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Inside & Out

Southern home

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SUBTLE SOPHISTICATION

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For a Midwestern couple building a Sea Island retreat, designer Beth Webb fashioned peaceful, monochromatic interiors that prove a neutral scheme can have plenty of sizzle.





It takes a talented design team to make a seven-bedroom house live like an intimate space. Beth Webb and architect Chad Goehring of Harrison Designs in Atlanta pulled it off with thoughtful choices and delivered a house whose intimacy and warmth belies its actual size. Leaning toward the yellow range of neutrals and employing wood, wicker, and jute throughout the house, Webb's design nonetheless exudes personality. Nancy and Milt Taylor of Ohio came to Webb with open minds about the new residence. "They had seen my work and were receptive to my ideas," says Webb. "They were incredibly easy to work with. Nancy and I had shared aesthetics and even a shared sense of fashion."

In the double-height living room, Webb grounded the seating area with a nubby jute rug and arranged generously sized furniture in front of the fireplace. Console tables behind the sofas frame the area like a room within a room. Webb spiced the pale palette with shots of complementary prints. "People have said I never use prints," she says. "But I do use subtle prints. You need them to add depth." Throw pillows on the sofas introduce a honey-toned linen print and decorative trim to break up the mass of cushions. Dark accents, like the fireplace screen and pair of egg lamps, serve a similar purpose. "Black is like an exclamation point in a neutral scheme," she says.

Throughout the house, lighting fixtures work as art. The foyer's strong architecture, features a staircase rising dramatically in front of the door, a bronze chandelier fills the space like a tangle of arabesques. The

Previous pages: In the living room, a pair of armoires conceal the television and offers storage. A variety of tables add interest to the neutral scheme. The room is open to the gallery on one side and the pool beyond the windows. Opposite: A double height foyer greets visitors with grand scale. "It's not until you look at the house from the front that you realize how huge it is," says Beth Webb. Above: Block print pillows add subtle depth on the sofas. Below: Viewed from the second story balcony, the seating area exudes inviting comfort.





sconces along the stair wall are like sculptures. “I love these for their graphic quality,” says Webb. In the kitchen, faceted brass and glass pendants hang over the island like statement jewelry.

The kitchen provided challenges for Webb, in that natural light was limited and it could easily have become dark and cold. Limestone floors have the requisite warm tones, and cabinets painted a color Webb calls “the perfect greige” is pale enough to keep the room bright. One of the room’s most striking aspects is the backsplash. In a happy accident, it was mistakenly installed with the grain running vertically, but the more Webb looked at it, she grew to love its resemblance to a waterfall.

The pool deck beyond the living room windows is the nexus of the main level. The master bedroom, dining room, study, and screened porch all open to the pool terrace. A wall in the kitchen opens to the porch in good weather, connecting it to the terrace and backyard. Designed to host large gatherings of extended family, the sequence of enclosed spaces provides the livability of a much smaller house with plenty of room for company.

The master bedroom is a dramatic expression of Webb’s style. The rope-clad bed frame encloses a bed made with a dynamic mix of bedding. “I like using silk against mohair, with matelassé for ribbing and embroidery for delicacy,” she says. “It’s about adding changes in texture to create interest.”

Opposite: In the dining room, Webb used variation in scale to keep the pale palette interesting. “The wicker is thinner, and the jute rug is thicker,” she says. The table base is wood grained, and the top is lime washed. Above: For the kitchen, Webb chose quartzite countertops and backsplash for their “bomb-proof” quality.



Clockwise from above left: Between the living room and the master bedroom, the study features warmer wood finishes for a cozy effect. An antique black trunk with strapping cuts an imposing figure at the end of the hallway. Upstairs, an antique console sits beneath a framed textile, with a metal mesh-covered jug and inlaid box on display. In a guest room, Webb used a tribal trim in navy blue for accent on the shams and swathed the bed in linen panels. In the bunk room, the bedding is machine washable matelasse with wool accent pillows.





Opposite page: Webb layered fabrics like boucle, matelasse, and mohair in the master bedroom. The bed frame, covered in raffia rope, delineates the room-within-the-room. Delicately embroidered fabric on the bench at the foot of the bed contrasts with the mid-century modern campaign chair. Lined and interlined curtains create a cocooned effect. This page, clockwise from above: Double vanities flank the volcanic limestone bathtub in the luxurious bathroom. An enormous steam shower sits opposite. The master bedroom has its own private terrace overlooking the pool.



An enormous screened porch provides a second living space that opens to the kitchen in nice weather and has space for a large dining table and seating area. Arched openings give the space a distinct identity, separate from the main house.

