



Mediterranean Modern

Traditional meets 21st
century at a historic
Lowry Hill home

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NESTLED IN MINNEAPOLIS' LOWRY HILL NEIGHBORHOOD, A STately MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE ABODE STUNS WITH A TRADITIONAL LIBRARY—FEATURING WALLS OF DARK-STAINED BUILT INS AND A HAND-PAINTED CEILING.

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ransforming this lovely Lowry Hill Mediterranean for modern living while preserving its historical character wasn't the easy path to take. But according to Jessica Dolezal, owner of Dolezal Creative Design + Build, it was certainly the right one.

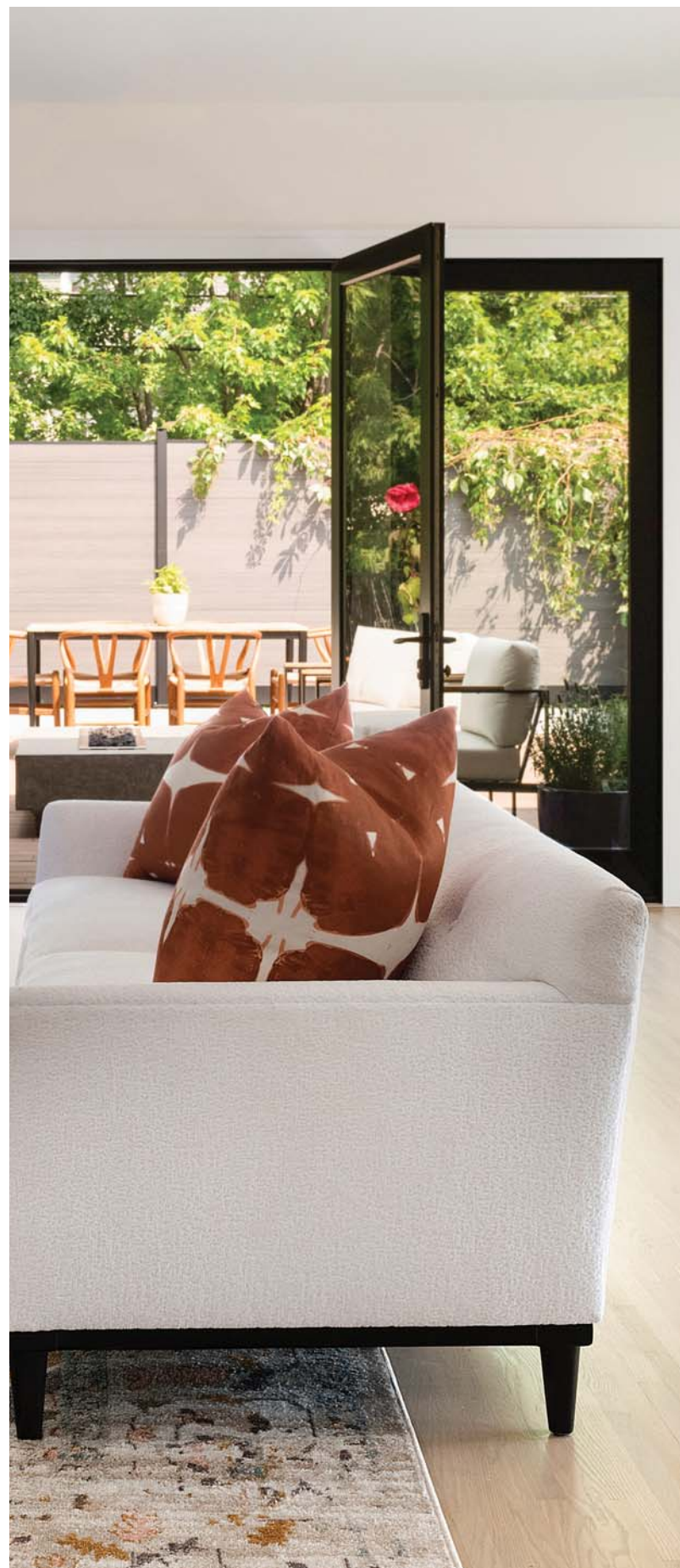
In fact, the house was built in 1919 by I.V. Gedney (son of Mathias Gedney, founder of Gedney pickles), and the layout followed the script of the era—a labyrinth of formal rooms frosted with decorative trim and moldings and a closed-off kitchen in the darkest part of the house. An ill-conceived addition in the 1990s only added to the complexity. "You just got lost in the house," adds Dolezal.

This complexity had the team thinking, and they initially considered demolishing the house but ultimately decided it was important to honor the character of the home and neighborhood. The solution was to leave the ivy-covered exterior's elegant metalwork, balustrades, and arched windows intact and clear to the decks inside. Dolezal notes they looked at every option before gutting the interior.

Knocking down a load-bearing wall required the installation of two 26-foot steel beams and large footings to support them—a worthy splurge, according to Dolezal. The investment would allow for a more open plan, which the owner, a busy medical professional, dearly wanted to better entertain and relax in with his family. Dolezal kept the staircase in its original location in the middle of the house but replaced it with a lighter interpretation: a floating, sculptural set of steps with a custom iron railing. The kitchen was moved up into a brighter, more central part of the house where it can soak up sunny southwestern exposure and enjoy sightlines to the front and back yards. Pale red oak flooring, walnut cabinetry, and white walls throughout reflect a soft California-casual look favored by the family.

