



*design destination*  
**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

# Capital Comfort

Drive a few minutes beyond Washington, D.C.'s central arteries and the stately homes—at the end of long driveways and screened by ornamental landscapes—seem as if they're hiding from passersby.

One such home, despite its Georgian grandeur, puts guests at ease. **Mary Douglas Drysdale**, go-to designer for D.C.'s power brokers and A-listers, helped longtime clients—for whom she had previously designed multiple homes—infuse its formality with color, warmth, and whimsy.

For her clients—a tech executive, his wife, and their children—Drysdale made their latest move seamless, incorporating art and furnishings from previous homes and introducing new details to create a design that's dramatic but not too precious.

In the paneled library, Drysdale painted the imposing wood with a deep gray, breathing new life into the room's Regency table and 18th-century French chairs.

Across the hall in the dining room, Drysdale imported the custom-made table,

By Jennifer Sergent Photography by Ron Blunt



**Entry** The octagonal central atrium sets the stage with shape rather than color. Designer Mary Douglas Drysdale started with an octagonal table skirted with Jane Churchill fabric and then created a still life—including urns, a Manuel Neri bronze, alabaster grapes, and a bowl filled with white onions. “I love to do my accessorizing at Whole Foods,” she says. Barn photography by local photographer Max MacKenzie hangs behind the still life—yet another study in shape.



**Entry** Drysdale placed contemporary art by D.C. artist Maggie Michael over an antique French settee and echoed the shapes in the art with a bold Kravet pattern on the pillows.



sideboard, and chairs from a previous project for her clients, slipcovering the chairs for a more casual effect. The rug is an antique purchased for the space, but the accessories come from retail chains.

"If you have something and you want to modernize it, bring in interesting containers, pillows, and art," Drysdale says. "Those elements can really update a room and make it feel very fresh."

She also took rugs from previous homes and cut them down to fit into the new one.

"I don't know why people think that they should have to throw everything away," Drysdale says.

She's quick to point out that even if clients can afford most anything, it doesn't mean you can't be practical. Why purchase a new piece of furniture, say, when you can paint a vintage piece to add personality?

"It makes projects that people see in magazines much more feasible when people think of it that way," Drysdale says.



**Living room** Existing draperies coordinate beautifully with the owners' vivid orange Donald Judd paintings. The cloverleaf ottoman was designed by Drysdale and upholstered with a cream fabric from Colefax & Fowler.



**Dining room** The owners' love of blue comes alive in the dining room. Designer Drysdale purchased an antique Aubusson rug from Doris Leslie Blau in New York. She slipcovered chairs in a Rogers & Goffigon blue stripe and repeated the color by lining the existing drapes in a Rogers & Goffigon blue linen. The painted mirror is from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, and accessories on the table and sideboard are from Crate & Barrel.





**Library** A Jansen console complements the library's dark palette perfectly. Embroidered black Duralee fabric on the antique French chairs adds a playful element. The pedestal table is from Dessin Fournir.



## tips of the trade

*Drysdale's favorite D.C. haunts:*

**The Phillips Collection** was converted from a residence and maintains a wonderful residential feeling. One can imagine living with the art and architecture.

**Restaurant Nora**, a certified organic restaurant, has walls graced with "museum-quality" Amish and Mennonite quilts.

**Dupont Circle Freshfarm Market** transforms Dupont Circle every Sunday.

**Rock Creek Park** cuts a wide swath through the center of the city, offering an escape to residents and visitors. It's a perfect place to get away from it all, like going to the country without the long drive.



**Family room** The Stark rug sets the tone for the deep red theme of the family room. It's enhanced by the crimson animal-print pillow fabrics and chair upholstery by Colefax and Fowler. The cream Manuel Canovas upholstery provides the canvas. The accessories are from the Cross MacKenzie Gallery and Margaret Rubino's Homes + Gardens shop, both in D.C.