

degrees of separation

DESIGNER PAUL CORRIE SWAPS CAREERS AND USES HIS D.C. ROW HOUSE TO DEVELOP HIS DESIGN DREAMS



before



P Paul Corrie's course of action as an adult has been perfectly legal. So by-the-book, in fact, that after finishing college, he followed in the steps of his attorney father by earning a law degree and then working at a small law firm. But not long after he switched the tassel on his graduation cap, Paul realized that his true passion was for a totally unrelated profession—design. So he did a career about-face, jumping on the fast-track to become one of the young design stars in Washington, D.C.

"All my life, I had a knack for and interest in things that allowed me to explore my creative side," says Paul. With the support of his family, he went into practice again, but this time with paint decks and fabric swatches instead of volumes of law books.

Like many designers, Paul eyed his home as a laboratory where his aesthetic taste could develop. The only problem? The 800-square-foot loft he shared with partner Steve Ewens worked either as a home or an office but was too small to be effective as both. A move was inevitable.

Tours of neighborhoods filled much of Paul and Steve's spare time until they discovered Mount Pleasant, a historic



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Designer Paul Corrie transformed this small bedroom into a home office. A Drexel Heritage round table—the dining table in his previous residence—doubles as a desk where he can look over design options with clients. Shelves hold client files in linen binders. **Opposite top:** The rough texture of the unfinished chair frames in the dining room offers a stark contrast to the delicate crystal chandelier. **Left:** Paul placed a small antique desk and bench, handy for quick notes, next to the front-hall stairs. **Preceding pages:** Traditional meets modern in the living room, where a small bench with curvy French lines rests artfully beneath an iron cocktail table topped with wood.



before



enclave situated just three miles north of the White House. It boasts its own “Main Street,” lined with shops and restaurants. The row house they bought was far from perfect, but with room for both work and living, it provided an excellent place for Paul to grow his fledgling business.

Sandwiched between two other row houses, the home had natural light from only the front and the back. So Paul’s primary goal was to banish its dark dowdiness with uplifting luminosity. He skillfully mixed a bleached palette that includes walls painted ivory, furnishings covered in creamy fabrics, and raw woods with elegant blond undertones.

“The house has a traditional layout and relatively confined spaces,” explains Paul. “I knew that the transitions from space to space needed to be strong.” His conservative approach created a neutral backdrop in which he could inject texture. In the living room, a tailored sofa covered in Ultrasuede and an armchair with contemporary lines provide spots for guests to enjoy conversation or for Paul and Steve to watch a movie on the flat-panel television hanging above a handsome cupboard.

An existing soffit that dated the dining room guided that room’s alterations. Paul closed it up and added generous crown molding that



A glass door to the back porch allows light in and sight lines beyond the confines of the kitchen.

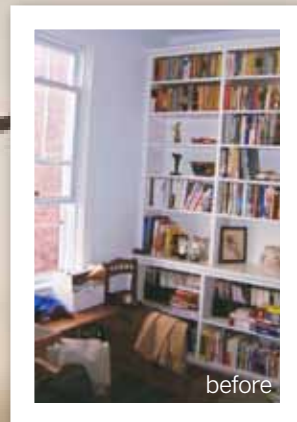
Opposite top: Elegant Carrara marble counters and a limestone tile floor give the kitchen a sophisticated yet hard-working feel. • Paul frequently entertains on the back porch, which he refurbished for added living space.

Bottom: The exterior of the row house.



In the guest room, an oatmeal-colored tufted headboard enhances ivory bed linens trimmed in contrasting brown. The same oatmeal linen used on the headboard is made into pinch-pleated drapery panels hanging from an iron rod.

Opposite: In the master bedroom, more of the distinctive iron rods are mounted to the ceiling to hold linen bed curtains that puddle on the floor.



provides the upper reaches of the room with a more refined, classic appearance. The space is not large, so furniture was limited to a large storage piece for china and glassware, a zinc-topped table with side chairs covered in shiny, copper-colored silk, and a large mirror that reflects light and makes the room appear larger.

While much of the house simply needed such touches as fresh paint and floor refinishing to make it livable, the kitchen was a different story. Metal cabinets, mint-green laminate countertops, and a washer-dryer for all to see made it look hopelessly outdated. A major overhaul and a sleek white palette brought it into the 21st century.

The bedrooms are as masculine looking as the rest of the handsome home, with layers of worn texture and neutral fabrics mingling to create an atmosphere of elegant simplicity.

Even though Paul showed restraint, there is abundant style throughout the home, with expert design touches that appear effortless and plenty of comfort everywhere, the perfect combination for the client—Paul.

“At the end of the day, my job is to satisfy the client, and in the case of this project, that client was me,” says Paul. “Being able to carefully select pieces and then edit is a wonderfully useful skill in so many situations. In design, good editing allows a home to breathe.”

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PAUL CORRIE OUR DESIGNER SAYS

Many designers insist on styling their interiors to polished perfection. But Paul Corrie brings his designs to a halt just before that point. His intentionally rough-around-the-edges projects have a worn formality that conveys elegance from a masculine point of view.

Paul neutralizes his interiors with tones of beige, brown, and ivory. And yes, he embraces a variety of finishes. But what sets his aesthetic apart are the pieces he leaves unfinished, providing a special chic patina.

“I’m conservative in style and prefer environments that lend themselves to the neutral and beautiful side,” says Paul. “These colors are what I have in my wardrobe, and they are what I want to live with.” For more ideas from Paul, visit the designer at paulcorrie.com.