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# DALLAS ELEGANCE

AUTHOR AND DESIGNER BETTY LOU PHILLIPS BRINGS  
HER SIGNATURE LOOK TO A NEW HOUSE BY INFUSING IT  
WITH TRADITIONAL DESIGNS FILTERED THROUGH A  
MODERN PERSPECTIVE.

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When out-of-town clients approached Betty Lou Phillips to help them

renovate and decorate a Dallas house, she was delighted to deliver her signature mix of elegance and ease. But Phillips, an award-winning designer and author of 14 books on French and Italian style, first endeavored to get to know her new clients and to fashion a home tailored to their tastes. "For starters, I listened carefully," she says, "aiming to respect their likes and dislikes. I saw the home not as a showplace but as a welcoming, warm invitation to their friends, children, and grandchildren."

The house, overlooking a serene park, was in an ideal location, but it needed work. "We replaced existing flooring, opened and enlarged doorways, added windows, and changed the hardware," she says. Limestone floors in the entry give way to walnut parquet in the dining room and the living room. Pretty French doors allow flow between the house and the pool area.

The entry hall bears hallmarks of Phillips's sophisticated

Previous pages: A Louis XVI settee sits in front of a propped mirror in the crook of the entry's staircase. In the dining room, curtains are a silk stripe by Manuel Canovas. The cushions are by Cowtan & Tout. Walnut parquet floors are left bare to show off their rich pattern.











A white Schumacher fabric covers the living room sofas, leaving room for a play of pattern on other furniture in the space. "Albert Hadley said that patterned sofas distract from the people sitting on them," says Phillips. "Clearly, I agree." The striped and patterned chair fabric is from Manuel Canovas. Vivid aqua curtains establish the palette of the room. "Silk communicates a subtle elegance more grounded than, say, an opulent brocade," says Phillips.









Left: Framed covers of the homeowners' favorite sheet music from Broadway musicals hang over the living room piano. Below and facing page: In the library, Phillips painted the wood paneling a warm brown and filled the room with white and green upholstery for a clubby but not oppressive atmosphere. The sofa fabric is by Pierre Frey, the pillows are by Jim Thompson, and the brown and white chair wears a print from China Seas. The ottoman and matching chair are covered in Holland & Sherry. Donghia lamps flank the sofa.

style. An antique Louis XVI settee backed by a large mirror greets visitors with confidence. "Rather than the expected chair, table, and lamp, a mirror and artwork offset the weight of the staircase and create interest," says Phillips.

In the dining room, French influences abound. The new walnut floors take on special visual interest from a parquet pattern. French chairs surround a round table from the owner's previous house. A carved walnut buffet, also from the former house, gets a fresh look in the airy blue and white room. Graceful French doors are flanked with silk panels.

Throughout the living room and dining room, walls are







This farm table in the library serves as a spot for paperwork or occasional dining. An upholstered bench covered in Kravet fabric provides versatile seating. Facing page: the family room, the library, and the husband's study all open onto the pool deck. The outdoor furniture is by Murray's Iron Works. A door set into the wall leads to a garage guest suite.





*Rute graveolens*



*Trollius ledebourii*



*Asclepias syriaca (cornuti)*



*Abutilon*



*Allium Dierowskianum*



*Serratula nudicaulis*







Venetian plaster in a pale champagne color. In a signature Phillips vignette, two paintings hung off center over a chest form a composition with a table lamp. “Arranging art is an art in itself,” she says. “A small painting hung beneath a larger one arouses interest.”

The living room features the client’s favorite color, aqua. A painting bought after the project was complete features the bold hue, as do the silk curtains. “Silk communicates a subtle elegance more grounded than, say, an opulent brocade,” says Phillips. A pair of white tufted sofas, along with an ottoman and armchair covered in compatible prints, surrounds a mirrored table. In one corner of the living room, a grand piano sits under an arrangement

of framed sheet music of the homeowner’s favorite musicals.

As a child, Phillips raised and showed American quarter horses and fell in love with the colors of the hides. “The library in the house reflects my love for chestnut, sorrel, and bay,” she says, “along with a myriad of foliage greens that are meaningful in my life.” A set of botanicals hung in a grid over the sofa gives the cozy room impact. Though the paneling is painted a rich brown, the light fabrics and glass accents keep the room light and bright.

The kitchen and adjacent sitting room repeat the blues of the living room. Here, though, fabrics are more casual and the furniture, more flexible. A pair of rectangular coffee tables pushed together adds versatility. The





This page: Phillips designed the new limestone mantel and trumeau in the sitting room off the kitchen. Checks and stripes emphasize the casual nature of the gathering space. The check is by Hines & Co., the recliners are covered in a blue Clarence House fabric, and the window treatments are by Cowtan & Tout. In the kitchen, a dramatic hood defines the cooking area, with countertops and backsplash of quartzite.







kitchen itself is polished and replete with conveniences. “Both the husband and wife enjoy cooking, so it is equipped with everything they might possibly need,” says Phillips.

In the bedroom, the designer intensified the blue and cream palette of the house. A vivid blue headboard rests against walls the color of creamy coffee. Slightly oversized furniture comfortably fits the large room. “The tall headboard supports the size of the room,” she says. “Then again, we are in the midst of an upholstered headboard revival.” Phillips had the bedside chests custom built slightly taller than standard to match the height of the bed. The striped rug adds a note of casual flair. That deft mingling of traditional and contemporary illustrates Phillips’s abiding design principle—“moving forward while looking back.”





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In the master bedroom, a sizable upholstered headboard plays to the scale of the room. "The striped rug by Stark," says Phillips, "adds a bit of pizzazz." Bedding by Peacock Alley lends a touch of femininity to the muted, comforting room. Right: In the bathroom, a tone-on-tone damask echoes the veining of the marble floors and walls.

