison. The two-tier table is a good choice for a small room—it offers double function without the bulk. The industrial style light fixture gives the room its touch of edge.

Lights, Chroma… *Plants*

Want to cultivate a timeless atmosphere in your own home? Here are a few tips to get you started.

FIX YOUR FIXTURES

Thanks to modern-day conveniences, lighting a room is much simpler than in Victorian times. Add to your ambient lighting with warm, supplementary lamps and wall lights. Choose lights that fit with your home's atmosphere, even if they aren't strictly from the same era as everything else.

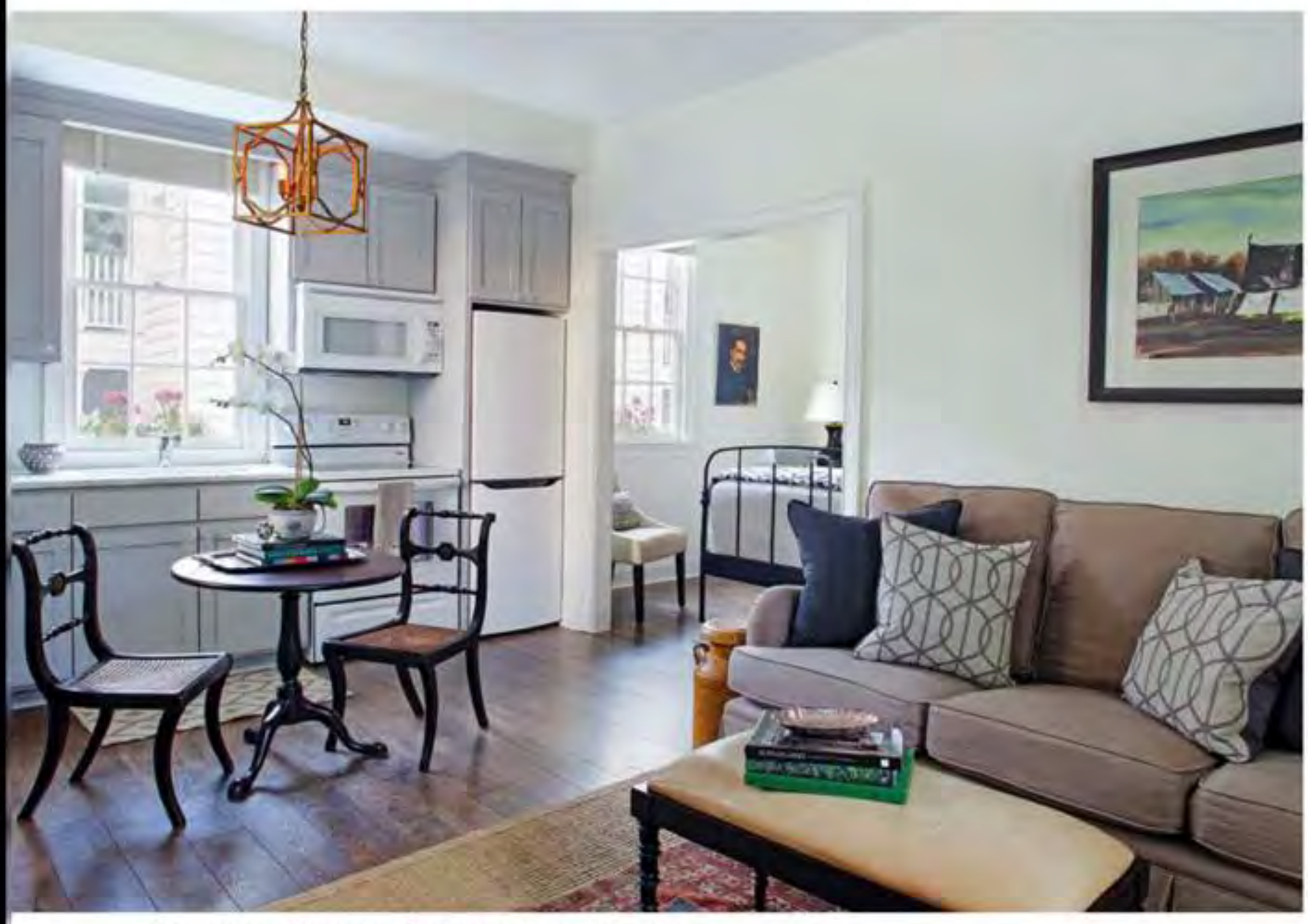
WHITEN IT UP

White is an excellent, timeless color. In addition to introducing a fresh, clean look to a room, white also pairs well with other colors, while making a pleasant contrast. Try white on the walls and on accent furniture.

GIVE PLANTS THE GREEN LIGHT

A bit of green can go a long way in keeping an antique-rich room fresh and lively. The juxtaposition of flourishing new greens with well-kept old creates the timeless feeling exemplified in the Waldburg houses. The same can be true outdoors, where a fresh new garden adds life to the property. Massey and Franck incorporated 13 varieties of tropical plants into the new courtyards.

In keeping with the historical intent of the house, **thet wo decided to restore features that existed on only one side of the house,** while adding them to the other.



|TOP| UPDATED FOR LIVING. One of the most modernized areas in the houses are the newly renovated kitchens, which feature modern plumbing and cooking amenities. The stone countertop and the sink are newer features, as are the two hanging lights. The glass-fronted cabinets allow the homeowners to display vintage and antique tableware that harks back to the original home.

|LEFT| KITCHENETTE. The simple chic open-plan studio divides along the rug line, and features a relaxing sofa rest area, as well as a table for two. Details like the pagodaesque light fixture, the geometric patterns on the sofa cushions, and the painting overhead, add definition and glam.

