HOME DESIGN & DECOR

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DESIGNERS AT HOME

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BUNNIES

IN BLOOM

For designer Gray Walker, inspiration begins the moment she steps through her front door.

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A hand-painted butterfly mural climbs the foyer staircase, evolving from Robin Wellner's original design to Lottie Banner's final iteration. **Stair runner:** Stark. **Table:** Niermann Weeks. **Lanterns:** International Shades.



Tucked into more than two wooded acres at the intersections of Eastover, Myers Park, and Cotswold, Gray Walker's three-story Georgian feels less like a city residence and more like a secluded retreat. Built in 1966 and designed by noted Charlotte architect Harold Cooler, the red-brick home sits on a quiet road with only five houses.

Walker and her husband, Geordie, purchased the property nearly twenty years ago from the family who built it. "No homes ever came up for sale on this street," says Walker, "so when I saw this come on the market, I thought, 'We've got to get in there today'." They were smitten almost immediately.

"The moment you step into the foyer and look through to the back of the house, it feels as though you're suspended in the forest," Walker recalls. Nestled into a hillside, the residence seems to hover among the trees, evoking the charm of an elevated treehouse retreat.

The house arrived with enviable architectural bones and a pedigree to match. Its original interiors were designed by the late Otto Zenke, whose sophisticated vision made the



The living room is anchored by a colorful Moroccan rug chosen by Walker's husband, Geordie. **Lighting:** Visual Comfort. **Ottomans:** CR Laine. **Rug:** French Accents.



home a standout of its era. "It was an incredibly chic house in the 1970s," Walker says with a laugh.

The Walkers transformed the home gradually, updating rooms in phases as time and budget allowed. The kitchen came first, followed by bathrooms, an expanded rear porch, and, most recently, extensive garden improvements.

Inside, the home serves as a canvas for Walker's creativity. The foyer's butterfly mural that climbs the staircase was originally painted in sepia tones by artist Robin Wellner. But the installation evolved over time, with artist Lottie Banner introducing bolder colors and graphic details. "Those butterflies, much like me, have gone through many changes in their life," Walker says.

Color and whimsy are on full display throughout the house. A vibrant Moroccan rug and sculptural sunburst chandelier energize the living room. In the dining room, walls and trim are drenched in a custom lacquered blue-green, while Banner transformed the ceiling into an ethereal landscape of silver and gold leaf. "I wanted to create a celestial ceiling so you felt close to heaven in the dining room," Walker says.

The kitchen balances classic architecture with fresh finishes. Walker traded the dark wood paneling for bright white cabinetry, soapstone countertops, and a marble backsplash, while the breakfast nook incorporates clear acrylic chairs and a custom upholstered bench.

In Geordie's study, Walker trimmed the grasscloth wallpaper with red Samuel & Sons gimp—"It's done like upholstery with brass tacks in it," she says—while the owner's suite embraces her love of lavender hues and floral wallpaper. But nowhere is the designer's personality more evident than in her closet. Outfitted with a lavender island, grasscloth-front cabinetry, and a wallpapered ceiling, the space feels like a garden party. "I wanted it to feel like a gazebo, with wicker wallpaper and flowers on a trellis across the ceiling," she says.

The home's lower-level studio—once a dark, wood-paneled man cave—is now a light-filled design headquarters where Walker meets clients. Because her business operates from home, every room doubles as a portfolio piece.

For Walker, the home's greatest luxury isn't its history or its picturesque setting—it's the freedom to keep imagining what comes next. Each room reflects a chapter of her life, layered with collected treasures, personal symbolism, and an unabashed love of color. Outside, the gardens continue to mature with the seasons; inside, new ideas are always taking root. "I'm constantly moving things around and dreaming up something new," she says. Surrounded by the canopy of trees that first captured her heart, Walker has created a house that feels both deeply personal and perpetually in bloom.

"I'm deeply rooted in my Southern heritage . . . it's been a love affair with this house, and we've done it slowly and methodically." —GRAY WALKER



A weather-friendly throw and curated pieces from Walker's glass collection bring warmth and personality to the covered porch. **Table and chairs:** Sika Design. **Bird pitcher:** Johnston & Gentithes Studios. **Yellow glasses:** Abigails.



The kitchen retains its original footprint but trades dark-wood paneling for crisp-white cabinetry, soapstone countertops, and a marble backsplash. In the adjoining breakfast nook, a custom banquette, whitewood table, and acrylic chairs with sunny yellow cushions brighten the space. **Table:** Tritter Feefer. **Chairs:** Plexi-Craft. **Bench:** Custom.



In the dining room, Walker drenched the walls and trim in a custom-mixed lacquered icy blue-green, and covered the ceiling in a hand-painted design by Lottie Banner. The dining room table belonged to Geordie's grandmother. **Chandelier:** Niermann Weeks. **Upholstered chair:** Cowtan & Tout.



The fifty-year-old home was designed by prominent Charlotte architect Harold Cooler. "(Geordie) immediately loved it because it's in a heavily wooded area," Walker says. "When you walk into the foyer and look out the back of the house, you feel like you're in a forest."



ABOVE: The powder room pairs paperbacked silk wallpaper from Koeppel Textiles with a gallery of floral prints by Tommy Mitchell. **Sconces:** Vaughan Designs. **Chandelier:** John Rosselli. **Mirror:** Global Views.

BELOW: Walker transformed her closet into a garden retreat with a trellis-inspired ceiling, lavender grasscloth cabinet panels, and a painted island to match. **Wallpaper:** Osborne & Little. **Grasscloth:** Thibaut.





Walker reimagined her studio as a sleek, white workspace with a built-in desk, high-gloss cabinetry, and open shelving for samples and swatches. **Rug:** Stark. **Lighting:** Hudson Valley.


MORE BEAUTIFUL



The owner's suite layers a lavender-upholstered headboard against floral wallpaper, highlighting Walker's signature pairing of lavender and canary yellow. **Wallpaper:** Osborne & Little. **Rug:** Stark. **Bedside table:** Bernhardt.



By removing a dividing wall, the couple combined two bathrooms into one bright primary bath with marble floors, a white vanity, and a striking pendant light. **Lighting:** Visual Comfort. **Tub:** Victoria + Albert.