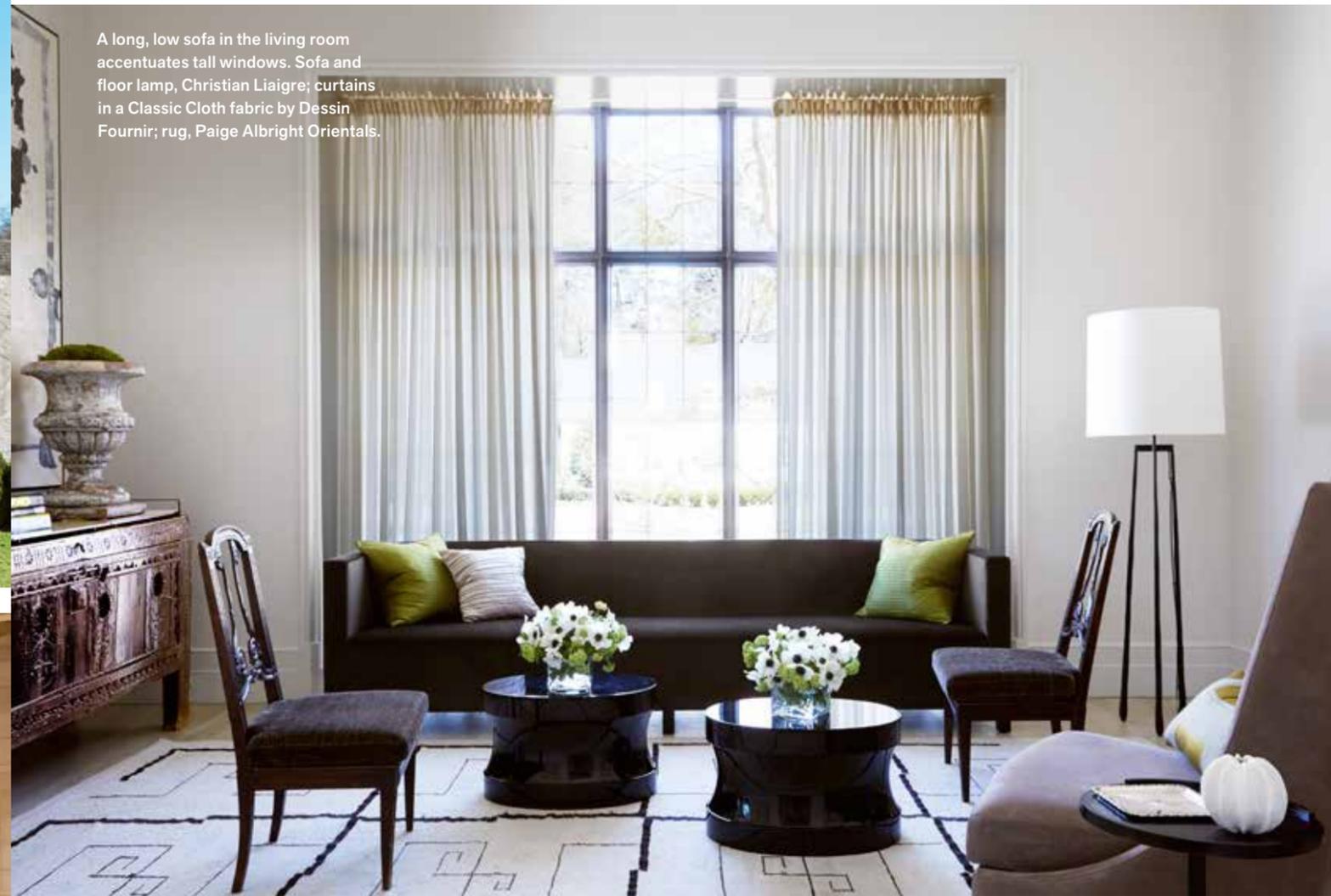
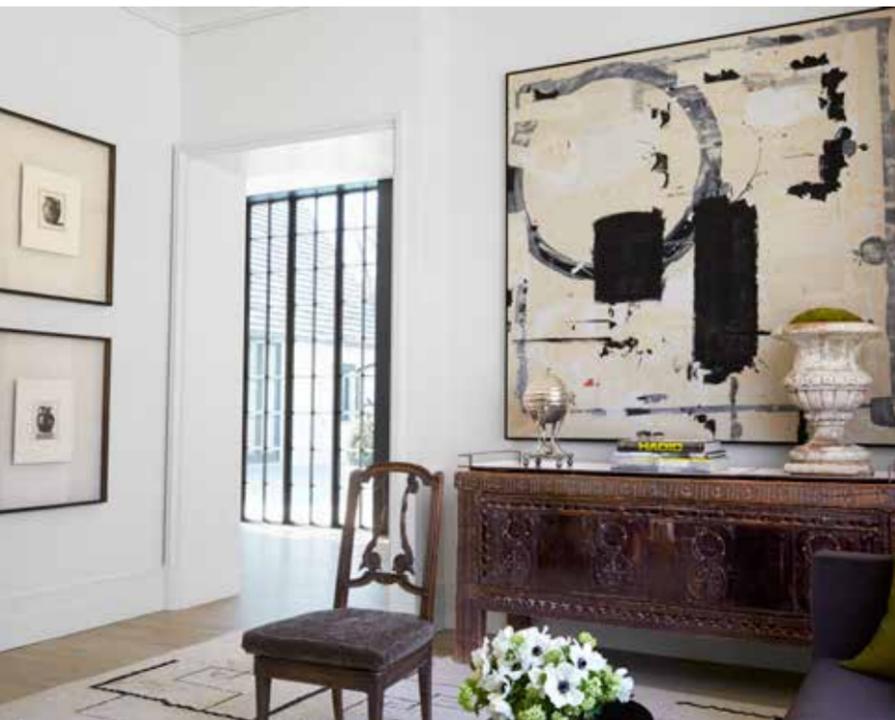


