

WELL *Aged*

AN ICONIC BOSTON
BROWNSTONE DEFIES ITS
VINTAGE STRUCTURE TO
ACHIEVE A MODERN LOOK.

By **Sarah Reidy-Ferguson**
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Design by **Catherine & McClure Interiors**

Nestled along the leafy-lined

streets of Boston's Back Bay neighborhood stands an original 1872 brownstone. The interiors of this classic red brick and stone charmer are underscored by alluring qualities that span the style spectrum from refined elegance to livable sophistication. The team responsible for achieving this seemingly effortless design balance is Catherine Skaletsky and Danielle McClure, mother-and-daughter founders of the Boston-based firm Catherine & McClure Interiors.

The pair viewed this creative endeavor as a dream project, offering 12-foot ceilings and ornate moldings, and, they note specifically, no plaster dust involved. Catherine and Danielle have known the homeowners for over a decade and had the pleasure of working on their previous residences. "She gave us carte blanche trusting that the results would be spectacular," Catherine says of one of the homeowners.

As older city homes tend to be dark, the designers sought to achieve a subtle West Coast vibe. The fabrics and wall color in lively shades of blue, decorative woodwork painted bright white and the selection of sandy-colored carpet collectively create a light and airy ambience. However, being mindful of New England's cooler seasons, the carpeting, curtains and fabrics are soft and inviting.





For the living room's furnishings, the designers included anchor pieces—a generously sized dark wood coffee table and an Italian chest topped with limestone lamps—accented by a plush sofa with soft curves and a deep seat.

From the onset, Catherine and Danielle took into account that period homes tend to be dark. This focused their choices on crafting the design scheme best described by the pair as “reflecting a light and airy ambiance, perhaps with a hint of California.” The designers developed a contrasting color palette inspired by tones lifted from selected fabrics that ultimately dictated all other favored design components. “Blue walls, sandy-colored carpet and accents like an oyster-hued throw are some of the lively colors used to create a subtle West Coast vibe,” Danielle says. “Regardless of the weather, the space gleams and white-painted woodwork adds to this aura.”

Catherine and Danielle credit New England's cooler temperatures as influencing the selection of decorative elements that echo a cozy and welcoming appeal. Soft-to-the-touch fabrics, plush carpet and inviting deep-seated furnishings play integral parts within each room.

An architectural wrinkle that the designers needed to address was the home's lack of a formal dining room. The homeowners entertain frequently and a defined dining space was essential. Reworking the living room floorplan was the obvious answer. “We masterfully created a dining area at the end of the living room in front of the bay window flanked by custom banquettes,”



the designers say. The homeowners have found this seating arrangement suitable for both business and social gatherings.

In structuring the living room's design at the opposite end of the space, the designers sourced anchor pieces, including a generously sized dark wood coffee table and an antique Italian chest topped with limestone lamps. The living room's fireplace was designed with a mantel surround salvaged from a historic Boston mansion, and is matched in decorative impact to the sofa positioned against the opposite wall. Cleverly placing furniture and highlighting existing architectural details further emphasize Catherine and Danielle's skilled

approach to achieving the living/dining rooms' successful relationship between balance and proportion.

The pair extended the airy ambience design theme into the kitchen. It was decided that current cabinetry and appliances would remain, but pale marble would be preferred over the existing dark granite countertops. Next to the window Catherine and Danielle positioned a counter-height marble-topped table joined with a pair of white upholstered nailhead trim barstools, creating a setting that the homeowners enjoy regularly for casual meals. Additionally, a creamy tone-on-tone tile backsplash that rises all the way to ceiling

The fireplace is surrounded by a mantel salvaged from a historic Boston mansion. The over-scale cabinet serves to balance the grand height of the ceiling as well as provide storage for cocktail and entertaining needs.



OPPOSITE | Beyond the lush chaise lounge topped with an oyster-hued throw, an ornate and eye-catching chandelier hangs above a classically shaped decorative table in the hall.

TOP | Due to the brownstone not having a formal dining room within the original floor plan, the designers cleverly created a dining space at the end of the living room. Custom-designed banquettes are positioned in front of the bay window on either side of the table.

was installed to draw attention to the lofty 12-foot height. The completed interior design of this iconic brownstone is a true testament to Catherine and Danielle's singular viewpoint. As a design team, the pair acknowledge that they strive to create spaces that take root in identifying each client's unique tastes, to reveal the fullest expression of their preferences and personality. "We bring a style to that equation often referred to as 'transitional,' embracing a mix of modern and antique, and one-of-a-kind pieces that make a room something extraordinary," the designers say.

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The designers' decorative components for the master bedroom were inspired by the appeal of a fine hotel. Fabrics include rich velvet for a loveseat and wool-sateen for the drapery, complemented by a custom walnut bed upholstered with Les Oiseaux yellow toile and a French tiger-maple dresser.

MODERN MIXING

FOLLOW THESE FOUR TIPS TO **GIVE A CONTEMPORARY EDGE TO A CLASSIC HOME.**

- **PROVIDE CONTRAST TO A DARK ROOM BY** selecting a light color palette applied to paint, fabrics and finishes.
- **OLDER HOMES CAN REFLECT A FRESH APPEAL** in redefining traditional floor plans. Place furniture to best represent the needs of your contemporary lifestyle.
- **HIGHLIGHT EXISTING ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS BY** emphasizing their details. Install tiles to meet the edge of a tall ceiling. Paint ornate moldings. Select over-scale furnishings to balance the proportions of large rooms.
- **THOUGHTFULLY LAYERING TREASURED ANTIQUES,** newly acquired décor and interesting one-of-a-kind pieces within a design scheme underscores the development of a room's singular style.



Existing cabinetry and appliances were accented with an airy appeal through the selection of tone-on-tone finishes. Dark countertops were changed out for pale marble and pebble-colored tile was sourced for the backsplash. A marble-topped table and upholstered barstools are positioned window-side for casual meals.

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The interior design of the first floor guest bedroom was inspired by the homeowners' fondness for the classic style of Ralph Lauren. Glossy brown walls serve as the backdrop for the room's timeless furnishings—a handsome leather chair, an antique French iron bed and a cowhide rug.

For more on **Catherine** and **Danielle** of **Catherine & McClure Interiors**, visit catherineandmcclure.com.