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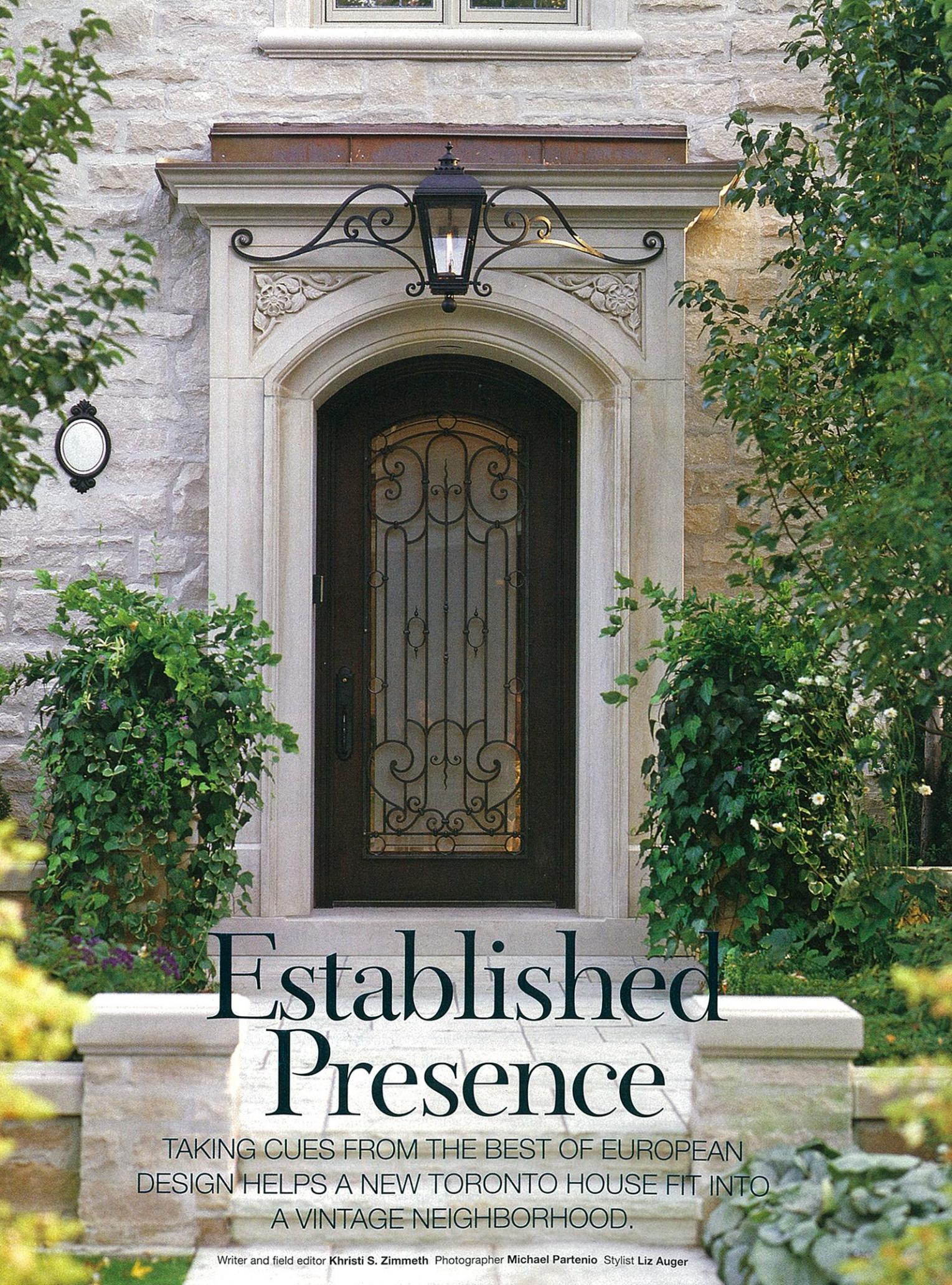
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Established Presence

TAKING CUES FROM THE BEST OF EUROPEAN
DESIGN HELPS A NEW TORONTO HOUSE FIT INTO
A VINTAGE NEIGHBORHOOD.

