

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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interiors + design




A formal garden with a stone path, manicured hedges, a fountain, and tall cypresses. The garden is set in a lush, wooded area with tall evergreen trees in the background. The path leads through various garden beds with colorful flowers and shrubs. A stone fountain is a central feature, and two stone statues are placed on the path. The overall atmosphere is serene and well-maintained.

NEW ORDER

KEY REVISIONS READY A LUTYENS-INSPIRED
HOME IN WEST LINN, OREGON,
FOR ITS RESIDENTS' NEXT CHAPTER.

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INTERIOR DESIGN / JOELLE C. NEBEN, MARRON INC.
HOME BUILDER / BRIAN BOHRER AND JEFF BOHRER,
CORNERSTONE CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, LLC.



In the living room of a West Linn home refreshed by designer Joelle C. Nesen is a sofa in a Kravet buffalo plaid and a coffee table by Formations. Round-bottomed armchairs include one in a delicate Rose Tallow Melrose House pattern. On the floor is a rug from Kadir Biçe. Above is a Vaughan chandelier.

A rich and fulfilling life is dependent upon constant discovery and change, lest the status quo render one complacent—or worse, out of touch. The same can be said of great architecture, as a West Linn, Oregon couple realized after they'd lived for two decades in a Sir Edwin Lutyens-inspired home by architect Jeffrey L. Miller. "It was such an amazing project and property. It just needed a few tweaks," says designer Joelle C. Nesen, who was commissioned to rework the interior architecture and design to better fit the newest phase of her clients' lives—without children in the house and with the wife, an antiques dealer, retired.

Much of the work for Nesen and senior designer Morgan Thomas involved making sense of the wife's large and impressive collection of antiques, artwork and porcelain. "On the West Coast, someone with such fine antiques is definitely a rarity," Nesen says. However, once her client had closed her Pearl District shop, most of the remaining inventory had come back to the house, yielding an embarrassment of riches. "In general, antiques create more depth and soul within a space," she explains, "but my client had so many she didn't know what should stay or what should go. They wanted to simplify and make something fresher and lighter."

Certain features that might have been appealing 20 years ago had also become challenging over time. A breakfast area and enclosed bar room, for example, blocked the kitchen from the sun room's dramatic vista of Mount Hood. The space just so happened to be where the homeowners were spending time enjoying the views and natural light. "It was heated and cooled by a mini-split system," says the designer, "which for heat wasn't very cozy." Upstairs, they'd tired of walking through their closets to get from the master bedroom to the bathroom beyond; and they wished for the bath to be more easily accessible with better function for the 6-foot-5-inch husband and the 5-foot-tall wife. "One of the things that I love about doing projects with people who've lived in a house for so long is they know what they want," says Brian Bohrer, who served as the general contractor with his brother, Jeff Bohrer.

The first order of business was knocking out the old bar and breakfast area to devise an open lounge with comfortable seating and built-in shelving that accommodates a new bar. "We created a clearer sight line to the view and to connect the spaces resulting in a better flow," notes Nesen, and to warm things up in the cooler months, floor heating was installed. In the double-height living room, the two-story window tower was rebuilt. Nesen also tailored the bathroom counters and wardrobe dimensions to the husband and wife's respective heights.

Aesthetically, Nesen reimaged the main level and master suite with a brighter palette and simpler, cleaner fabric and wallpaper patterns to replace the former French Provincial vibe. "We were able to make some interesting choices," notes the designer, like the living room's sofa swathed in a buffalo plaid and Victoria Hagan drapery fabric with an understated motif that lends extra depth; and the den's leopard pattern carpet paired with rust-hued plaid armchairs. The designer's boldest move might just be the dining room, now covered in graphic wallpaper as a foil to a 19th-century painting by Louis De Koninck and more traditional drapery and upholstery fabrics. "It's a great backdrop to give it a little playfulness and not seem so severe," she says.

The result allows the owners' antiques to stand in sharp relief, especially since Nesen edited their numbers. Now, a collection of Quimper pottery is assembled and displayed on a white plaster wall in the library and a group of European oils hangs in the entry's stairwell. New elements mixed in among her clients' antiques and repolished furnishings not only add interest, they give functionality to areas that were previously unused. A double-wingback chair anchors the living room's double-height bay window, while built-in shelving along an opposite wall frames the new library space. "This room was so big, but they only used a small portion of it," Nesen says. "We really wanted to draw people to both ends."

After its update, the house breathes easier now, with a logical layout and treasured accessories pared down and displayed to full advantage. "It was about making choices that would take them for the duration," says Nesen, "and are style-appropriate for them and the architecture of the house." ■

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Opposite: Nesen combined the owners' chandelier with a dining table by Brazil Baroque and four bow chairs by Meda Goods, upholstered in a Fortuny silk. The draperies are a Donghia silk blend.

Below: Pintura Studio's Zhen Fen wallpaper adds graphic impact in the dining room, where a lamp from Iddis stands on an Alfonso Maria console. Part of Nesen's brief involved integrating a heady assortment of antiques and art.

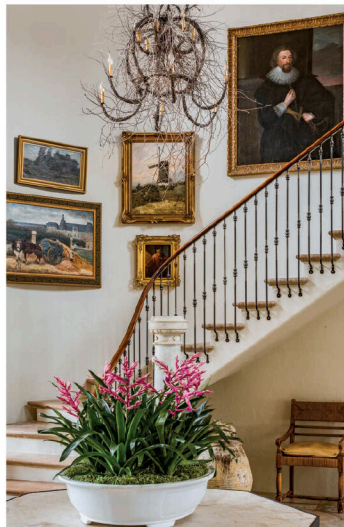


Rickwood Cabinetry's custom built-ins define the library. Nesen covered the wife's antique chairs in a Jaeger linen blend and reupholstered her settee in a Brunschwig & Filz print, both in keeping with the traditional feel of the furnishings. Complementing the arrangement is a vintage rug from Kush-Rugs.



Below, left: Nesen gave new focus to the entry, curating a selection of the couple's European oil paintings to hang as a gallery installation up the grand stair. The branch-form chandelier is an extra piece.

Below, right: The wife's extensive collection of French Quimper pottery provided plenty of choices for Nesen to arrange on a wall in the library. "We worked hard to create collections and groups to be more visually dramatic; then just having accessories everywhere," says the designer.





Opposite: A China Seas wallcovering was part of the master bedroom's new look. At the foot of the bed, dressed in linens from French Quarter, is a bench in a Lee Jofa fabric. The table lamp is by Vaughan; the carpet is by Stark.

Left: The armchair's Rogers & Goffigon pattern plays off that in the China Seas drapery fabric and wallcovering. The RH mirror and CFC table are new pieces but bring an antique flair to the space.