EAT AND HOST. This gorgeous kitchen affords heavy-duty meal prep and easy-going entertaining, thanks to the cozy seating area.

BRINGING THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

Along with removing noncontributing features, the architects needed to enhance and shape the features that upheld the townhouses' historicity and the intent of the original builders, Tully and Grady, who built multiple Savannah houses at the time. Massey and Franck performed reconstruction on the houses' foundations: restoring the original Savannah gray brick piers, as well as creating new piers from the same old bricks, which they discovered under the home.

The flooring too was a good deal of work. At the beginning of the project, vinyl covered the original pine flooring, which had fallen into ill repair, with the occasional hole and broken plank. Massey and Franck sanded, sealed and swapped out boards to bring the pine floor back to its original status. When it came to the walls, the architects undertook the ambitious task of recasting the plaster moldings instead of simply replacing the walls with modern sheetrock. Original medallions now crown the wall, while certain areas contain new moldings modeled after the old, where the old had been removed in past renovations.

Franck and Massey removed windows and doors where necessary, making modifications when possible. To

QUAINT COUNTRY CHARM. This bedroom is a seamless combination of old and new, as the quilted bedcover and mantel mirror tout shabby and chic roots, while the antique desk and chandelier add a fine antiques feel.

maintain the house's historicity, they opted to use only double-hung 6-over-6 wood windows. They removed the modern windows entirely and replaced broken glass in existing, historically appropriate windows. Franck and Massey also rehung the weights and chains, to optimize functionality as well as historicity.

The chimney surrounds involved a surprising bit of work to rediscover their historical footprints. Because of the renovations over the past several decades, the fireplace had become disguised under layer after layer of paint. The surrounds, which appeared to be constructed from wood, turned out to be soapstone, hidden underneath several coats of color. "Finding the soapstone beneath the layers of paint was a pleasant surprise." Massey and Franck say, "The green soapstone is such a beautiful material that it adds richness to the interiors of the town homes." The architects reopened the fireplaces and even rebuilt the chimneys. Franck and Massey restored surrounds and chimneys alike, and then hung the ornate, newly restored chimney pots over them.

In keeping with the historical intent of the homes, the two decided to restore features that existed on only one house, while adding them to the other. For example, while Franck's side featured a newel post from the original townhouse, Massey's side had been built over because of the apartments. However, the architects were able to model an identical post on Massey's side, based on the existing newel on Franck's.

RENOVATIONS WITH TIMELESS TEXTURES

After restorations, the architects had a number of decisions to make in terms of their own renovations. While they emphasized the need to find the houses' original footprint, they also elected to make certain modernizing changes, to introduce a timeless quality to the homes. Massey and Franck say, "Intentional design elements were incorporated to give the house[s] a fresh and timeless presence. We were able to specify with great care a cohesive selection of finishes and fixtures [such as] style of cabinetry, colors of paint, lighting fixtures, plumbing fixtures, etc. that are timeless yet appeal to modern sensibilities."

MIRROR IMAGE. A symmetrical arrangement makes this bedroom a serene, relaxing area with matching side tables, pillows and artwork. The lovely worn finish of the scrolled-arm bench adds a memorable look. Parallel styling is effective for the bedroom, because it gives off a restful, if predictable, vibe.

ELEGANT ESCAPE. The bathtub is an excellent choice for restoration in old bathrooms. Where a shower could have been installed, the bathtub attests to the historicity of the current house. The electric candles on the wall also nod to the older houses' style, while the whiteness of the room breathes timelessness.

MAGNIFICENT MASTER. The gray upholstered headboard is a plush focal point of the room, flanked by the antique bedside tables; the vibe of this space is casual yet stately. The French door leading to the veranda gives this room its dream-room status.

|TOP| OUTDOOR OASIS. The new courtyard features an abundance of tropical plants, as well as seating for guests. It also affords a private entertaining space for each of the town houses.

|BELOW| EVERYDAY EXOTIC. A bit simpler, the second courtyard features outdoor seating and a more open feel. The designers used a planting pattern for the ivy fence to create a simple yet unique design focus.

In addition to interior decorating decisions, Massey and Franck added a few larger modern touches, contributing to the present houses' timeless quality. One such choice was the kitchen, which Franck and Massey clarify was "the greatest deviation from the historic home's floor plan." They constructed the new kitchen on the site of the original dining room, at the middle of the house, because "today's residents spend a majority of their time in the kitchen." The new kitchen has a good deal of storage space, which is uncommon in a traditional Victorian home, while the old kitchen became a new den.

The homes' original trunk rooms, a traditional second-floor storage element in Victorian homes, became laundry rooms with adjoining bathrooms. Additionally Franck and Massey added garden courtyards at the rear of the property, as well as a guesthouse on each side. "This new building," Massey and Franck say, "helped form contained private garden courtyards with soothing fountains on each side of their dividing wall." They also topped off each twin with a new apartment or office space, and freshened up the outdoors with "an abundance of tropical plants," from sable palms and saw palmettos to azaleas and autumn ferns. CB