Writer and field editor Khristi S. Zimmeth Photographer Michael Partenio Stylist Liz Auger



OPPOSITE Split-face Indiana limestone and carved stone details present a fine face to the street. The limestone reflects a Norman French heritage while the carving draws inspiration from English Tudor detailing. THIS PHOTO The spacious entrance hall boasts wide doorways and limestone floors.



R

Residents of Toronto's historical Rosedale district were more than a little nervous when plans were announced to tear down a nondescript 1950s ranch on one of the neighborhood's best-loved streets. "It's not that they loved what was there as much as they were afraid of what would replace it," says homeowner Jane Campbell, who purchased the property in 2003 with her husband, John McLeish. The couple had searched more than five years before buying the 50×180-foot lot and the humble house that sat on it. "There were a lot of questions about whether the new house would fit in," she says.

The neighbors needn't have worried. The French-inspired residence that rose in the ranch's place blends seamlessly with the stately Georgians, Tudors, and other neighborhood homes of classic architectural styles that line Rosedale's well-maintained, tree-canopied streets.

That was the plan all along, says architectural designer Ray Murakami, who worked with interior designer Brian Gluckstein to realize Jane and John's dream of building the perfect country house in the city.

Veterans of 20 years in a contemporary-style condominium where "you could almost touch the skyscrapers," the couple had longed for more space and a more relaxed life, yet they didn't want to give up the city's extensive cultural offerings and easy commute. Rosedale, one of the

ABOVE A graceful blend of English and French traditions, this new house complements its vintage surroundings. Period details evoke English manor style and the homeowners' favored European country houses.
RIGHT Designer Brian Gluckstein conceived of the etched-glass mirrors surrounding the living room's custom-made limestone fireplace.









city's top residential enclaves just a few minutes from John's downtown law office, offered both. "We love the neighborhood and its history, and decided to build a house that would complement it," says Jane, a retired school principal. "We had always wanted a lovely European country house. We weren't originally thinking of tearing down and starting fresh, but in the end it made the most sense."

Building on a narrow lot in an established neighborhood was not without its challenges, Murakami says. "We had to be sensitive to the streetscape and the rhythm of the existing houses and driveways as well as to heights, proportions, and setbacks, all of which are tightly regulated by the city," he says. They were careful not to disrupt any of the property's mature oaks and maples with the home's rectangular footprint. And they maintained as many of the site's original topographical features as possible.

It paid off. "Being so sensitive to the lot and the neighborhood is a big part of the reason we were able to achieve an established look," Murakami says. Indiana limestone, slate, and other exterior building materials were carefully

LEFT Ten-foot ceilings and vertical moldings lead the eye up and lend a sense of spaciousness to the 21×14-foot dining room. The table and chairs look antique but are new; the chandelier is about 100 years old. BELOW Dining room millwork blends into the butler's pantry doorway.





OPPOSITE Inspired by English country houses, the kitchen features a limestone island, furniturelike cabinets, and the same clean aesthetic found in the rest of the house. The zinc range hood is a nod to French café style. RIGHT Upper cabinets feature glass door fronts with Gothic-arch fretwork. Inspired by vintage library card catalogs, the small drawers beneath hold such items as recipe cards and matches.



chosen to give the house an understated European elegance and to echo the mood of nearby residences.

The narrow lot also influenced the floor plan. “Jane had originally requested a classic center entrance hall, yet that would have severely limited the sizes of the living and dining rooms,” Murakami says. “We eventually decided to go with a side entrance to free up floor space for the main living areas in the front of the house. We all agreed that we were better off with a few generous large spaces instead of too many small ones.”

Like the cosmopolitan city where it’s located, the house is a mix of styles and sensibilities. The exterior draws from Norman French influences, yet the interior has a British flavor. Classic architectural details blend with contemporary amenities throughout.

Jane and John brought Gluckstein into the planning process early to refine spaces along the way and ensure that the home’s disparate elements would add up to a harmonious whole. Doing so, the homeowners say, simplified decision making during the 14-month building process and helped them avoid costly mistakes. “We nicknamed Ray, Brian, and their assistants our dream team because they made it so easy,” Jane says. “They made sure the house had an overall design cohesiveness, which was important to us.”

