



Originally, the consoles were a solid color but Stückenschneider hired the Koch Brothers to gild them in order to decoratively tie them into the mirrors and vases. The painting at the end of the hall is by a photographic artist from New York. "He photographs pigments suspended in water," Stückenschneider says. "It reminded us of fluffy heavenly clouds. And it had the colors she liked so we commissioned that work."



# CAST IN SHADES OF GOLD

*Written by Christy Marshall / Photography by Alise O'Brien*

Looks can deceive. From the street, this house looks like the honorable William Shakespeare may have lived there. An English Tudor of cream stucco with bands of dark wood and leaded windows, the house was built in the 1920s and designed by the venerable local architectural firm of Maritz & Young.

But walk through the arched front door and you are suddenly transported to the Mediterranean. “The interior is Italian palazzo with terrazzo floors,” says interior designer Ken Stückenschneider of Stückenschneider Decoration & Design.

As happens with so many homeowner/designer relationships, Stückenschneider was first called in years ago on one project. Then one room down, he moved on to redo most of the rest of the house.

“First I did the family room,” Stückenschneider says, referring to a large addition architect David Pape had designed and Higginbotham Brothers had built years earlier. “I added the tapes on the drapes and redid the rods so they blended in with the wood architecture. We increased the scale of the furniture because it is a massive room.” He also added a hand-tufted Elizabeth Eakins rug that took seven months to design and six months to make. “All of the rugs are custom and designed especially for the house,” he says.





Another Stückenschneider signature touch is oversized pillows. "I always like floor pillows," he says. "Kids love them." He had the seating area in the window added, the sheers and the large gold band border. The furniture was rearranged to make more conversation areas.

This Elizabeth Eakins custom-designed runner is from an 18th century French floral pattern.



The floral fabric found in New York came with its own set of problems. "When the printing presses broke in France, we got the last 60 yards of this fabric," Stückenschneider says. "They would not recut the block prints." The gold braided trims were custom designed for the house.



After a successful completion of the family room, he moved on to the rest of the house. In his wake, he scattered touches of gold.

"She wanted it fresh but still liked a proper traditional home that was grounded in classics, that would stand the test of time," Stückenschneider says. "We tweaked the details to make it classic Continental."

When he began, the walls were bright yellow; he brought in a faux finisher to repaint them shades of cream.

"There was also a carpet in the entry hall covering the black-and-white terrazzo," Stückenschneider says. "I thought that was key for setting the mood of the house to give it a bit more formality. But then we'd warm it up with fabrics, textures and window treatments."

The previous designer had opted to cover the living room terrazzo with sisal carpeting. Stückenschneider had that yanked up as well. The homeowners' existing Oriental rug dictated the design of the room.

For the key bolts of fabric, the homeowner and designer packed their bags and headed east.

We shopped in New York for a week looking at all different patterned fabrics from around the world," Stückenschneider says. "We looked at English and French and documented fabrics. After several days, she fell in love with that French 1920s hand-blocked printed chintz. We started there and built the scheme around that."

The homeowner found this Marquetry armoire. Stückenschneider hired Donald Counts of Christborn Furniture and Cabinet Company to redo the interior. Glass shelves were added; the drawers are lined in felt and to prevent warping, hold bowls of water.



The walls were already faux-finished but Stückenschneider had the dining room chairs reupholstered in Fortuny fabrics. He also added the rock crystal chandelier.



The house is filled to the proverbial rafters with fine collections—be it tea caddies, gilded mirrors, Chinese porcelains, religious art, and antique furniture to patterned china. And Stückenschneider made his choices with that fact in mind: “It really suited the collection she had formed with Jules Pass over the years of continental French and German Marquetry furniture supplemented with 18th century Chinese porcelain made for the European market trade,” he says.

The fabric paired well with the antiques. Stückenschneider then layered on top of that velvets in bright colors. “She really wanted it to be happy, floral, pretty, with some strong colors,” he says. “She wanted to freshen it up with bursts of color. So there is hot pink flame-stitch velvet on the chair backed with the chartreuse damask.”

The family entertains. A lot. One room gracefully tumbles into the next making it optimal for crowds as well as the occasional nook for a one-on-one conversation. The feeling of the house is pure serenity. Candles flickering, fresh flowers in vases, music wafting in the background, and the housekeeper greeting you at the door with offers of coffee or water. If houses could talk, this one would have a Parisian whisper of a grande dame dressed in shades of gold. **sl**