Circular shapes and angular lines heighten the drama in the octagonal, leather-clad dining room. Table, Rose Tarlow Melrose House; chairs in a de Le Cuona fabric, Nancy Corzine; 18th-century chandelier, David Skinner Antiques; console, Circa Interiors & Antiques; trim in Dune White, Benjamin Moore, with walls in a Dani leather. OPPOSITE: Queso, an English lab, in the foyer. Credenza, Robuck; antique mirror and lamp, Details.

# BALANCING ACT

With a perfect mix of the sleek and the sublime, a newly built house in Alabama radiates a refined, soulful sensibility.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY LIZ HAND WOODS | ARCHITECTURE BY BATES CORKERN STUDIO  
 LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY NORMAN KENT JOHNSON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELANIE ACEVEDO  
 PRODUCED BY CAROLYN ENGLEFIELD | WRITTEN BY CATHY STILL MCGOWIN



A long, low sofa in the living room accentuates tall windows. Sofa and floor lamp, Christian Liaigre; curtains in a Classic Cloth fabric by Dessin Fournir; rug, Paige Albright Orientals.



Shades of white unify the house, inside and out. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** 15th-century Persian chest; large-scale art, Jean-Marc Louis. The facade of the house is whitewashed brick. Refrigerator, Sub-Zero; chair in a Great Outdoors fabric, Nancy Corzine; sink fittings, Dornbracht; light fixture, Kevin Reilly. Chandelier, David Skinner Antiques. The swimming pool surround is Indiana limestone. Custom sofas, chairs, Restoration Hardware; cushions in a Perennials fabric.

**MOUNTAIN BROOK, ALABAMA**—particularly Old Mountain Brook, as it is known locally—is filled with stately 1920s Georgian Revivals, English Tudors, and Federal-style architecture. It’s the kind of neighborhood where families put down serious roots and houses pass from one generation to the next. So how do you introduce a new home into a venerable Southern neighborhood? You base it on classic design principles—something architects Paul Bates and Jeremy Corkern of Bates Corkern Studio in Birmingham do well.

