

SHADES OF RED

Using red accents and traditional decor, designer William Parker turns a Georgian-style home in Tarrytown into an object of beauty.



A Spanish Colonial-style table that is surrounded by red velvet chairs dominates the dining room. A pair of crystal chandeliers and two windows framed by flowing red drapes add balance and richness to the space.

By Karin Marie
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When homeowners Claire and Carl Stuart envisioned the interior of their new home, they saw red. “Specifically, cardinal red,” says designer William Parker of William Parker Architects-Interior Designers. The choice of vibrant red signaled a clear departure for the couple, whose previous home featured a pale, neutral palette and a décor that relied on rustic elements. “It was rustic all the way,” recalls Claire, “with heavily fauxed walls and travertine floors.”

Their new house, originally built in 1980, couldn’t be more different. A three-story Georgian-style structure, it brings to mind delicate Chippendale furniture, white gloves and the Boston Tea Party—a far cry from rustic. Yet the décor seamlessly fuses traditional elements—crystal chandeliers and dainty side chairs—with modern art and personal objects that reflect the homeowners’ adventurous spirits and outgoing personalities. The Tarrytown home’s layout is typical of the highly symmetrical Georgian architecture form. Georgian, or (as the style came to be known in Revolutionary America) Federal, houses are square or rectangular and feature a central axis surrounded by rooms. The rooms can be accessed two ways—through doors opening off the central axis or those that lead directly from one room into another.



An abstract by Robert Rector serves as a focal point in the library, where the red in the painting offers a burst of color against the dark wood paneling.



The formal living room brims with fabric of richly hued neutrals punctuated by jewel-toned red and gold detailing.

A central staircase dominates the entry, which forms part of the central axis. To the left and right, the showpiece formal dining and living rooms are in full view through wide double doors. Both rooms are—in a word—opulent.

In the dining room, a Spanish Colonial-style table surrounded by eight cardinal red velvet chairs and crowned with a pair of crystal chandeliers graces the room's center. Beyond the table, a custom-made Italian faceted mirror tops the fireplace, serving as a focal point. Flowing red drapes, edged in a patterned trim reminiscent of an Elizabethan knot garden, accent full-length windows. The oak floor features a faux wood inlay identical to the drapery trim. One of the room's more unusual accent pieces is an oversized, trumpet-shaped Venetian glass lamp, circa 1950, in red—of course.

Across the entry, the formal living room brims with fabrics of richly hued neutrals punctuated by jewel-toned red and gold detailing. The room's multiple seating groups were designed to encourage both large group and intimate conversations. Because the Stuarts are involved in a number of fund-raising activities and often host parties for charity organizations and educational institutions, the design needed to accommodate a variety of functions.

While beautiful furniture and accent pieces played a major role in the design plan, the inclusion of family and personal mementos was also a key element. As a result, one living room wall serves as a gallery for striking, candid portraits taken by Claire during a trip to Israel and



Though one of the smallest rooms in the home, the downstairs powder bath is a jewel. Bright red striated walls with a shiny lacquer finish provide a dramatic backdrop for a Bombay chest, modified to hold a sink.



On the patio, outdoor curtains hang from the portico supports, adding a bit of Caribbean spice and creating an enjoyable outdoor room.

Egypt. The wall, with its black and white photos, makes a thought-provoking statement and provides a fitting transition into the adjacent dual-use library and study.

Deep coffee-colored wood paneling in the study creates a snug and enveloping backdrop for this work-focused retreat. Built-in bookshelves provide a home for family objects such as travel souvenirs, memorabilia and artworks created by the couple's now-grown children. An abstract painting by artist Robert Rector hangs over the fireplace. In a bow to contemporary life, one shelf section was modified to serve as an entertainment center. Earth tones dominate in the room, but a warm shade of red is intertwined throughout the space. "It's a comfort red that pops and pulls the eye," explains Parker.

Next to the study is the family dining area, which opens onto an enclosed patio with a pool and spa. The flooring in this room and in the kitchen is black and white tile—a traditional Georgian look, according to Parker.

On the patio, the homeowners' request for a semi-tropical "San Antonio River Walk" quality is accomplished with tropical plants and light-colored wicker furniture. Outdoor curtains hanging from the portico's supports add a bit of Caribbean spice and create the feel of an outdoor room.

One of the home's most spectacular rooms is also one of its smallest—a first floor powder room that's tucked away under the stairs. Bright red striated walls with a shiny lacquer finish provide a dramatic backdrop for the room's decorative elements, including a magnificent Bombay chest modified to hold a sink.

Comfortable is the perfect word to describe the master bedroom suite, which consists of a sitting room, bedroom and his and her baths. The relaxing refuge is filled with an overstuffed chaise lounge and armchairs, soft Afghans and plump pillows. The color scheme encompasses a full range of pale neutrals with chocolate accents and the smallest touches of red. With its fireplace and wall-mounted plasma screen TV, it's just the place to spend a cold winter day with a book or DVD and a pot of hot tea.

This plush, personal space seems a world removed from the opulent formality of the dining and living rooms—a testament to the design's overall success in meeting the homeowners' public and personal needs. ^{ah&l}