

WEB-EXCLUSIVE HOME TOUR

# Inside a British Expat's Cozy Colorado Home

A London-based decorating duo brought their quintessentially English point of view  
Stateside for this complete overhaul

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January 9, 2023



Proper tea, temperate weather, universal healthcare—all things an English transplant might be homesick for while living in the US. But for a client of London-based Salvesen Graham, the thing they pined after most was window treatments. “That was the first thing she said when we spoke to her. ‘I just want curtains at my window,’” remembers Mary Graham, who cofounded the interior design firm with Nicole Salvesen.

The clients, a British wife and American husband, contacted the decorating duo—known for their thoughtfully layered and quintessentially English interiors—a year into the pandemic, after deciding to move from California to Boulder, Colorado. “They wanted to live somewhere a little bit more relaxed,” says Salvesen. “And Boulder definitely is! There would be days when a contractor would say, ‘Oh, I’m going snowboarding today. I can’t help. The snow’s just too good,’” she laughs.

Boulder also offered plenty of nature to explore (key for the clients’ active kids) and a charming historic neighborhood, where the family decided to settle. “When you’re up [there] looking down on the town, all you see are trees, and then this little enclave of historic houses,” Graham explains. The family’s Arts and Crafts–style home is preserved as a historic building and features intricate millwork and original flooring. “It’s always funny coming from different perspectives of what’s old and what’s not old,” Graham says, nodding to the home’s relatively short history compared to some of their Georgian and Victorian projects in the UK. “But because it is a listed home, there wasn’t a huge amount that we could do structurally.”

The original floor plan presented a number of quirks for the designers to make sense of, including a walkthrough formal dining room. “It could never be anything other than a walkthrough, so we turned it into a library, somewhere you can sit and open a book,” says Salvesen. “In the UK, we will often have a hallway with a round table that can double up for intimate dinners or a spot for stacks of books and a big flower arrangement.” The solution works well for the clients, who are “incredibly academic,” Salvesen says. “They are the sort of people that sit down and open a tome—something interesting and probably slightly terrifying to most of us.”

One of the first floor’s two sitting rooms offered a similar challenge. “Prior to us configuring the flow of the rooms, they didn’t really use that sitting room, because it felt quite dark,” Graham says. “So we really embraced it and made it this cozy, cocooning snug where you can just curl up with a book.” While most of the rooms downstairs are semi-open plan, this is the one room where the homeowners can shut the doors and retreat, enveloped by a rich mix of textiles. In contrast, the more formal sitting room is light and airy, with a wall of windows. Art, sourced by Salvesen Graham and Anna Kirrage, lines the walls. And an antique writing bureau serves as a drinks cupboard, making it an ideal spot to entertain.

The kitchen and hearth room are the heart of the home. The designers separated the open spaces with glass-paneled half walls. “This is a trick we use quite a lot so that you can still see through, but you also have little corners that you can put furniture up against or hang art on,” says Graham. The hearth room, which opens out to the veranda, is where the family gathers, with seating for eight around the dining table, plus a banquette and armchair in either corner. The pair also turned a former pantry into an office off of the kitchen. “The admin of the house always seems to be done next to the chopping board,” Graham observes. “We wanted to create a slightly more peaceful environment for [that].”

And, did the client get her initial wish? Traditional valances, pleated floor-to-ceiling drapes, neatly folding Roman shades—each window was carefully considered. “She wanted to have floral fabrics everywhere,” says Salvesen. In the primary suite, a ruffled valance and curtain even surrounds the headboard. The bedroom features an eclectic collection of rosy English florals, stripes, suzani, and geometric prints.

But, Salvesen and Graham hope that the items that weren’t on their clients’ initial wishlist make them just as happy as the ones that were. “That’s one of the really satisfying parts of our job—you’re actually just making a house work better for the people that live there. It’s a less obvious and less tangible kind of impact. But long term, that’s the thing that makes a house a pleasurable place to live.”



