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MeredithSpecials

Tudor Revival

Inspired by the inviting details and craftsmanship of English-style homes built at the turn of the 20th century, a design team creates a classic home with a modern twist.

Block paneling, painted a crisp white, imbues the stair hall of this new home in Houston with a sophisticated sense of formality that is matched by an antique-style reproduction settee.



Like an artist lured by a blank

canvas, architectural designer Robert Dame couldn't resist the opportunity to work on a dramatic spec home for Thompson Custom Homes of Houston. Working in tandem with interior design firm Bellacasa Design Associates, which handled the furnishings and interior finishes, and without the constraints of a client, Dame created what he calls a "spontaneous design" for a Tudor revival home that is both classic and fresh.

The exterior stays true to the American interpretation of the English style, featuring a prominent front-facing gable decorated in half timbers and stucco that gives way to a mostly brick exterior accentuated by a hand-carved doorway and limestone window casings. In typical Tudor fashion, windows are central to the home's character, and Dame chose a mix of styles—diamond-cut leaded-glass units, casements, and mullioned windows—to add charm.



With the house sited on a parklike esplanade shaded by a canopy of live oaks, and graced with benches along a manicured path of crushed granite, the windows are positioned to help the interiors soak in the gracious views. "There are a lot of cross-axes in the house," Dame says. And with these come delightfully revealed subtleties. A back staircase from the upper-level bedrooms leads down to a sun-kissed breakfast room warmed by a stone fireplace. In the formal library, the view extends beyond the entry to an elegant stair hall and white block paneling.

"The interior of the home isn't typically English Tudor," says Bellacasa's Kevin Spearman, whose responsibilities included selecting furniture, designing cabinetry, and choosing paints and stains. "We wanted a traditional look that had been restored—one that conveyed a fresh, modern-day feel. We kept the woodwork clean; we didn't want a lot of ornamentation."

The stairwell's block paneling is a prime example. In Tudor style, the detail is characteristically treated to a dark stain, but Spearman's team painted it white instead. And its handrail denotes a simple rather than heavy iron detail. The updated approach continues throughout the rest of the house, with the design team mixing painted finishes with dark stains, using marble alongside modern appliances, and combining antiques with chic new furnishings. "English homes tend to have a very heavy feel," Spearman says. "This one offers a good balance of masculine and feminine influences."

A rolled-arm sofa in a floral print pairs beautifully with a more modern, streamlined cousin in the library. The master bedroom juxtaposes a rustic pine ceiling with a crisp upholstered bed and low-profile armchairs; the master bath pairs vintage faucets with contemporary light fixtures. "The architecture gives it a timeless feel, and interior selections give it an edge," Spearman says.



This photo: The fireplace in the breakfast room melds a smooth limestone surround with a rustic stone wall. **Opposite:** Architectural designer Robert Dame used a coveted book collection on English architecture left to him by his late grandfather as inspiration for this home's Tudor style.



Above: Built-in bookcases filled with prized book collections lend the library a classic, sit-a-while warmth. Nailhead-trimmed side tables balance the floral motif on one of the sofas. **Opposite:** Club chairs upholstered in silk and leather sit on the great-room side of the fireplace. A limed pine ceiling evokes a country air.





Streamlined furnishings upholstered in rich textures,

contrasted with shiny surfaces, lend the master suite a casual elegance.



Opposite: An upholstered bed, a pair of birdcagelike light fixtures, and a vaulted ceiling give the master bedroom a luxuriously lofty look. A mirrored armoire features diamond-grille doors that mimic leaded-glass windows commonly found in Tudor homes.

Left: A Tudor arch passage into the master bath's dressing area provides a quiet reminder of the home's timeless English touches.

Below: The master bath's tub sits in the middle of a shiny walnut floor. A pale gray-and-white scheme keeps the mood serene. Cabinet doors are fitted with chicken-wire and crisp X-motif millwork.

