

INTERVIEW WITH MELISSA LINDSAY, PIMLICO INTERIORS | PHOTOGRAPHER AMY VISCHIO

GRAND TOUR

An **ANTIQUE HOME** embraces a more **MODERN APPROACH** while **HONORING** its history



This is a beautiful antique home. What drew your clients to it? My clients are a family of six, and they really desired living closer to a community and their kids' activities. With four children, they're driving all the time, and they loved the idea of being able to walk to town. They found this Federal Georgian-style home in Ridgefield that was built in 1787, and it's a little over 9,000 square feet. The clients had come from an antique house, and they love the quirkiness and charm these homes can bring. Before they purchased it, a father-and-son team had completely restored

and renovated it, so while we did some work on it, we didn't need to do a full gut job. We incorporated a few key pieces here and there as well as some artwork they wanted to bring over, but they were ready to start from scratch with furnishings and decorating. This was their forever home.

What was the extent of the updates you made? One major change was updating the recessed lighting—since the ceilings are on the low side because this is an old house, we changed all of the recessed lighting



opposite: Glimpsed from the foyer, the dining room is outfitted with a cluster of light fixtures by Profiles; the second-floor hallway is furnished with an ottoman from Hickory Chair in a Rosemary Hallgarten fabric, and the wall sconces are by The Urban Electric Co. **this page:** The family room seating area is centered on a sleek custom coffee table by Pimlico Interiors. The hanging light fixture is from L'Antiquaire, the rug is by J.D. Staron, and the floor lamp is by Porta Romana.



this page, top left and right:
The powder room, tucked under the main staircase, gets the jewel-box treatment with a stunning Nobilis wallcovering, vintage hanging light fixture and sconce by The Urban Electric Co.; artwork by Amy Vischio and a CF Modern ottoman grace the family room. **opposite:** Ombré pillows by Rosemary Hallgarten and a floral pillow fabric by the Designers Guild introduce moments of rich color into the family room.





to a more contemporary, flangeless style so they weren't as much of a distraction. The clients didn't want to embark on a full kitchen renovation, so we put in all new countertops and plumbing fixtures, painted the cabinets and replaced a built-in desk with new cabinetry. We also installed a new walnut countertop, sink and faucet in the butler's pantry, and we changed all of the vanities and sconces in the bathrooms upstairs. In terms of decorating, we used a lot of wallcoverings throughout the house and all new paint. It was about bringing the house to the next level with some fairly significant changes, but nothing major in terms of architectural updates.

What was it like working with this client? The wife really appreciates good design, quality and craftsmanship. What I love about her is that she knows what she likes; she's very decisive. I was able to take what she liked, combine that with the architecture of the home, and create a really strong design. There was great synergy between us, and we would joke—I would bring three fabrics to show her, and I already knew which one she would pick. She would say, "I like that one." And I'd say, "I know." And

she'd say, "I know you know!" [laughs] We were so in sync at the end; it's really special when you can get to that point in your working relationship.

Since the clients wanted to start new, what were they looking for? We took a slightly more modern approach from where they had come from, but it was important to still honor the home's historic architectural qualities. It's an expansive home with nice proportions, and there's a beautiful mix of intimate rooms, like her reading room and the husband's study, and larger rooms, like the living room. It was interesting to balance the charm and casual feel of this house with its elegant grandness.

How would you describe the color palette you chose? The living room is the grandest space, and it gets great light throughout the day. I loved the idea of a beautiful cream palette, and I punctuated it with a strong teal and mixed in some cooler grays. The space feels soothing and elegant yet vibrant with the teal. It was just a few moments of it to give it some energy, but not enough to overwhelm the space. It was also important not to compete with architectural details like the windows and columns, but

rather to enhance them; the cream enveloping the room does that nicely here. For some of the smaller spaces, like the study or the reading room, these were opportunities to create jewel boxes.

