

At HOME, *In* STYLE

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Photo by Stephen Buchanan





WONDER IN WARDOUR

HOME HIGHLIGHTS
THE BEST OF
OLD AND NEW

BY
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Overlooking the Severn, the quiet hamlet of Wardour is a much-revered Annapolis neighborhood, with its Olmsted-designed open spaces, curvilinear streets, and mature gardens and trees. Ensnconed on one of its charming roads sits this four-level manse, a study in Georgian farmhouse architecture. Its proportional adherence, strikingly simple detailing, and distinguished frontage fit perfectly with the area's historically significant setting. While the structure hearkens to days gone by, in actuality, it is only two years old.

When homeowners Laurie and Adam Gezelle purchased a rare plot of land in Wardour, they knew they'd need to make the most of a small space, adhere to its many green and city build restrictions, and incorporate their unique passions for historic architecture and mid-century modern design. The result is a home that boldly declares what's old is new and what's new is old—in essence, the perfect personification of all things Annapolis.



PLACEHOLDER CAPTION
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HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The Wardour community—planned out at the turn of the century by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (best known for such projects as the National Mall, the Jefferson Memorial, and Rock Creek Park)—has long distinguished itself from adjacent West Annapolis and surrounding localities. Olmsted’s plans emphasized the land’s natural contours and indigenous plantings, producing irregular lots, generous greenery framing the water views, and big, old homes to university presidents, military leaders, and other significant Marylanders.

The Gezelles, a young Maryland family who appreciate older residences and had previously renovated a 110-year-old home on Brewer Avenue, stumbled upon the Wardour lot the day the for-sale sign went up, and quickly moved on it. Adam Gezelle, a creative account manager with Washington, D.C.-based Aquent and Vitamin T, and a graphic designer by trade, is a self-professed Annapolis “super fan,” as well as a passionate advocate



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for revitalizing, repurposing, and renovating. His wife Laurie Gezelle, a physician assistant at Anne Arundel Medical Center, enjoys the same aesthetic, but readily hands the design reins to her husband.

Knowing he wanted a house that fit seamlessly into the landscape but would still give his growing family ample room on a quarter of an acre, Gezelle enlisted the help of Baltimore-based architect Jonathan Rivera. “We had to make a house that lives large in a small footprint, has an old-school Annapolis appeal, but also allows for modern living,” Rivera says.

To make the most of the pie-shaped lot and a 43-foot-wide by 30-foot-long footprint, they opted to build up, not out, explains Gezelle, and the style that best fit was a Georgian farmhouse, a stately look, evident throughout the Annapolis area. The classical architecture, with its English basement comprised of nine-foot ceilings, central staircase accessing all three floors, and quaint side porches providing water views, also allowed for maximizing living space.

With the design concept in place, the challenges remained numerous: construct a home that looks like it has been there for 100 years; follow strict green guidelines from the city (such as using only approved materials on the driveway, keeping existing trees, and incorporating certain energy efficient products); adhere to a tight budget; and rush to complete before the birth of the Gezelles' twin boys.

The family procured Brice Colhoun and Mark Madery, with Annapolis-based Cumberstone Craftsmen, builders on the State House's 2011 restoration, as well as numerous new construction projects and old home restorations. The

Cumberstone team worked closely with Gezelle to build out the residence's bones and finish the main structure as well as a separate two-car carriage house garage.

Working as his own general contractor, sourcing many unique materials through friends and family, and restoring vintage items himself, Gezelle attained considerable cost savings. And the 5,000-square-foot dwelling was ready within 10 months of breaking ground, an impressive construction feat. Even better, the house was done in time for the Gezelles' growing family—now five-year-old son Blake and two-year-old identical twins, Trent and Reed.

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

To achieve a historic look on a new building is no simple task. The vernacular of the style dictates what can and can't be done, so a room or window can't easily be swapped or added. And the detailing must be precise. Though the average person may not pick up on each minute finish, together the minutiae create visual cues that yield an overall grand scheme, Gezelle explains.

The Georgian style, for example, has a very specific window schematic: large windows are comprised of nine panes over nine panes with two-inch historic sills, laid out in a five-on-top, four-on-bottom order. It seems easy enough, yet it requires more than today's basic miter

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cut, with each window containing a labor-intensive 20 cuts of wood to create the look.

