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LEFT: Cheery colors and patterns make the living room a haven. The elegance of Federal-style walls and accessories is lightened with a sisal rug and woven-grass window shades. RIGHT: Beyond the living room, white Colonial shutters cover the windows in the sunroom.



# All-American Charm

Pretty patterns and a classic color scheme give a Colonial house fresh appeal

BY BERNADETTE BACZYNSKI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN MELVIN

Outside the windows of this 1921 Colonial home, the view is decidedly rustic: a restful lake, old trees and open sky. Inside, however, there's a flavor of Federal-period formality that's softened by warm fabrics, cheerful colors and, most of all, the laughter of the family's three young children.

"It's a home full of acquired treasures," says interior designer Lola Watson, ASID, of William Beson Interior Design, Ltd. in Minneapolis. "The owners believe that living with beautiful things can be compatible with living an active, enjoyable life—and this family proves it every day."

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**WALLS:** In the dining room, designer Lola Watson considered all of the surfaces to integrate the mural gracefully.

■ The mural mirrors the view and extends it from the windows. If you have no view, paint a niche into your scene that displays an objet d'art or a sunny window where you'd like one to be.

■ This mural features an 18th-century Connecticut village nestled on the Atlantic coast; a friendly goat is one of several farm animals that graze at various spots on the mural.

■ Watson suggests incorporating small touches that can have big impact—a hint of a vine by a window, a trellis or clouds on a ceiling, a faux ribbon painted above a picture.

**WINDOWS:** Shutters painted the trim color make effective window treatments in rooms with murals.

■ If you prefer curtains or draperies, choose a simple style in a fabric that matches the predominant background color of the mural.

**FLOORS:** Understated floors let the mural take center stage.

■ Busy, bright rugs can distract from the beauty of the mural.

■ If you have hardwood floors, consider bringing an element of the mural onto the floor, perhaps as a border.

**LEFT:** The mural in the formal dining room covers all four walls.

**ABOVE:** The butler's pantry, which houses laundry facilities, features wipeable wallpaper and easy-to-maintain vinyl floor tiles. A Dutch door keeps the dog in.

## Toned-Down Formality

The “good bones” and design details of the spacious home, such as the original dado trim, fireplace and bookcases in the living room, provided an excellent starting point. The wife knows her taste, says Watson. An inveterate antiques shopper who only buys new if old isn't available, she prefers classic styles and a color palette of reds, blues, browns and yellows.

And since Watson and the homeowners had worked together on the family's previous home, many of their antique furnishings and fabrics were already in place. “We weren't starting from scratch,” Watson notes, which was a good thing—work began on the day the couple closed on the house.

On the first floor, the designer left the elegant terrazzo-tile floors untouched. To avoid a stuffy look and bring in some natural texture—“it is a lakefront home, after all,” says Watson—she covered the living room floor with a sisal rug and gave the floor a layered look by centering a smaller Oriental rug on top to delineate the seating area. The rich red and blue accents of the rug repeat in the robin's-egg blue walls and red hues in upholstery and window fabrics.



**WALLS:** An assortment of colors and patterns can coexist in harmony if you set boundaries, as Watson did in this house.

■ Crown molding, chair rails, baseboards, dados and other decorative trim elements contain and visually showcase color within the bedroom.

■ Architectural elements in the daughter's room divide the toile-patterned walls from adjoining patterns or colors. The classic patterns mean she can simply change accessories to allow the room to mature as she does.

■ Elements of color and pattern blend between rooms that are visible from one another.

**WINDOWS:** White wood shutters keep the look clean and serene in the master bedroom and offer a quiet contrast to the playful patterns in the daughter's room.

**FLOORS:** Dark-toned wood floors recede visually, says Watson, providing a good "ground" for area rugs and adjacent wallpapers and fabrics.

■ By bordering patterns on fabric treatments that touch the floor, such as bed skirts, they become contained as well.

■ On the floor of the daughter's room, the bound edges of the chocolate-brown wall-to-wall carpet makes the carpet easy to remove for cleaning.

**ABOVE:** The various deep-brown tones in the master bedroom pop against a pale blue-and-white background. The bed, a reproduction, blends with the antiques in the room; the custom rug is made of easy-to-maintain wool. The mantel is original to the home.

At the windows, custom hand-woven grass shades tone down the formality of the room. To carry the red accents up onto the walls, Watson chose fabric that matches the existing sofa upholstery for the simple 18th-century English-inspired window valances, and trimmed the valances in red silk fringe to pick up the color of the chairs' piping.

## Surrounded by a View

The talent of Minneapolis artist Carolynne Darling dominates the decor of the dining room. Her custom mural, painted directly onto all four walls, depicts the coastline of Connecticut, the home state of the husband's family. "We researched both the coastlines of the 1700s and contemporary ones, blending elements of each," says Watson. "We've even included farm animals to give it an authentic rural feeling."

Darling and Watson were also careful to merge the views from the windows with the vista depicted in the mural, creating a continuity between indoor and outdoor spaces. White Colonial shutters at the windows and a simple sisal rug—no layering here—let the pastoral mural take center stage.

## Pretty and Practical

Upstairs, original oak floors, refinished and stained a deep antique brown, anchors the master bedroom, where walls in a lighter shade of the blue in the living room, evoke a restful ambience. Here the designer chose to cover windows with simple white shutters for a clean look. To keep the effect sophisticated, she opted for chocolate-brown as the accent color. To keep it serene, she accessorized the room sparingly, with pastoral paintings and botanical prints in harmony with the lake view.

In contrast, she designed the daughter's bedroom to be decidedly feminine, with a twist. "She's a little girl who likes to wear dresses," says Watson, "so we made the room pretty, but gave it chocolate-brown accents and sophisticated basics that will grow up with her." The rug, an English Wilton carpet, is low-pile so small toys can't get lost in the nap; its rich background showcases a variety of flowers that will accommodate new color schemes as the daughter's taste changes. The bright pink-and-white toile wallpaper coordinates with the subtle stripes of the paper in the playroom.

The daughter's bathroom also stands up to daily use. Ceramic tiles resembling bead board look like wooden wainscoting. Installed high above, the wallpaper remains unaffected by water, and vinyl liners protect the custom, smocked fabric shower curtain. On the floor, a custom wall-to-wall carpet—bound on the edges—is easy to remove for cleaning and keeps tiny feet warm. ■



TOP: A variety of patterns adorn the walls and floors in the young daughter's bedroom and playroom. ABOVE LEFT: Brother and sister take tea in the playroom that adjoins both bedrooms. Coordinating wallpaper and a smaller version of the sister's rug allow adjacent spaces to blend. ABOVE: The color scheme in the daughter's bathroom gets a sophisticated note with Watson's pattern-on-pattern design. Wallpaper resembles pillow quilting. The custom shower curtain was inspired by a little girl's gingham dress.