

Southern Accents

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Natural Style

romantic rooms
glorious gardens
inspiring ideas

special section:
window
treatments

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The Mediterranean-style house may be big, but it has relatively small inhabitants: William, Oliver, and Eleanor Lorton (and Mabel, their English mastiff). The graceful limestone entablature and pediment on the Beaux Arts façade were hand-carved in California. 'Skyrocket' junipers fill stone planters. OPPOSITE PAGE: The rotunda features an iron balustrade and a limestone floor with a cabochon marble insert.



Together in Tulsa

Designer Charlotte Moss
creates a grand setting to
meet a young family's needs:
great space, timeless style,
and comfort throughout

At one end of the living room, a reupholstered Jansen sofa anchors an intimate seating area with comfortable antique chairs and distinctive wood and marble side tables.





“We

had no intention of building,” says Leslie Lorton. But when she and her husband, Bobby, were searching for a new house in Tulsa, they learned that a two-acre property in one of the city’s prettiest residential areas had come on the market. “At the time, we had a little daughter and were looking for a house we could grow into,” says Leslie. “But after we fell in love with the location, we realized the existing nondescript house had to go.”

In short order, they demolished the house and hired Los Angeles architect Richardson Robertson to design the Mediterranean-style residence they longed for. “We saw some houses Rick had done in Dallas and respected his reputation for creating buildings with historic accuracy,” says Bobby. “That was consistent with our wish to have our new house look old from the start. Basically, we envisioned a somewhat rambling design with a barrel-tile roof and prominent hall, but at the same time did not want a big, scream-in-your-face building.” Almost immediately, the couple brought New York designer Charlotte Moss on board. After their initial meeting, Leslie sent piles of her favorite magazine photographs to

The glazed loggia leads to the guest suite. An antique Jerusalem stone floor, French-style lanterns, and an oversize limestone fireplace set a scene reminiscent of a Portuguese castle. RIGHT: The butler's pantry sensibly connects kitchen to dining room and functions as the informal dining area. FAR RIGHT: The library, with leathers, burnished woods, and a palette of loden, tobacco, and ochre, provides a grown-up place for the parents to read or watch movies.



acquaint Moss with her personal sense of style, and before long, they felt like a team who had worked together for years.

Moss' first order of business was details: moldings, lighting, floors, and doors. She also selected building materials that ranged from tile, limestone, and marble to other old architectural elements that would give the new structure backbone and emotion. "I was lucky to be working with talented local stone cutters, millworkers, carpenters, and iron crafters who understood the depth of this project," she says.

To achieve the airy yet antiquated Mediterranean

look her clients wanted, Moss headed to Europe and California. Among her finds: 18th-century parquet floors; handsome old glass-and-wood doors from England; and fireplace mantels, chandeliers, and an utterly unique 1920s powder room sink she spotted in Paris.

"The key to making a house of this size not look brand-spanking new is to interject elements that have patina. Otherwise, a large new construction can go flat," says Moss, who stresses that both she and the Lortons experienced an overall learning curve during the four-and-a-half year project.



Décor aside, Moss says this assignment was never a tightly scripted, rigorously choreographed by-the-book design scheme because over the course of the project, the family dynamic changed. “Leslie was pregnant with a baby boy when we began and was expecting their third child by the time they moved in. So, more than ever, life *within* the shell had to be just as much a priority as how it looked,” she says. “To make a design work is to understand the lifestyle factors that would evolve here and expand over time,” she says. “To that end, I envisioned it as a house that

would grow and change with the family.”

With that idea firmly in place, the home radiates a sense of lightness. Beyond the soft palette, silk draperies, delicate Chinese wall panels, and burnished bookshelves, the real subtext of this house allows—even encourages—playfulness. Moss knew that the family room and bedrooms would get heavy use and would need to be “bulletproof.” When tricycles come roaring down the long gallery, the couple understands it’s only a matter of time before the high-spirited children will prefer hosting sophisticated parties in the





Chinese wall panels and an 18th-century floor, which was reclaimed from a chateau, set a refined tone. Early 19th-century Venetian chairs surround a dining table designer Charlotte Moss adapted from the Duke and Duchess of Windsor's house in the Bois de Boulogne. Moss also designed the Chippendale-style fretwork below the chair rail. OPPOSITE PAGE: Ivy Garland porcelain by Anna Weatherley sets an elegant table.



The master bedroom provides separate sleeping and sitting areas. The Italian settee complements the dramatic pagoda-crowned bed. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: One of Mabel's favorite places to cool off is in Leslie's deep nickel-plated tub; gray-and-ivory striped silk curtains frame the windows in the sun-filled room. Botanical watercolors arranged above an Italian commode make the bath feel more like a living space.





very same space. “These are the practicalities of such a house,” Moss says, “and you must first understand the minutiae of life that will transpire in it. If you don’t address these issues, you end up with a space that is pretty but doesn’t work. Here, we took a big house and made it intimate.”

At the end of the day, the house, with its nods to Mediterranean sensibilities, seamlessly addresses the needs of a busy young family that passionately loves every nuance—not to mention the intangibles: room to grow and, yes, soul. ♦

For details, see Sourcebook, page 190.



ABOVE: Oliver's room is a serene space where the daybed is sensibly positioned in a custom-designed niche. Glass-paneled closet doors and oval windows above create a sense of openness. LEFT AND OPPOSITE PAGE: The celadon and orchid pink guest suite is "generous in size and spirit," says Moss, who used the same floral fabric on the bed, curtains, and chairs for a unified look. An antique English screen divided into six framed panels hangs over the bed. Moss completed the scheme with an antique French lantern and 20th-century Venetian-style bedside commodes.