Gluckstein says group members were on the same page from the first day. “Being involved from the beginning allows us to keep a close eye on the details and make sure that custom moldings and doors match, and coved ceilings line up,” he says. “Some people wouldn’t notice, but we



LEFT An elegantly cozy settee at one end of the kitchen creates the impression of a banquette at the breakfast table. Crisply tailored Roman shades pull up to reveal views of the backyard pool and English-style gardens. OPPOSITE Open to the adjacent kitchen, the sophisticated family room features a coffered ceiling, crisp millwork, a TV cabinet (to the right of the fireplace), and built-in shelves. Four oversize French doors let in light and open to the backyard terraces.

believe the details really do make the difference between a good house and a great one.”

The fruits of the team’s successful collaboration are evident throughout the distinctive, approximately 6,000-square-foot home. On the main level, a spacious entrance hall leads to the living and dining rooms near the front of the house and to the informal kitchen and family room/den beyond. A traditional English “servery,” better known across the Pond as a butler’s pantry, acts as a transition between the dining room and kitchen and is a handy place near the side door to unload groceries.

Back in the main hall, a softly curving staircase punctuated by a custom wrought-iron balustrade leads upstairs to bedrooms, a two-level library, and a study. “The library was another of those serendipitous solutions,” Murakami says. When no room for the homeowner-requested space could

be found on the main level, the architect looked up, literally. “We decided there was no reason there couldn’t be a wonderful place for entertaining or relaxing on the [upper level],” he says. Lined in 150-year-old reclaimed pine, the two-level space is a classic, yet surprisingly cozy, getaway that invites lounging off the master bedroom.

Further adjustments were made to the upper and top levels to reflect the homeowners’ lifestyle. Because John leaves early for the office and sometimes spends late nights working, Murakami gave him access to the hall through the master bath and closet to minimize noise and disturbances in the master bedroom. He also designed a top-level study, ensuring that Jane can sleep peacefully even if John has a late-night deadline or early-morning conference call.

Because they were moving from a contemporary condominium, the homeowners decided to start from scratch





when it came to furnishings, keeping just a few favored antiques and opting instead for the look of tailored tradition that has become Gluckstein's signature. Jane calls it "elegance with an edge."

"When we first brought him to the condo, Brian looked around and then asked us if we owned a cottage," Jane says. "The majority of our most contemporary pieces looked out of place in the new house."

Classic or contemporary, the new furnishings and accessories have a subtle sophistication that comes from clean lines, simple fabrics, and a neutral palette, Gluckstein says. All complement the house's distinctive details and enhance its quietly elegant ambience. "If the house doesn't have good bones to begin with, you're in trouble," Gluckstein says. "You can't hide bad bones with interior design. The best house is one in which you can take all of the furniture and accessories out and it's still beautiful."

Relaxed yet refined, the house truly reflects the personality of its owners, he says. "It really is the perfect fit." That's true for the homeowners—and for the neighborhood. Other Rosedale residents have come to agree. "Some of the people most vocal against the house in the beginning were the first to come and compliment us on it once it was done," Gluckstein says. "That's how we knew the project was successful. If you drive down the street, you'd be hard-pressed to figure out which is the new house." **BH**