Since his study and her reading room both open up to the living room, did you have to design these three rooms together in a sense? A little bit. I wanted you to be able to look through one room into the next and feel like it all made sense, yet also feel like you were in very different spaces. Because the living room is so large, if it had just flowed into those other two rooms, you wouldn't have felt grounded. The rooms needed to flow yet feel distinct. His study is bold, and it reads quite well off of the teal in the living room; the sharp contrast of the large cream space and this smaller, saturated room is really dynamic. I made her reading room more feminine with a curved sofa, floral wallcovering and a softer palette of mauves and lilacs. I wanted these smaller, interior rooms to stand out yet not feel disparate from the rest of the house.

Any special considerations for the dining room? The biggest design challenge here is that the dining table is off-center. If you're looking into the room from the foyer, there is a fireplace on the left and two windows in the back that serve as a focal point. If you were to center the table between those windows, which is what would make sense, you would be too close to the fireplace. Since we weren't getting rid of the fireplace or moving walls, we had to figure out how to make this room look spatially correct while being off-center. My solution was to put a cluster of light fixtures above the table. A single fixture clearly would have looked off-center, but a cluster of lights not only tricks the eye but looks great!

How did you determine the best layout for the family room? This is a comfortably sized space for their family of six. We chose not to put the TV over the fireplace—it's across from the sofa—and we devised a layout ideal for gathering and watching TV. The appeal of the Chesterfield sofa, which anchors the room, is that there are no loose cushions, so it's a great





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this spread: Updates to the spacious kitchen included new faucet fixtures by Dornbracht and hanging light fixtures by The Urban Electric Co. The butler's pantry received a new vintage light fixture, and a Celerie Kemble wallcovering offers a sophisticated feel.





above: Dining chairs by Baker Furniture are pulled up to a Rose Tarlow table in the dining room. A Phillip Jeffries wallcovering envelops the space. **near right and opposite:** The wife's reading room is wrapped in an elegant floral wallcovering by Stark. A rug by J.D. Staron grounds the space, and the demilune tables flanking the fireplace and the wall sconces above the mantel are all vintage. The gently curved sofa, upholstered in a Dedar fabric, and a floor lamp from Circa Lighting create the perfect reading spot.





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this spread: One of the seating areas in the expansive living room includes a Holly-Hunt sofa, vintage club chairs and an antique mirror coffee table through Pimlico Interiors.





above: A vintage brass leaf table lamp is displayed on a set of nesting tables by Edward Ferrell. The rug is by Rosemary Hallgarten. **opposite:** A custom "tête-à-tête" chair designed by Pimlico Interiors creatively connects the two seating areas in the living room; a sculpture by Paul Bloch through Heather Gaudio Fine Art is another point of interest.



“It’s fun to face the design **CHALLENGES** of an old house. They can lead you to **CREATIVE IDEAS.**”

—MELISSA LINDSAY



family sofa. We upholstered it in an indoor/outdoor fabric, and it has a tight back and seat. The round chairs completely swivel around, and the armless chair facing the fireplace is visually open. This was important because we didn’t want the chair to block the way you walk through the space, yet it’s substantial and very comfortable. There’s an upholstered ottoman off to the side that’s easy to pull up as well. I also loved the symmetry of the two chests on either side of the fireplace, which makes that wall a strong focal point. It was about creating beauty and a strong spatial layout, and making a space that was built for a time when we lived very differently into the best it can be for today.

What inspired the purples and greens in this room? My client loves purple and bringing in color with pillows. We did different iterations with pillows for the various seasons, which is how she grew up, and I thought that was great; it gives you a different feel during different times of the

year. For this room, we mixed the warm with the cool. The warmth of the wood furniture feels very in keeping with an antique home but in a modern way, and there are cool tones with some of the upholstery. We did a wool flannel for the curved chairs and a cotton velvet for the sofa that has more of an elegant feel. We balanced texture with this small moment of color. I love the floral and the moss green; it just works.

