

# BOSTON COMMON

## PATRICK DEMPSEY'S

WILD RIDE FROM MAINE TO SUPERSTARDOM

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John Meyer and Laura Brooks Meyer

## Drawn to Tale

John and Laura Brooks Meyer connect the past and the future with powerful design narratives.

CLIENTS WHO HIRE architect John Meyer and his wife, interior designer Laura Brooks Meyer, walk away with more than just a beautifully designed home. They often get a story—a limestone fireplace hand-carved in Hungary, for instance, or a railing morphed into a fairy-tale depiction of a dragon. They also often get frame-worthy art: one of John's drawings of the property, bringing the homeowner's vision to life.

The team behind Meyer & Meyer Inc. pairs artistry with research expertise, looking back in time for authentic historical details and forward to innovative contemporary design. Their Newbury Street penthouse project, a former Jesuit headquarters, included exterior restoration elements as well as the addition of interior features like modern light fixtures and furnishings, rosy pearwood wall paneling and a sleek Poggenpohl kitchen. "We love contemporary touches," says Laura, "but we also want to be respectful of history. I like the blend."

The couple has also done some public projects, including the Boston Common Visitor's Center, now underway, and the Tool Shed in the Public Garden. "Public facilities were all the rage at the turn of the century," John says. "Builders put a lot into them. We wanted to capture that."

Their own history begins in St. Louis at John's father's architectural firm, where they both worked. "I was in architecture school, which was all about the rules," John says. Recalling a summer he worked on an ocean liner

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and visited Japan and Marrakesh, he says, "I saw stuff that broke every rule." It completely changed his vision. When he and Laura moved to Boston and established their own firm, they knew they wanted to do design that was about craft and quality of materials. "We figured we'd starve," John says. "But it didn't turn out that way."

They turned their talents on their own home, too, a Victorian in Newton retooled into a colonial revival. "Part of what we do with the drawings and details is get involved in creating the story of a home if there isn't one yet," says John. "Everyone wants to have a story."

—JANICE O'LEARY

Custom metal work. "We love it when an artist or contractor can take an idea and turn it into a realistic feature, like this dragon made for a Hopkinton estate by statuary artist **Bob Shure**." *Skylight Studios Inc., 105 Salem St., Woburn, 781-933-3822; skylightstudiosinc.com*



## JOHN & LAURA'S PICKS

Syrax Wine Table by **Lewis Mittman**. "This cunning little table adjusts to the height of your chair and is held in place by a chair leg. We love that it's so functional." *The Martin Group, Boston Design Center, 1 Design Center Pl., Ste. 111, 617-951-2526; martingroupinc.com*



"Made in Italy, **Sicis** mosaic tiles in glass are colorful and put together by hand, so they add an artistic element to any space." *Tile Showcase, 1 Design Center Pl., Ste. 639, 617-426-6515; tileshowcase.com*

**Schonbek** crystal-pendant lamps. "We opted to put these Swarovski crystal lights over a bed for reading and ambiance instead of the more expected swing-arm wall sconces. Every room needs something that sparkles." *Wolfers Lighting, 1339 Main St., Waltham, 781-890-5995; wolfers.com*



Elmwood Bar stool by **Burton-Ching**. "I've used this stool in so many homes. I just love it every time. It's so comfortable, and you get tired of metal backs." *M-Geough, Boston Design Center, 1 Design Center Pl., Ste. 410, 617-451-1412; www.m-geough.com*



"Vermont artist **Stephen Huneck** does this funky little thing with bathers. It's fun and playful. We have one in our home." *143 Parks Road, Saint Johnsbury, VT, 800-449-2580; dogmt.com*



Architectural woodwork. "We use the details crafted by **Architectural Timber & Millwork** in so many of our projects. These guys are the best in the world at what they do." *49 Mount Warner Road, Hadley, 413-586-3045; atimber.com*



Fireplaces, both hand-carved and modern. "We used this one in a beach hut and it worked perfectly in the small space." *Spark Modern Fires, 99B Greenwood Ave., Bethel, CT, 866-938-3846; sparkfires.com*

Texas Loveseat by **Polaris**. "We love this piece for two reasons: It's completely made by hand, from cutting the leather and stitching the cushions to securing the components; and the old-world Italian workmanship juxtaposes the shapely modern silhouette." *D Scale Modern, 520 Harrison Ave., 617-426-1055; dscalemodern.com*



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