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## There's still time to explore Decorator Show House

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With styles ranging from French country to modern chic, the Emerson House has a room for everyone.

"The house is stunning and our designers have done an amazing job working with some very challenging spaces. They have managed to keep the historic colonial feeling of the house while updating wall coverings and floors as well as adding many clever and whimsical decorative touches and beautiful furnishings," said Laura Dehler, director of marketing and development for the Museums of Old York.

Located on Long Sands Road, just a few steps from York Village, in Maine, the Emerson House is a Georgian Colonial residence whose earliest roots date back to circa 1719 as a Tavern.

Known originally as a place for "Entertainment for the Sons of Liberty" in 1700s, John Adams is known to have stayed in one of the tavern rooms, which are believed to be the current home's living and dining rooms.

For the past 22 years, the Museums of Old York has hosted the annual decorator show house as a means to raise money.

"The show house ticket sales and purchases of furnishings displayed in the house, as well as items from the boutique, support one of New England's outstanding historical museums in good shape, care for a remarkable collection, and provide educational programs for over 3,800 school-age children this year," Dehler said.

"This is our third year. It's been great. We love it. The people are great to work with, it's a good cause, it's been great for us. We've really enjoyed it," said Maya Travaglia of Charles C. Hugo Landscape Design based in South Berwick.

With the help of Chuck Hugo, Travaglia transformed the bare back and side yards into a spacious, paradise garden.

"The idea was to integrate the old and new. The concept of this being a very historical house and the classic Maine tradition that comes with that yet infuse it with more contemporary elements," she said. "We have a kitchen garden with traditional cabbage, kale and eggplant. We have a red tomato happening, that's very exciting, and a tiny baby squash."

"We relayed the brick terrace in this Persian carpet theme to make it more interesting," Travaglia added.

In addition to creating their own designs, Travaglia and Hugo borrowed ideas from the original homeowners.

"They were avid gardeners in their day. She had given me pictures of their gardens from when they lived here 25, 30 years ago," Travaglia said. "We wanted to re-embrace that spirit of loving plants and flowers and watching the little hummingbird coming in and dragonflies on the cabbage, there are little chipmunks running around all happy with places to hide."

Although Travaglia says she loves the entire final product, she says the edible garden is her favorite element.

"I love the edible aspect of the garden because it's just a personal passion of mine. I went through the master gardener program two years ago and they were focusing on edibles. I love to watch food grow," she said.



Just beyond the vertical garden, inside the side door, is the kitchen where all of the edible plants might one day be cooked.

"I was more or less inspired by the age of the house and the original incarnation as a tavern and a farm house," said kitchen designer Meredith Bohn of Meredith Bohn Interior Design in Hollis, N.H.

"I wanted to show how we can make toile and a French country kitchen look more up to date using modern elements and different textures."

Adding to the modern element of the kitchen are the contemporary wicker chairs and the concrete countertop.

"I was inspired by the concrete application on the counter. It's very modern, very green, very useful and something people can do in their own spaces to change the countertop," she said.

In the estimated three weeks Bohn took to complete the project, she said she encountered a few challenges.

"My picture on the wall is straight, the ceiling line isn't," she said. "Trying to fill the space without overfilling the space can be a challenge. You have to learn how to take things away as well as put things in. You try to make it feel like there's not just a bunch of stuff there."

"You have to tie in the function," she added. "This room is already dictated and has a specific function, so that represents more of a challenge."

Bohn refers to the wicker table and chairs as her favorite element of the room for its personal appeal to her taste.

"Probably the table and chairs in the sense that it feels like what I would want to do on a Sunday morning," Bohn said. "Hanging out, going to the beach later with a picnic. Very relaxed, very comfortable."

For Mary O'Neill, taking a bedroom and transforming it into a spacious, sunny home office was all about redefinition.

"What I decided to do is try to show people that they can have a very comfortable room, very well decorated. It can be pretty and still be a home office. It doesn't have to have bulky, dark furniture," O'Neill said.

"I saw the room, it originally had been a bedroom, it had a twin bed and a double bed. There were other bedrooms being designed so I didn't think there was a need for another bedroom," she added. "What I found is that a lot of people are working from home, or telecommunicating, this way if they're spending seven or eight hours a day in a room it might as well be a real pretty room."

O'Neill said after choosing the fabrics for the window treatments, everything else came together.



"The soft kind of blue, green mineral feel felt appropriate. Once I chose those, I chose everything else," she said. "Honoring the authenticity of the house but still creating a beautiful, peaceful, functional room was the biggest challenge."

If after spending a day in the home office you want to relax in the comfort of a Woodbridge library, Sue LeClair has you covered.

"It's exactly what I would expect from a library. It's masculine, it's streamline, not pretentious in any way, and some of these colors are my favorites," said Sue LeClair of Shore-Built Woodworking.

Along with her husband, Bob, LeClair helped designer Frank Hodge of Boston to create a quiet, quaint space to relax.

Although LeClair says her husband's favorite creation were the bookstands by the fireplace, she has another favorite contribution.

"The day bed was a fun piece to do because it added some functionality as well as a place to sit back and relax as you would in a little study or a library," she said.

"I love working with color, I love working with textures. I'm one of those weird people who love going to work every day."

"He does the production, the technical side of it. I do everything else," LeClair said of the division of labor between her and her husband. "I'm a jack-of-all-trades but don't ask me to build anything because it will be off-level and slanted."

Regardless of the room and designer, all of those involved with renovating the Emerson House say the process was enjoyable and they're thrilled with their final creations.

"It's just incredible how people transform these spaces," said Travaglia. "You think 'Wow, how could it have been that before?' The creativity and spirit that gets reflected is remarkable."

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