How did their master bedroom come together? Two things were musts. One, she wanted to keep their existing canopy bed; and two, she absolutely loved the rug from their existing bedroom, so we recreated that on a larger scale for their new master. Those were our starting points, and we built on the design from there. It was a decently scaled room, so an upholstered settee at the end of the bed with a vintage coffee table filled in one expanse. We created another moment by the window, with a chair and an ottoman with beautiful lines, that stands on its own. The ceilings



this page: In the middle daughter's bedroom, a feature wall covered in a whimsical wallcovering by Schumacher is a delightful surprise upon entering. The bed is dressed in linens from The Linen Shop, and nightstands custom through Pimlico Interiors are topped with lamps from Made Goods. In the corner, a vintage Art Deco-style vanity is paired with a vintage acrylic chair for homework sessions, and a ceiling light from L'Antiquaire is overhead. Vintage sconces placed above the fireplace mantel are another chic touch.





top left, top right and near right: In the master bedroom, the area rug and the ombré drapery fabric are both from Holly Hunt. A plush settee is pulled up to a vintage coffee table at the foot of the bed, and a club chair and ottoman by Donghia are tucked into a corner. **bottom left and bottom right:** The youngest daughter's bedroom is a vision in pink. The canopy and drapery fabric is by Designers Guild through Osborne & Little, and the rug is by Stark. In addition to the custom bed by Pimlico Interiors, seating options include a fuschia leather ottoman by Oly Studio and an ottoman covered in a striped fabric by Duralee. A floor lamp by Stray Dog and a turquoise table lamp by Jill Rosenwald help brighten the room at night.





opposite: Fun hanging light fixtures by Arteriors and clean-lined floating shelves on either side of the bed free up space in the oldest daughter's bedroom. The custom headboard by Pimlico Interiors is accented with taping by Samuel & Sons, and the bed linens are from The Linen Shop. **above:** In the third-floor playspace, Pantone chairs through Design Within Reach are set up for playing games. The built-in window seat and wall sconces were added during the project.

are low, so I was mindful about keeping the room feeling expansive. Instead of traditional drapery hardware, we created a track that brings the drapery panels up to the ceiling. The ombré pattern of the draperies gives the room a luxurious feel and draws your eye up. It worked nicely with the existing wall color from when they bought the house, so this was the only room we didn't paint. It has a soothing palette and a great mix of old and new.

How did you give each of the daughters' rooms a personality?

These rooms were the first design presentations we did, as it was important to the clients that the children's rooms be complete upon move-in day. The room with the hanging lights over the bed is the oldest daughter's room, and she has a cool, funky style. We put this neat wallpaper on the ceiling, fun lights over the bed and floating shelves on either side. I love the taping along the edge of the headboard, which is a nice detail

you see when you walk in. This room turned out really well despite not having a lot of space. The room with the silver metallic wallcovering is the middle daughter's, and it could be mistaken for a master—it's large, and we played up the elegance of it while making it feel fun. There is this beautiful headboard, a Murano glass light fixture, vintage Murano glass sconces by the fireplace and a whimsical feature wall with a cozy tufted sofa and ottoman. She didn't want any color in her room, so it was an opportunity to let certain pieces shine, like the vintage Art Deco-style vanity that serves as a desk. The pink bedroom is the youngest daughter's room. It's fairly large with a fireplace in the corner and a lot of windows, so we had to ground the space and give it hierarchy. The canopy-like bed can also serve as a sofa, and she can create a seating area around it with the chair and ottomans. She loved the pink floral design, and I paired it with an unexpected stripe and blues and grays so it didn't feel too precious.





this spread: The husband's study makes a bold statement with orange club chairs by Jiun Ho, side tables by Palecek and a floor lamp by Porta Romana.

Tell me about the playroom. This is on the top floor, along with their son's bedroom and a guest room. It was already there, so we did a few things such as adding the built-in window seat, the wall sconces and some built-in shelving for game storage. We also created a very large lounge seating area.

What did you like about designing and decorating an antique home?

It's actually fun to face the design challenges of an old house. Sometimes they lead you to creative ideas, because if you were building a new home, you might say, "We're doing a large living room, but we're not going to

throw in iconic columns!" *[laughs]* When things aren't done exactly how they would be done today, that creates challenges. But when you can come up with creative approaches to deal with them, that's when the magic happens. —INTERVIEW BY LAUREN FETTERMAN

Resources:

Interior designer: Pimlico Interiors, Westport; 203-972-8166; pimlicointeriors.com
Contractor: Keith Gerety, Gerety Building & Restoration, Katonah, NY; 203-531-8100; geretyrestoration.com