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\$5.00 US / \$6.00 CAN



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A GEORGIAN GROWS

The estate had it all—save for a house



ARCHITECTURE BY **DOUGLAS VANDERHORN**

TEXT BY **CATHERINE WARREN LEONE**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **WOODRUFF/BROWN**

IN GREENWICH



The brick exterior of this 13,500-square-foot Georgian home features a Doric portico, a Palladian window and a slate roof.

CLOSE TO TOWN IN GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT, a grand allée of mature trees edged a long driveway that culminated in front of a pool house, pool and tennis court. But where was the main house?

It was exactly the lack of such a structure on the nearly four-acre property, which had been carved from the late Estée Lauder's estate, that sold Mark and Chrissy Reichenbaum on the site when they found it in 1998. The recently married couple, high school best friends who



reconnected later in life, had been residing in a New England-style farmhouse in Greenwich's "back country" and had grown tired of the 25-minute ride to town. But after looking at existing houses in their desired location, they found that something was always missing—like his-and-hers bathrooms, says Chrissy.

The site's previous owner introduced the Reichenbaums to architect Douglas VanderHorn of Hilton-VanderHorn Architects, the Greenwich firm that had designed the pool house and drawn up plans for a main dwelling that had yet to be built. Chrissy, a commercial realtor, and Mark, an entrepreneur who had sold his car air freshener business to Quaker Oil, liked VanderHorn's work and asked him to create new plans for a Georgian country house. The Reichenbaums wanted an elegant and comfortable home for themselves and Mark's teenage children, Harris, 17, and Jamie, 15, as well as the newest family member, Pinky, a bichon frise.

"The property is in the pricey part of Greenwich, so for investment purposes as well as personal preference, they wanted to put a proper home—not a spec house or a builder's Georgian—on the property," says VanderHorn. His firm has a reputation for fine historic reproductions, one he likes to qualify by adding, "We don't actually copy a design, but it doesn't look like it's done in the year 2000 either."

The house VanderHorn created has 13,500 square feet of space and is currently valued at \$15 million. That's large, Chrissy says, but not too large. "You don't visit and say, 'This must be another living room they don't use,'" she explains. "To me, it feels like a fabulous Manhattan town house. As large as it is, two people could be fine or eight people could be fine. It just works."

Loyal to the design of the Georgian period, named for the consecutive reigns of England's four King Georges





In the library, opposite, a custom-designed wooden mantel is flanked by two chairs from Steven Jonas upholstered in Scalamantré fabric. The red hue is carried into the dining room, above, with its Chinese red wall color, silk drapery and antique Persian rug. The chinoiserie table dates from 1910.



from 1714 to 1830, the exterior of the brick house has such classical details as a Doric portico, a Palladian window, a slate roof, five chimneys (serving six fireplaces) and a semicircular service wing (including a four-car garage and Mark's office) topped by a cupola.

Interior rooms flow from hallways built in the shape of a cross. The 21-foot-high entry hall with Doric columns, raised-panel wainscoting and nearly seamless marble floors leads to a winding stairway on the left and an oak-paneled library on the right. In front lies the elegant living room. At the hall's far end, under a leaded glass fanlight window, the guest suite can be seen.

As for the rooms, VanderHorn notes, "There's one of everything," singling out a home theater, a billiards room, Chrissy's painting studio, a kitchen and breakfast room with a walk-in butler's pantry, a master bedroom suite with his-and-hers dressing rooms and baths, a first-floor guest suite with a private porch and four additional bedroom suites on the second floor.

Chrissy calls the home's interior style "formal but comfortable and inviting." French Louis XV furniture provides the formal, while the comfortable and inviting come in overstuffed chairs and couches upholstered in serene earth tones.

The design scheme started with the floors and carpets, with the rest based on that. In the living room, a Sultanabad carpet's burnt orange, deep blue and cream colors are complemented by burgundy couches and chairs. And the richly detailed woodwork throughout the home plays a prominent role. "The house is so beautiful," Chrissy says, "that if you didn't put any furniture in it, it would still be beautiful."

And her favorite room? Her private bath, of course. ☺