Gezelle recruited a variety of experts to achieve similar finishes. He sought out Williamsport, Maryland-based Redland Brick, manufacturers for more than 120 years, for Cushwa bricks, oversized bars emblematic of older homes. The brick grouting is almond-tinted, not gray, replicating the sand composition of this region, and the grout lining is purposely rougher and jagged to produce a hand-hewn, antique visual.

The gold leaf hand lettering on the front door transom—typical of turn-of-the-century typography—was created by master gilder Brendon J. Brandon of Edgewater, Maryland-based Designs & Signs.

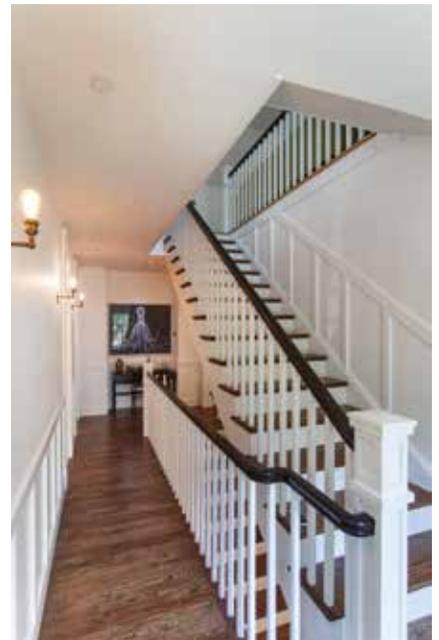
Much of the antique-style trim work, multiple vintage transoms over doorways

and window finishes were shaped by family friend Rick Miller. And Gezelle sought the expertise of his brother Mike Gezelle, a representative with McCormick Paints, to achieve the interior and exterior subdued color palette, matching century-old tones.

Countless other items—converted gas lamps, copper snow guards, the pitch of the roofline, even the simple iron detailing on the front stoop—add to the overall aged effect.

EACH PIECE, EACH DETAIL HAS A STORY

The same attention to vintage detailing is evident inside. Gezelle hunted for one-of-a-kind materials and pieces that match the house and area's style. Many of the furnishings and artwork appeal to his love of mid-century modern furniture



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and décor. The juxtaposition of turn-of-the-century vs. mid-century styles adds to visual interest, while the focus on simple, orderly, and unique craftsmanship unites every space.

The decades-old, six-panel, fir front door was picked up at Second Chance, a Baltimore-based nonprofit that salvages materials for resale, and was refinished with Rick Miller's help.

Creating an impressive accent wall in the home office, wood cladding was repurposed from an old Howard County barn that blew down during Hurricane Isabel.

Wormy chestnut—a wood found only in preexisting structures due to its near extinction from a blight in the early 1900s—was reclaimed as the support beam over the fireplace. More reclaimed wood can be spotted in wainscoting throughout the house, in the ceiling of the mudroom and as shelving in the kitchen.

Old mortise box locks, complete with skeleton keys, finish off each door. A 100-year-old bathroom sink, two 100-year-old claw-foot tubs, and a vintage wash sink are incorporated in various areas.



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Furniture and accents display unique design lines: Gezelle restored two original Eames DCM chairs, stamped November 1953, and uses one in the master bedroom; the office desk is a restored Knoll from

the late 1950s; the bedroom pieces were originally used by Gezelle's parents. Even a changing table in the twins' nursery is a repurposed mid-century dresser.

Various pieces of art enhance or offset the older finishes. In the powder room, *Westward Ho!*, an 1866 engraving by T.D. Booth printed by W. Pate New York, has its original unbroken wooded backing, while the hallway features a modern Patrick Conception handscreen of Star Wars' Boba Fett. Gezelle obtained two Charles Emery prints from Annapolis Collection Gallery, including a 1953 image of the city dock and a 1950 little boy crabbing. A print of the Lord Bodner Octopus Study, inspired from the 19th century copper plate engraving, sits at the top of the staircase.

With its layers of timeless elements and supreme attention to detail, it's clear this labor of love in Wardour will endure for years to come. ♦