Working with clients on opposing sides of design—the husband is the modernist, the wife’s the traditionalist—the architects, along with interior designer Liz Hand Woods, sought to bridge the couple’s contradictions. “They love this neighborhood and all the classic Americana that comes with having a home here,” Woods says. “The wife asked for a grand staircase that her daughter could descend in style when she reached prom age.” The husband’s priorities were simpler: a light-filled stair hall that offered privacy.

Bates and Corkern put proportion and function first. “It’s really a Charleston single house with a pared-down Tudor exterior,” Corkern says. “The home’s geometric forms are all traditional, but the details are clean and minimal.”

A prominent gable and bay window define the front of the house. Extending to one side, a courtyard with a pool and covered loggia

is shielded from the street by a privacy wall, while a porte cochere stretches opposite. A 10-foot-tall wooden front door hints at the dramatic proportions inside. Rooms boast lofty ceilings, arched openings, and lots of windows. Limestone and cedar shake mix with copper, steel, and plaster.

In keeping with the husband’s minimalistic requirements, furnishings are spare but refined. An antique neoclassical credenza resides in the stair hall. Woods paired it with an antique gilded mirror with lots of flourishes. “When you don’t want something to read entirely traditional or modern, you introduce contrasts to play off each other,” she says.

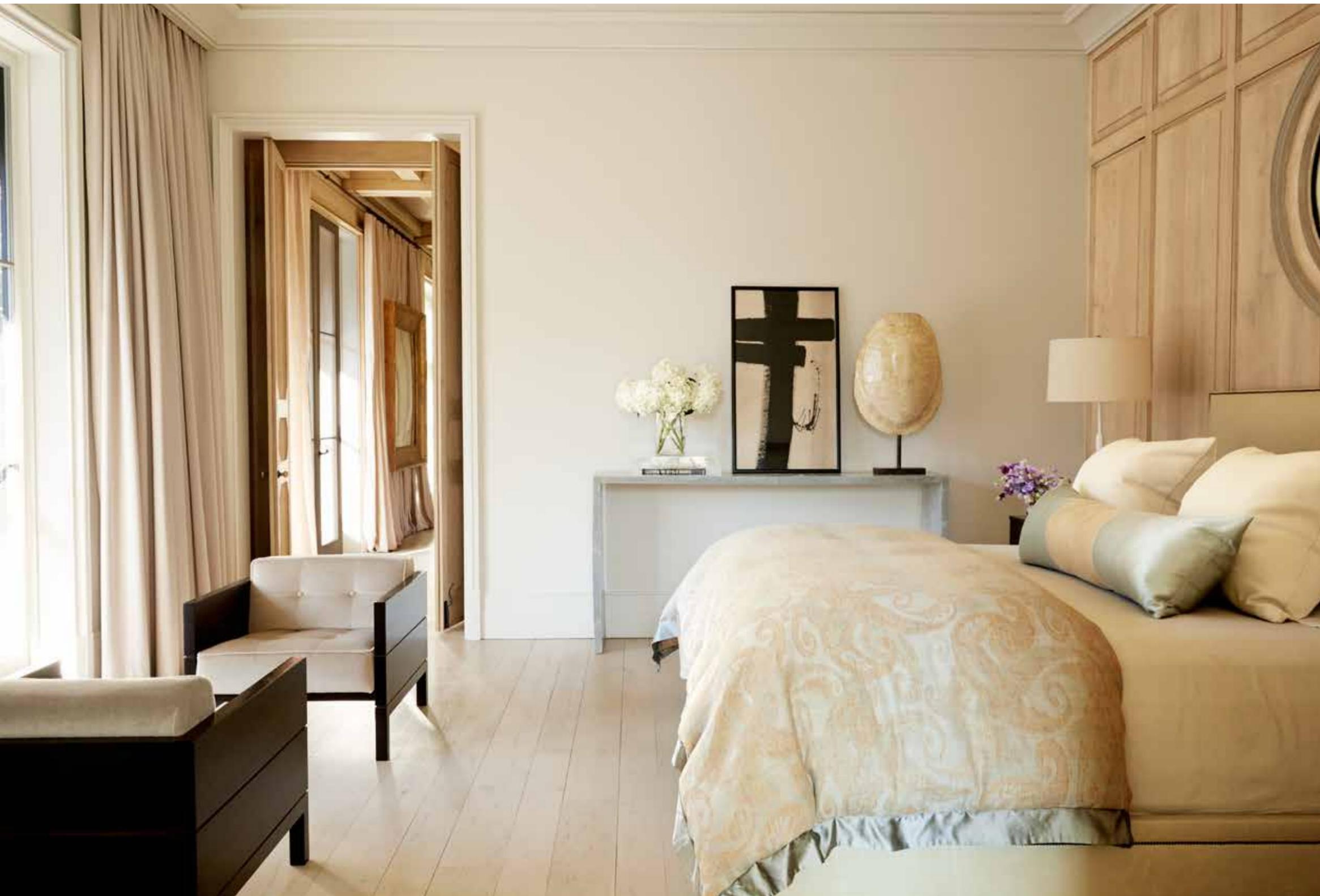
Corkern cites the work of Chicago architect David Adler as the inspiration for the octagonal dining room. Centered with a Rose Tarlow Regency-style dining table and surrounded by sleek Nancy Corzine side chairs, the room pulls off the delicate balance between new and old thanks to clean lines and a spectacular 18th-century crystal chandelier. “It’s a period piece, but the square shape gives it a modern feel,” Corkern says.

