

CHARLESTON  
SINGLE

CHARLESTON  
SOUTH CAROLINA



# *Paradise Found*

With a restored Victorian exterior, this home's interior took on a modern tone with an open floor plan, rich hues, and shimmering finishes.

BY MARA BOO PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIE WILLIAMS PRODUCED BY SANDRA L. MOHLMANN



**THIS PHOTO** Showcasing a veritable confection of period detail, Ginger and Gregory Keating's front entry is graced by ornate trim and scrolled ironwork, both hallmarks of Victorian architecture.

**OPPOSITE** A glass-beaded lap pool nestles into the Keatings' lushly landscaped side garden. Protected from streetside views by a cleverly designed water feature gently spilling over a flower-topped dividing wall, the pool is a luxurious respite on hot, humid days.



“The color palette  
of *layered tones*  
of *chocolate* brown  
and white creates an  
elegant aesthetic.”

DESIGNER DEBORAH DAINE



Of the clean and contemporary parlor, designer Deborah Daine says, "We popped open what is essentially a very small room by mirroring the entire fireplace from floor to ceiling." Metallic leather chairs shimmer in its reflection.

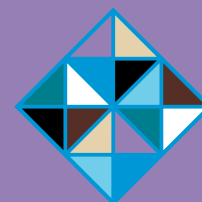


Historical homes typically require trade-offs between charm and livability. True, they're often embellished by lush architectural elements of a bygone era. Then again, they're likely to lack the kind of space that satisfies the needs of young families in this millennium. This is precisely the reason many couples choose a generous mudroom over gorgeous moldings, for instance, and buy new.

Not Ginger and Gregory Keating. "We asked ourselves, river, beach, or downtown?" Ginger says, explaining the couple's decision to forgo building a new home in favor of living in downtown Charleston, South Carolina. "It was really no contest. We love the lifestyle here—not to mention that it is just so quaint."

Indeed, their Charleston Single House—a fine example of the one-room-wide homes lining the city's historic streets—boasts abundant original architectural detail, from wrought-iron metalwork encircling the house to twin verandas, known locally as piazzas, welcoming cool breezes into its high-ceiling rooms. To stroll past the Keatings' house—built in 1870—is to take a walk back in time.

That is, until Ginger opens the front door. "People see inside and say, 'Wow! I would never have imagined,'" she



### *Color Palette*

*Designer Deborah Daine coaxed a contemporary vibe out of monochromatic colors that are anything but cool. "My aim was to create a sensual environment inspired by nature. Some of the most colorful things around don't actually scream color. They're organic." Think seashells, as Daine did, or the many hues of well-worn sea glass.*

### *Soothing and Subtle*

*Coffee colors ranging from espresso to café au lait mingle with whispers of lavender and blue to create a uniquely restful color palette. Generously lavished with milky-white trim, the effect is at once fresh and familiar. "Everything we did in this house was an effort to bridge the gap between old and new," Daine says.*



### *Neutrals*

The neutral walls complement, rather than compete with, an exciting array of color and texture provided by furnishings, fabrics, artwork, and even flowers.

**RIGHT** Though diminutive, the hardworking kitchen is packed with state-of-the-art amenities. A breakfast bar provides a casual spot for quick meals. Wenge wood cabinetry and espresso window blinds contrast with underlit quartz-crystal countertops. **BELOW** “We worked very closely with the local historical society to make all our color choices,” Daine says. “It was important to preserve the integrity of the home as well as the neighborhood.”



BEFORE



says. Gone are the stuffy, uninspired interiors she and Gregory found when they bought the house. Gone, too, are the walls that once separated its first floor into a warren of tiny rooms—one so small, designer Deborah Daine says, “it could only fit two reclining chairs.”

Today, the house manages to honor its historic roots even as it functions beautifully for the Keatings and their combined brood of four kids, thanks to an open floor plan that gracefully melds the family room, dining room, and kitchen into one “grand room,” as the Keatings affectionately say. “Our aim was to create a contemporary home within the historical bones of this house. We had to make it more useful for modern-day living,” Daine says. “So we left what was wonderful—its lovely moldings, the ornate fireplaces, the heart pine floors—and took out the rest.”



