



# PAST *Perfect*

A MODERNIST SENSIBILITY  
AND AN AFFINITY FOR HISTORY  
INFORM A FRESH LOOK FOR  
A FAMILY HOME IN MARIETTA.

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ARCHITECTURE / LINDA MACARTHUR, LINDA MACARTHUR, ARCHITECT  
INTERIOR DESIGN / BRIAN WATFORD, BRIAN WATFORD INTERIORS  
HOME BUILDER / MICHAEL LADISIC, LADISIC FINE HOMES

**W**hen Greg and Lee Alison Rable decided to blend classic and modern aesthetics for a new home in Marietta, Georgia, the past became their greatest resource. The couple and their two teenage sons had called a traditional-style residence home for 17 years and, in contrast to the open floor plans and luminous interiors they had grown to admire, it had begun to feel dated. Craving clean lines and sunlit rooms, they set out in search of a fresh sensibility.

After touring a historic James Means residence—modified by architect Linda MacArthur—the couple became smitten with the home’s U-shaped plan. “We loved the way it wrapped around the beautiful backyard and pool. We knew immediately that was what we wanted,” says Lee Alison, who hired MacArthur to construct a similar home near Marietta’s historic square. “This is where I grew up and my family still lives here, so it was only natural to settle here.” Keeping the principles of modernism and the enduring quality of English country houses in mind, MacArthur devised a stately residence that’s as nostalgic as it is current.

To give the home modern functionality, MacArthur employed an open-plan kitchen, breakfast area and family room, and positioned the interior bar adjacent to the formal living room, dining room and pool terrace. “You have to think about how the family will move through the house,” says the architect, who incorporated two staircases—one in each arm of the U-shaped plan. “They used to be near the entry, but it doesn’t make sense to come down the stairs and end up at the front door in your pajamas.”

MacArthur took an especially artful approach for the modernist main staircase, which almost “looks like it’s

floating,” she says. Looking to renowned architect Sir Edwin Lutyens’ design for England’s Deanery Garden as inspiration, the architect used window walls to help enclose the stairs. In this case, she says, “the stair was not merely a way to get up to another floor but a way to bring light to both levels.” To enhance the references to English country vernacular, she framed the windows with cedar and expressed the stairwell on the exterior by punctuating its brick cladding with cedar and glass.

After general contractor Michael Ladisic was brought on to construct the home, the Rables tapped designer Brian Watford to furnish the interiors. “I’ve known Brian since elementary school, but we fell out of touch after high school,” Lee Alison recounts. “One day I was browsing Pinterest and saw work he had done for a local show house, and I knew instantly he was the right designer for us.” She requested to meet for coffee, and soon the reacquainted schoolmates were shopping for paint colors, furniture and fabrics.

Watford seamlessly connected his interior design to the architecture, suspending a chandelier with bubble-like glass spheres that cascade through the sunlit stairwell. “I played off the modern design of the staircase,” he says. In the interest of more ethereality, he painted the kitchen’s perimeter cabinetry a pale shade of blue, which complements the teal tone used for the island and pantry cabinetry. Says the designer of the similarly saturated high-gloss interior bar: “The lacquer adds a sense of depth you don’t see elsewhere in the house; it makes the space feel like a little jewel box.” This bold treatment tempers the more traditional style of the kitchen, spearheaded by Jane Hollman of Studio Entourage, the branch of MacArthur’s firm focusing on kitchens, bathrooms and other small-scale projects.

In keeping with the color palette Watford had already established, the formal dining room corrals peacock-colored Italian velvet armchairs around an ash wood table and mod metallic chandelier. Watford balanced the home’s blue-green hues by outfitting the breakfast area and living room with cream-colored textiles and warm accents like *faux bois* and brass. The coved corners of the latter space do well to soften sharp statements made by riveted grass-cloth walls, a kinetic cowhide carpet and sea urchin-shaped ceiling fixture.

“I knew I wanted to push more modern,” says Lee Alison, who expressed slight reservations along the transition from traditional. Despite her reticence, it was Watford’s guidance that urged her to get to the design she really desired. “It was a labor of love in the end and I couldn’t have enjoyed it more—getting back in touch with my old friend and creating such an amazing home for my family.” ■

“THE ENTRY LEADS  
TO A DARK LIVING  
ROOM, DRAWING  
YOUR EYE TO  
THE EXTERIOR.”

—BRIAN WATFORD



In the light-filled entry of this Marietta, Georgia home, designer Brian Watford suspended Mr. Brown London’s Rabanne chandelier above a brass and quartz table by Noir Furniture. The acrylic and brass stools—upholstered with Holland & Sherry hair-on-hide—are from Interlude Home. The rug is from Moattar.



Wrapped in a Phillip Jeffries wallcovering, the living room's curved walls add interest and a sense of calm. Velvet Bjork Studio sofas were arranged around a *faux bois* drum table by Ironies. Illuminating the scene are a Lumiere chandelier by Jean de Merry and Apparatus Studio's sconces, all from R Hughes.

In the dining room, a gold-leaf Currey & Company Ringmaster chandelier hangs above a Hickory Chair dining table—sourced from Bungalow Classic—and vintage Italian chairs upholstered in a Fishman's Fabrics teal velvet. The Tibetan wool and silk rug is from Moattar.



The floating staircase, inspired by Sir Edwin Lutyens' work, is partly enclosed by cedar-framed window walls that flood the home with sunlight. A brass and hand-blown glass Coup D'Etat chandelier from R Hughes cascades through the stairwell, lending whimsy to the design.

**Right:** For the bar, MacArthur designed walls that curve into the ceiling and create “the feeling of a club car on a luxury train,” she explains. Watford reinforced the richness of the architecture with glossy green lacquer. Kelly Wearstler’s Cubist pendant from Circa Lighting adds drama in concert with Arteriors’ Watson sconces.

**Opposite:** In the kitchen, a trio of spherical pendants hangs above a Bianco Lasa Fantastico marble-topped island fabricated by Construction Resources. The base is painted Sherwin-Williams’ Riverway, while the reproduction Norman Cherner walnut counter stools are from Design Within Reach. The vent hood is by Francois & Co.





Watford created a serene feeling in the master suite, where he installed a Vanguard Furniture bed upholstered in pale blue Donghia fabric atop a Tibetan rug from Moattar. A Mr. Brown London pendant and Arteriors vintage brass table lamp give the room a glamorous sensibility.

**Below, left:** The master bathroom, painted a luminous shade of white by Sherwin-Williams, features a vanity topped with Calacatta marble fabricated by Construction Resources. The floor tile is from Renaissance Tile & Bath and the sheepskin-upholstered acrylic bench is from Interlude Home. The streamlined sconces are by Waterworks.

**Below, right:** Watford adorned one wall of the powder room with Artistic Tile's Kauri Diagonal porcelain in Tasman Blue, made even more dynamic by the addition of a cantilevered vanity with chevron-patterned drawers. Polished nickel sconces from Circa Lighting flank a wood-framed mirror from West Elm.

