

The Next Level

Classic and bold design elements take an awe-inspiring
Dallas residence up another notch.

WRITTEN BY CHRISTINE DEORIO | PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN KARLISCH | STYLING BY JENNY O'CONNOR



Architecture: William Briggs, William S. Briggs, Architect **Interior Design:** Laura Lee Clark Falconer, Laura Lee Clark Interior Design, Inc.
Home Builder: Robert Clark, Robert Clark and Associates, Inc.

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ne might argue that when the new owners of this Dallas home called upon interior designer Laura Lee Clark Falconer to give the place “wow” factor, there wasn’t much work to be done. The French

Revival abode was remarkable already, with a groin-vaulted ceiling in its central hall, a sweeping marble staircase and gracious living spaces overlooking a pool, pool house and manicured grounds. However, Falconer and her clients—a husband and wife who enjoy hosting intimate gatherings with friends and spending time with family in equal measure—saw the potential for more. “The residence had a wonderful feel from its classical scale and elegant proportions,” the interior designer recalls. “It was a blank slate in need of detail, so we finessed and added layers to almost every surface.”

The goal was not to change the home’s classic character, but to fully express it—much to the delight of the original architect, William Briggs, who was joined by both Falconer and builder Robert Clark in updating the abode. Beginning with the formal living room, which Briggs had positioned at the terminus of the grand central hall to capture backyard vistas, elaborate existing crown molding eases the transition between two new surfaces: a mirrored fireplace wall and a glossy enameled ceiling. These finishes bounce light and “make the room sparkle,” notes Falconer, whose team included senior designer and project manager Kelly Satre and design assistant Cassie Hutchinson. “This is the first space you see when entering the house, and we wanted something special to set it apart.”

Elsewhere, the formal dining room’s vintage Murano glass chandelier catches the eye before letting it drift to a canopy of hand-painted cherry blossoms on the walls. Across the hall, a study that doubles as a lounge for guests gained gravitas thanks to a gold-veined dark marble fireplace surround that Falconer sourced while visiting an Italian quarry. Meanwhile, a combination of classical ceiling ornamentation with sleek SieMatic cabinetry in stainless steel and Macassar ebony finishes adorns the kitchen. Here, soft-white expanses of Calacatta Caldia marble form

the countertops, backsplash and vent hood, where Clark—working with project manager Jeff West Jr.—had it fabricated “to emulate detailing you would typically only see in wood,” he explains. The effect is repeated on the primary bathroom’s marble slab walls, which culminate at a crown molding seemingly cut from a block of stone. “It was a thrill to take that language of wood moldings throughout the house and apply it to a different material,” says Briggs, whose project manager was Tom Muckenstrom. “It’s difficult to find people who can do something so technically difficult, but Robert is familiar with this level of effort and execution.”

The furnishing selections, many of them bespoke, are equally unique. “Keeping in mind that ‘wow’ factor, we wanted every room to have something not seen before,” Falconer explains. In the formal living room, it’s a pair of antique Biedermeier chairs reupholstered in a custom blue embroidered silk moiré. In the primary bathroom, it’s reverse-painted vanities depicting the tree of life. And in the study, it’s a vintage, patinated-bronze Philip and Kelvin LaVerne coffee table that was hand-carved with a chinoiserie scene, and then buried in a special soil to oxidize.

Accents like cherry blossoms, the origami-like folds of the study’s chandelier and the dining chairs’ upholstery evince Falconer’s appreciation for East Asian motifs and techniques, which add “such a layer of elegance,” observes the interior designer. Modern influences also include a Saarinen pedestal table in the grandchildren’s playroom, a midcentury chandelier in the formal living room and fine art throughout selected in consultation with Ashley Tatum of Tatum Art Advisory, including works by David Hockney, Robert Polidori and others.

Underneath its French formality, the house is “secretly modernist,” Briggs notes—from its floorplan prioritizing connections to outdoor spaces created by landscape architect Harold Leidner, to details such as the free-floating main staircase, “which spirals up on its own weight, ascending into this dream realm of rest and repose,” he adds. “The way you move through the house is not traditional; it’s eccentric, unexpected.” Falconer agrees: “What William started here was beautiful, and it feels like his vision was finally realized.” The result, in a word—Wow. ■



David Hockney’s *Coloured Flowers Made of Paper and Ink* hangs above a Port Laurent marble fireplace surround, which interior designer Laura Lee Clark Falconer sourced from an Italian quarry for this Dallas home’s study. Porta Romana’s Axel chandelier suspends from the coffered ceiling, lined with McLaurin & Piercy wallpaper from James Showroom. The custom rug is Holland & Sherry.



Above: The formal living room houses a pair of antique Biedermeier chairs in an embroidered silk by de Gournay, which flank a vintage French Art Deco table. At the window sits a Ferrell Mittman sofa in a Castel fabric from David Sutherland, where the John Lyle floor lamps were also sourced.

Opposite: Accented by cast-glass moldings by Stephen Cavallo, the custom mirror treatment of the formal living room's fireplace wall reflects a midcentury chandelier found on 1stdibs and a mirror by Eve Kaplan from Gerald Bland in New York. The oil painting is Frederick Frary Fursman's *In the Shade*.





Above: In the formal dining room, an antique Louis XVI-period fruitwood console with bronze trim from Newel is framed by hand-painted Gracie wallpaper. A brass mirror from 1stdibs hangs behind an arrangement by Haile Wossen.

Opposite: A vintage Barovier&Toso Murano glass chandelier lights a custom Carlyle dining room table by Holly Hunt. Natasha Baradaran's Wrap dining chairs, covered in a Rubelli fabric, top a Shiir rug from David Sutherland. Vintage Italian Art Deco wall sconces flank *Auric Field* by Lita Albuquerque, which incorporates 24-karat gold leaf.



Above: The Midas Grand Tier chandelier by Fisher Weisman makes a spectacular statement at the top of the staircase. Gracing the far wall is Robert Polidori's *L'Orangerie interior, green carpet #1*, Château de Versailles, Versailles, France.

Opposite: When asked to select a color for her study, the wife responded: "Tiffany blue." Baxter Painting Inc. applied a custom hue to cabinetry accented with panels of hand-painted de Gournay silk. A Milan chair and ottoman from the Jan Showers Collection rest on a floor covering from Truett Fine Carpets & Rugs. The crystal-beaded palm-leaf chandelier is a 1940s French design.





Above: The primary bathroom walls are paneled with slabs of Calacatta Bettogli marble from Aria Stone Gallery, executed by builder Robert Clark to mimic architectural detailing throughout the abode. Jean de Merry's Helena vanity was customized with a tree of life scene. The P.E. Guerin faucet is from Vivian Watson Associates.

Opposite: Above the primary bedroom's two-sided fireplace hangs a 1940s-style Venetian mirror. The vintage gold-dusted, fluted-glass chandelier is attributed to Murano glassmaker Seguso. Lorin Marsh's Marquee bed from David Sutherland features textured and tinted mirrored-glass panels framed in Australian walnut. The Silhouette chairs and ottoman are by Allan Knight.