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Authentic Patina

An Atlanta manor home balances the past with the present, marrying English Arts and Crafts traditions with modern-day styling.

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Understanding that Lisa and Jeff Martin and their three teenage boys wouldn't use a formal dining room, architect Peter Block and interior designer Beth Webb designated a niche at one end of the great-room as a cozy spot for eating, playing games, and doing homework. The streamlined banquette and rustic table were designed with versatility in mind and can be used together or apart.



THIS PHOTO: Creating playful contrasts was key to achieving elegant simplicity in the great-room. The plaster walls' subtle sheen highlights the rich patina of 19th-century ceiling beams, while the straight lines of the cast-stone fireplace are softened by curved log cabinets. OPPOSITE: Lush plantings envelop the U-shape home, offering privacy from the road.



If the thought of an English country manor conjures visions of chintz draperies and Chippendale chairs, think again. The Atlanta home of Lisa and Jeff Martin is as English as it gets—but with a modern, minimalist twist. “The house was inspired by the English Arts and Crafts homes of architect Sir Edwin Lutyens,” architect Peter Block says. “Steeply pitched gables, strong rooflines, and well-proportioned windows and doors are all part of that rural English vernacular, but this home’s finishes are cleaner and more current for a contemporary lifestyle.”

The five-year-old home boasts a patina beyond its years thanks to honest materials painstakingly selected by Block and interior designer Beth Webb. Lime-washed oak floors, 19th-century heart-pine beams, and plaster walls frame gracious public rooms anchored by cast-stone mantels. Natural light radiates through floor-to-ceiling windows and French doors topped with generous transoms. Cased in both wood and steel, the windows and doors present uninterrupted views and easy access to a loggia and manicured grounds.

“The house is designed so that its three main living areas—the great-room, library, and gathering room—all spill out onto the loggia,” Block says. “Even though it’s located outside, the loggia is just as much a living room as any room within the walls of the house. You’ll find the Martins and their three teenage sons out there year-round watching television as a family or entertaining friends.”

The family’s laid-back indoor-outdoor lifestyle was a driving force behind several design decisions. A versatile floor plan of open, undefined rooms allows spaces to evolve as the family grows. For cohesion, a neutral palette is employed throughout the home. From the creamy painted brick exterior to a tapestry of taupes, ivories, and earth tones inside, colors are soft but the materials are hardworking. “We carefully considered the functionality, longevity, and comfort of each piece of decor,” Webb says. “Strong, structural furnishings set against a subdued European palette honor the home’s architectural integrity, while their simplicity supports the Martins’ way of living.”



OPPOSITE: Webb selected pieces with strong visual and tactile appeal, such as a chunky wool carpet, weathered pecky cypress bookshelves, and an open-orb lantern, to anchor the library. RIGHT: To put a contemporary twist on a traditional English Arts and Crafts design motif, Block exaggerated the scale of a picketed newel in the entry. He balanced the post with simple circle and dash cutouts in the balustrade. BELOW: The kitchen cabinets are a modern interpretation of a 19th-century English shutter Block found at a flea market.



“Carefully layering textures, materials, and finishes is crucial to making a new house look old.”

—INTERIOR DESIGNER BETH WEBB



“This house is strong but friendly. You can tell that it’s very comfortable with itself.”

—ARCHITECT PETER BLOCK

BELOW: A custom zinc hood crowns a grill in the outdoor kitchen, calling attention to the pecky cypress-clad ceiling. RIGHT: The loggia’s plush upholstered furnishings foster the feeling of a well-appointed interior living room. A 14-foot-tall fireplace made from Georgia weathered granite anchors the space.