“We built in joinery in the entrance hall because they had zero storage for coats or shoes, and when you live in the mountains you need it,” says Graham. To offset the orange undertones of the original wood floors and moldings, the designers chose a soft green for the walls—Farrow & Ball’s Olive. The wallpaper and bench cushion fabric are by Michael S. Smith Inc., and the oil pendant lamp is from Empel Collections.





A guest powder room was a new addition on the first floor. “We feel quite strongly that you need one that’s nice for your guests,” says Graham. “And it has a really sweet, circular internal window.” The walls are covered in Antoinette Poisson’s Jaipur wallpaper, as well as paneling painted Benjamin Moore Galapagos Green. The oval cane mirror is a Salvesen Graham design, while the light fixture and shade are from Soane Britain.



3/16

In the sitting room, the interior designers layered two shades of green for a cocoon-like effect—[Farrow & Ball's Calke Green](#) and [Benjamin Moore's Vintage Vogue](#). The curtains and blinds feature [Soane Britain's Qajar stripe fabric](#). "Curtains are a huge part of English decor. The inclusion of them here is what gives it that layered, comfortable English feeling," says Graham.



“We wanted this to be a more formal drawing room,” says Salvesen. The stools are by Salvesen Graham with David Seyfried in a Pierre Frey fabric. The rattan pendant is from Soane Britain.



The family powder room walls feature Antoinette Poisson wallpaper and sconces by Hector Finch. The marbled lampshades are by Pooky.



The formal dining room turned library offers a contemporary take on Victoriana, with Décors Barbares' Zénaïde pattern gracing the walls, Roman shades, and sconce lampshades. The chairs are by Salvesen Graham, covered in Claremont Milano linen.





The hearth room is a multipurpose gathering space for the family. Wicker armchairs by the Nicholson Gallery and Travis and Company armchairs covered in Guy Goodfellow fabric surround a bespoke table by Brian Memmler. The light fixture above the table is from the Urban Electric Co.



The designers reconfigured the kitchen, now centered around a large island surrounded by Swiss-back counter stools from Nickey Kehoe. The pot rack with pendant lights is by Anne Morris.



The primary bedroom combines patterns and prints to brilliant effect. The wallpaper and valance are by Guy Goodfellow, while the bed curtain lining is by Soane Britain. The suzani throw is from Pentreath and Hall. The cane étagère tables are by Vaughan.



The reading nook in the primary bedroom is comprised of two armchairs by Travis & Company. The fabric for the Roman shades is Jean Monroe's *Wisteria Rose*. The polished brass wall lights flanking the window seat feature a scallop-shell design by Collier Webb.

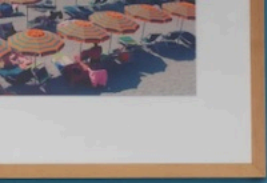


Due to the home's historical status, Salvesen Graham only made decorative updates to the primary bath, including Roman shades in a de Le Cuona fabric, George Smith slipper chair, and scallop rug by Jennifer Manners and Salvesen Graham.





The sunny office, formerly a pantry, is a place for the client to sit with her laptop. Farrow & Ball's Matchsticks, White Tie, and Pointing, cover the walls, woodwork, and ceiling. A Parsons desk lamp by Susie Atkinson sits atop the custom upholstered desk in Desmond Grasscloth by Sister Parish.



The basement was a huge undertaking that involved digging out an additional two feet of height before refitting the massive space. Now, a guest bedroom and adjoining bath are to the left of the basement stairs.

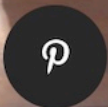


Shades of blue tie the basement's separate rooms together. In the guest bath, the tile is by Walker Zanger. The vanity hardware is by Waterworks.



“We wanted it to feel pretty and decorative down here and not like you were going into the depths of a dark basement that was only for teenagers to hang out,” Graham laughs.





The hearth room's French doors open to a wrap-around veranda, with a lush green backdrop.