## Shimmer

The distinction between shimmer and shine is subtle. "None of the surfaces in this house are bright or hard. They've all been reduced to a glimmer by washes of color or a matte coat of wax," Daine says.



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## Illuminate the Style with Lights

"There are all manner of crystal chandeliers in this house," designer Deborah Daine says. "But not a single one of them is too serious. They've all got some sort of whimsical feel. Some of them are even supercontemporary. Their common denominator is that they all look very comfortable in a historical setting." Ginger Keating concurs. "They're like the really good pair of earrings you put on when you get dressed up. They make the house sparkle," she says.

Here's a lighting resource list. Note that manufacturers update their product lines frequently, so some of these fixtures might no longer be available.

1. Fascination—Uttermost Lighting, to the trade only, 800/678-5486, [uttermost.com](http://uttermost.com)
2. Worlds Away Moderna Lantern—Candelabra, 800/440-5121, [shopcandelabra.com](http://shopcandelabra.com)
3. Shine Sugalite Pendant—Candelabra (*see above*)
4. Crystal Cascade—Boyd Lighting Kentfield Collection, to the trade only, 415/778-4300, [boydlighting.com](http://boydlighting.com)
5. Swan Crystal Bead—by Canopy Designs through Candelabra (*see above*)
6. Tobacco Capiz Shell with Crystals (*imported from Thailand*)
7. Antiqued Silver and Crystal—through Deborah Daine Design, 313/869-2686



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*Crisp Accents*  
 Custom white millwork deepens and enhances the dusky quality of metallic-washed plum walls. The contrast delivers a fresh take on tradition and accentuates architectural detail.



**TOP** Style extends to the outdoor kitchen. "The furnishings, the fabrics, and the colors all flow from the interiors," Daine says. She even brought some shimmer outside by placing a framed mirror on the wall along the walkway above the outdoor sink.

Though not quite 3,000 square feet, the house lives large. Sight lines stretch from front to back in a single glance, visually stretching its boundaries. "You get an amazing feeling of expansiveness and light in this house," Daine says.

Her deft use of color and materials is the main reason. Daine relied on deep, dark chocolate tones to ground an otherwise airy palette of barely there, monochromatic color inspired by an abalone seashell sitting on her desk. "The shimmery, soft hues inside that shell reflect the sea—the gentle washes of understated platinum, silver, and not-quite-there blues and lavenders," she says. "They're elegant colors that perfectly fit Ginger and Gregory, who are themselves both very elegant."

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## *Voice of Experience*

Designer Deborah Daine looked beyond the usual materials and products for this home. "I really love hotel design, spas, and restaurants, so I tend to use a lot of the same products in residential projects. It's a great way to find some truly innovative things," she says. For example, the nonfunctioning fireplaces were fitted with eco-friendly fireboxes, typically used in the hospitality industry. "They use denatured ethanol, rather than gas, to create a wonderful flame and heat." Likewise, she employed solid quartz crystal—rarely used in residential applications—on the counters. "The quartz was flown in from Israel, along with the fabricators, who wanted to see for themselves how it looked in someone's house!"

# The Plans, Before & After

Working within the home's existing footprint, the Keatings reconfigured the core of the main level into what they call the "grand room," which consists of a new kitchen, family room, and dining room. The upper-level room positions remain largely the same, with most of the changes coming in the form of surface updates and new built-ins.



**BEFORE**  
The Keatings reconfigured these closets for more storage, enabling them to remove the obtrusive closet in the master bedroom.

This warren of rooms had plenty of usable space, but the walls needed to go.

The parlor kept its original shape but has a newly configured staircase and fireplace surround.

**AFTER**  
Instead of opening to an overgrown garden, the two-level piazza now overlooks a pool.

The Keatings upgraded the existing bedrooms with built-ins, lighting, and paint.

This "grand room," as the Keatings refer to their combined kitchen, dining room, and family room, is the new heart of the home.



3,000 square feet

ARCHITECT ASHLEY JENNINGS  
DESIGNER DEBORAH DAINE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT BOB ABLES