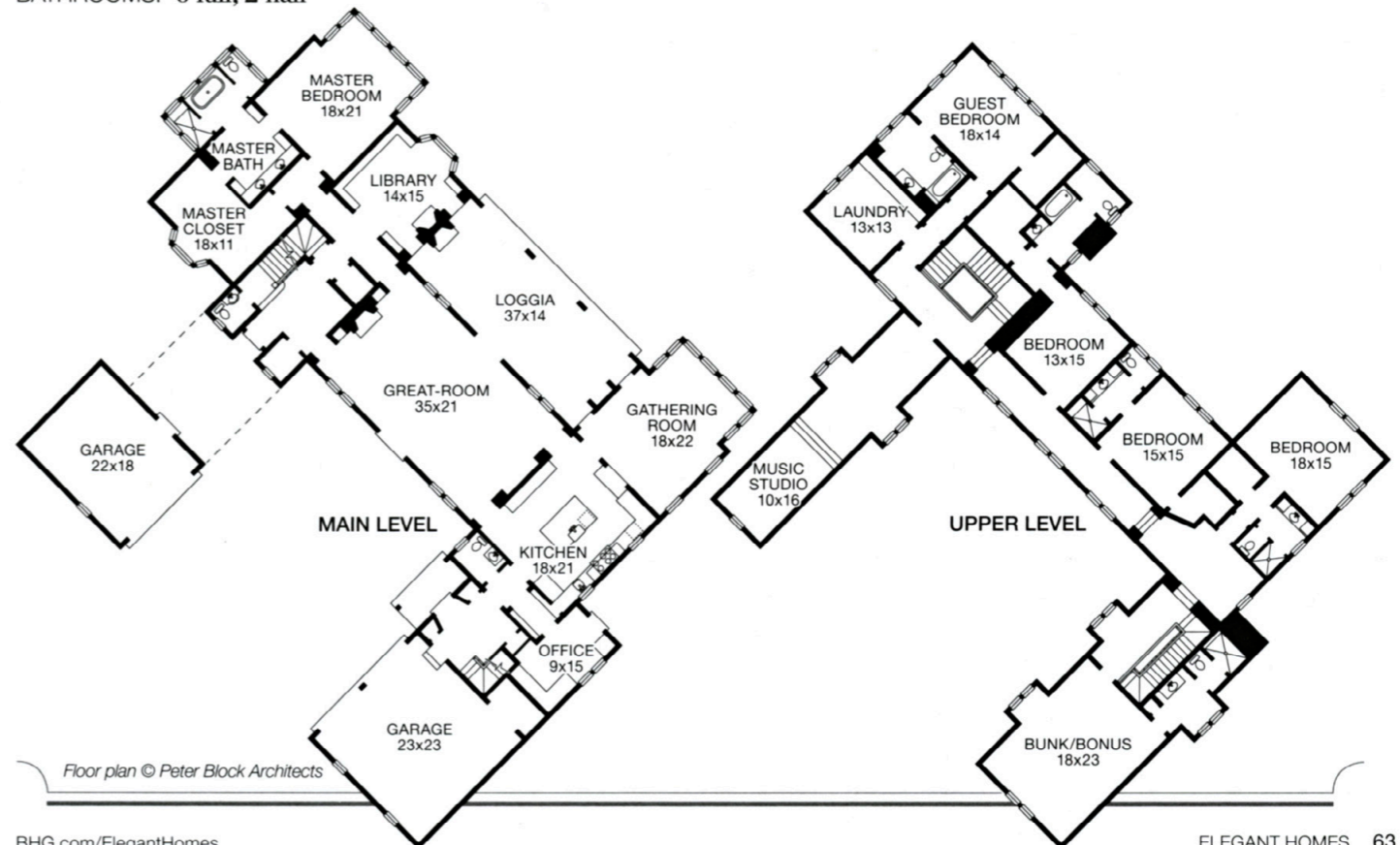




OPPOSITE: A shimmering silver-tone tub in the master bath serves as a striking visual divider between a dressing room and the wet area hosting the shower and water closet. LEFT: The master suite features a light-filled relaxation zone with French doors leading to the loggia. Measuring 8x16 feet, the seating area design was inspired by a bay window at Plumpton Place, a historic home in England designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Floor plan

TOTAL SQ. FT: 8,000
 BEDROOMS: 6
 BATHROOMS: 6 full, 2 half



Floor plan © Peter Block Architects