The main-floor library is where tradition speaks the loudest, and it offers a distinguished counterpoint to the laid-back

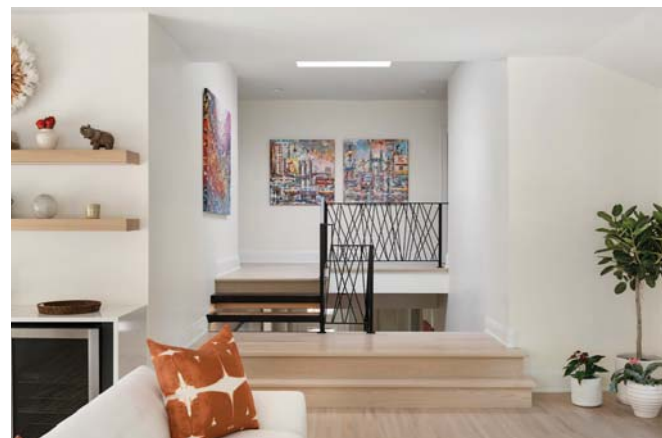




THE UPSTAIRS FAMILY ROOM IS PACKED WITH COLOR, NATURAL LIGHT, AND A SEAMLESS CONNECTION TO THE SURROUNDING NATURE. A SET OF LARGE, BLACK-FRAMED FRENCH DOORS LEADS TO THE DECK, JUST ONE OF THE HOME'S DISTINCT OUTDOOR AREAS. THERE, A FIRE PIT, SEATING AREA, AND DINING TABLE AWAIT FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN SEARCH OF A GOOD TIME (LEFT). A STYLED WET BAR WITH A MINIATURE FRIDGE AND SHELVES FOR STORAGE AND DÉCOR MAKES ENTERTAINING A BREEZE (ABOVE).



NATURAL MATERIALS LIKE WOOD, STONE, AND CONCRETE MAKE THE PRIMARY BATH A PERFECT PLACE FOR REST AND RELAXATION. IN THE FAMILY ROOM, ART AND AN L-SHAPED SOFA ADD A BOUT OF BLUE, AND IN THE NEARBY KITCHEN, A WATERFALL ISLAND CATCHES THE EYE WITH ITS STRIKING BLACK VEIN. UPSTAIRS, A LOFTED BED AND AN OUTER SPACE-THEMED CEILING DESIGN DELIVER AN OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD BEDROOM, WHILE AN ABSTRACT MURAL MAKES A SUBTLE STATEMENT IN THE PRIMARY SUITE. WHITE, GALLERY-LIKE WALLS THROUGHOUT THE HOME SET THE SCENE FOR COLORFUL WORKS OF CUSTOM ART.





energy of the rest of the house. The 9-foot ceiling is from another time, too. Hand-painted by artist Carolynne Darling to resemble an old-world map, it drew inspiration from the family's favorite literary adventures—"Gulliver's Travels," "Ulysses," and "Peter Pan." At the center is a directionally correct compass surrounded by vignettes, including a giant octopus menacing a ship, the sea god Triton, and a delicate treehouse with Peter Pan and Wendy figures. The room is lined with dark book-

cases, the home's original limestone fireplace surround, and an irresistible plush velvet banquette.

To marry historical and contemporary styles, Dolezal carried a few traditional finishes throughout the house, such as window casings and baseboards. "We were very intentional with our choices to make this work," she says. As a result, getting the bones right gave her the freedom to apply modern touches—for example, the waterfall kitchen island and frameless

corner fireplace in the family room. She notes that while the floor plan is more open than it used to be, it's not an echo chamber. "There's very much a sense of separation."

The family loves to gather around a fire, and the refreshed home has five spots for them to do so—in the family room, living room, and library, plus two outside. Two of the interior models are woodburning and zero-clearance (no chimney or distance from furniture required). This gave Dolezal the freedom to place them where they made the most sense and is another example of how she melded the traditional crackle and scent of a wood fire with modern style.

One hallmark of Mediterranean design is the effortless flow between indoor and outdoor spaces, and Dolezal wanted to emphasize that connection. So, she placed sets of large French doors throughout the house to provide access and clear views to the home's distinct outdoor areas—a stone veranda in the front, a courtyard on the side, and a deck that extends off the family room upstairs that gets filled with plants and flowers in the summer.

The owner's two children also had a hand in designing their bedrooms, which made the process more fun for everyone. "I tried to incorporate their tastes and interests," says Dolezal. Outer space and sports are clear enthusiasms in the son's room, with nature taking center stage in the daughter's. The primary bedroom is clean and neutral, with a soothing blue and white mural. The en suite bathroom is Roman-worthy with a 950-pound cement tub (that required piano movers to install) and a rain shower that can deliver all sorts of precipitation—from a sprinkle to a downpour. A walnut ceiling, live-edge vanity, and woodgrain tiles soften the space and lend a beachy, natural look.

The brighter and better-functioning house is serving the family well, according to the homeowner, who appreciates all the cozy spots for reading, listening to music, eating, and spending time together. Dolezal says she put her heart and soul into this project and is gratified with the outcome. "It flows so well," she says. "I'm proud of how richly this home lives." ❧