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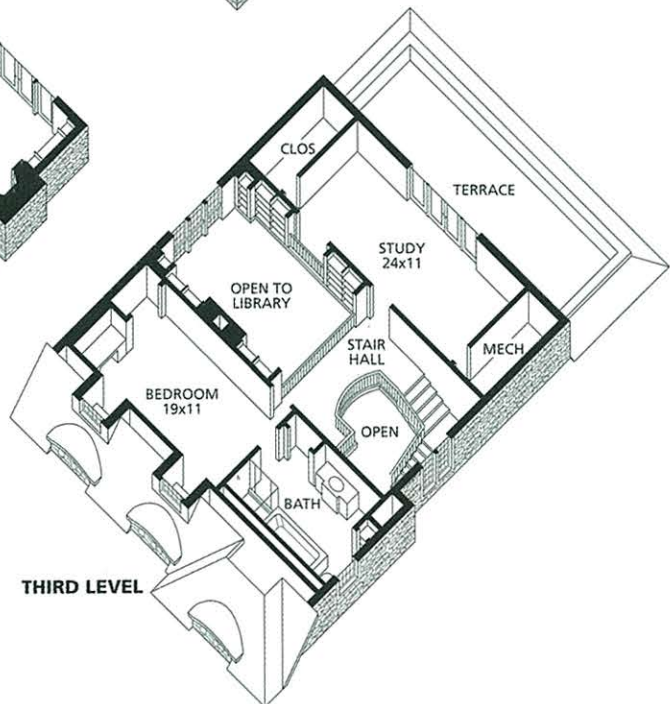
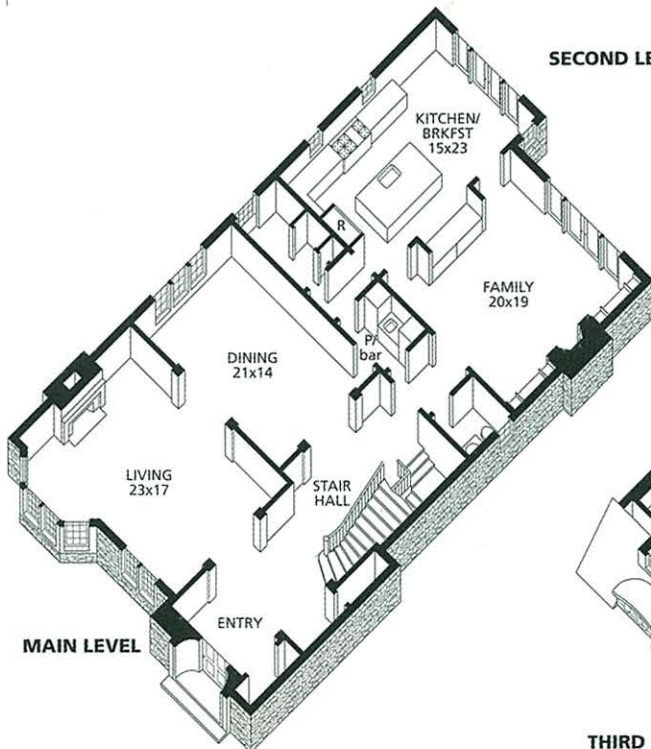
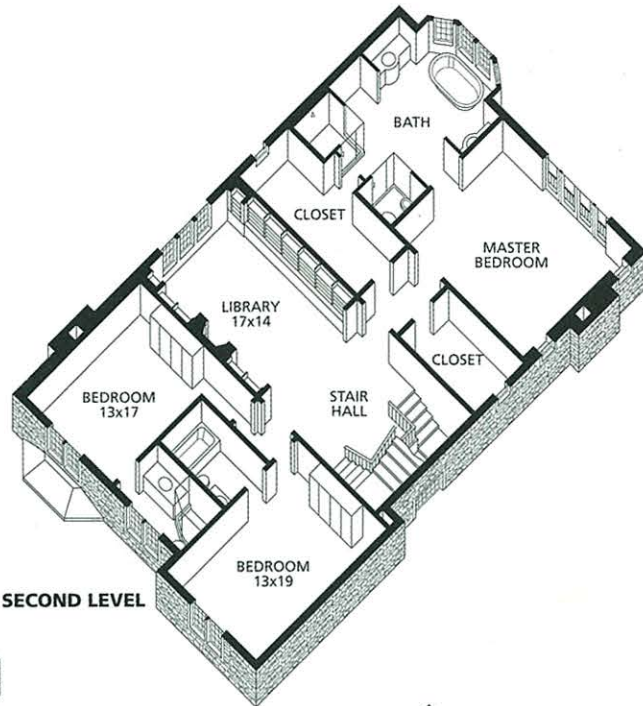
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The master suite's serene palette is feminine but not frilly. Early designs featured a cocoonlike upholstered bed that reached the ceiling, but plans were later modified to let in light from the small windows nearby. Upholstered beds are an attractive way to absorb sound.

LARGELY INSPIRED BY Norman French design but with touches of English Tudor style, this new home fits perfectly into a gracious neighborhood of older dwellings. Interior spaces feature exquisite architectural features, comfortable proportions, and a mix of traditional and modern furnishings.



MAIN LEVEL SQ. FT.: 2,425
 UPPER LEVEL SQ. FT.: 2,370
 TOP LEVEL SQ. FT.: 1,382
 BEDROOMS: 4
 BATHROOMS: 4 full, 1 half



Architectural designer **Ray Murakami** Interior designers **Brian Gluckstein** and **Stephen Wagg** Builder **Frank Campoli**