In the living room, a Christian Liaigre sofa was the husband’s pièce de résistance. “Everything was chosen for beauty, authenticity, or purpose,” says Woods. New pieces mingle with antiques, such as delicate carved-wood side chairs and a 15th-century

**IN THE DETAILS**

“Precision was paramount. Dressy furnishings mix with modern, and everything has its place. If you do something precious, you have to balance it with something that has an edge.”

Walls paneled in white oak set off contemporary furnishings. Sofa in a Classic Cloth fabric by Dessin Fournir, cocktail table, and floor lamps, Christian Liaigre; chairs in a Holly Hunt leather, Jean de Merry; curtains in a Rogers & Goffigon fabric.



Art and objets create a striking vignette in the master bedroom. **LEFT:** Vintage chairs in a Great Plains silk; duvet in a Rogers & Goffigon paisley; console, Jan Jander; table lamp, Mr. Brown; sculpture, Amy Perlin Antiques; curtains in a Holly Hunt fabric; art, Jean-Marc Louis. **BELOW:** Tub, Kohler; fittings, Lefroy Brooks; side table, Dransfield & Ross; curtains in a Classic Cloth fabric by Dessin Fournir. For more details, see Sourcebook.



Persian chest, offering a play of contrasts: dark woods and upholstery set against plaster walls. “We used Benjamin Moore’s Dune White throughout the house,” Woods says. “It’s a gentler, softer white—a chameleon that works well with different kinds of light.”

In the family room, kitchen, and master bedroom, white oak walls showcase a light, hand-waxed finish—a fresh twist on heavy

English paneling. The custom-crafted fluted panels add subtle details that underscore the home’s refinement—proving that big design statements can be made without a lot of fuss. They also hide clutter: “The husband doesn’t like open shelves. He didn’t want to have to fill them up with things that aren’t necessary,” Woods says. “There’s a whole other house behind the walls.

“To pull off a home that both parties would enjoy, precision was paramount,” says Woods. “Dressy furnishings mix with modern, and everything has its place.” Corkern agrees: “If you do something precious, you have to balance it with something that has an edge.” The result is the perfect blend of his-and-hers design ideas—and a home everyone can agree on. □