



Architect Stratton Hammon designed the Lyon House in the 1950s. Each subsequent owner has made their mark while taking care to preserve the home's historic character.

SUNNY-SIDE UP

Interior designer Libby Rush of Bittners artfully melds family heirlooms with contemporary touches to create cheerful, cherishable spaces

Written by Bridget Williams / Photography by Robert Burge

Part of a triumvirate of homes designed by architect Stratton Hammon for Mr. and Mrs. Preston Joyes and their daughters in the 1950s, the Lyon House has been lovingly cared for in the ensuing decades. Each subsequent owner has made their mark while taking care to preserve the home's historic character. As part of a compound dedicated to family, there's no doubt the Joyes' would approve of the current owners, who relied on interior designer Libby Rush of Bittners to integrate a host of family heirlooms into an overall design scheme that is both forward-thinking and timeless.

The exterior of the clapboard home is organized into a central two-story section defined by a gambrel roof and a pair of projecting wings, each with a fireplace. The layout creates a central landscaped courtyard at the entry, further defined by a charming white picket fence.

It feels like springtime the moment you step inside the front door. Rush did a masterful job of utilizing the homeowners' existing pieces, both from their previous historic residence in the Connecticut Western Reserve area of Ohio and those passed down through the family, and combining them with contemporary upholstery, paint finishes, and wallcoverings.

In the extended entry hall, Rush created an inviting vignette by flanking a gilt chinoiserie-style mirror with a pair of Japanese paintings on silk that belonged to the wife's mother. Beneath the mirror is a lovely antique five-drawer chest on bracket feet that is bookended by a pair of cane back open armchairs with velvet upholstery subtly reminiscent of a giraffe-print. Serving as the striking backdrop is a wallcovering from Seabrook, whose pattern dually conjures up notions of a monotone animal print or the rippled reflection of light on water.



Wallcovering from Seabrook serves as the backdrop for a well-composed vignette in the entry hall. Travers fabric on the cane-back chairs.



Wall covering from Folia in the powder room.

A light-filled formal living room spans the entirety of the home's central section; its rear wall is an expanse of glass that opens to a bluestone terrace with woods beyond. The color palette builds upon an Oushak rug that represents one of the few pieces purchased for the home. Well-suited to the scene is a painting of a snow-covered landscape by Russian artist Ivan Fedorovich Choultse. Noteworthy for his snow scenes that seem to radiate light, Choultse was the court painter for Czar Nicholas II.

Another artist, Rebecca Graves of R. Graves and Company, was commissioned to create the subtle five-color faux-finish on the walls at either end of the room. Brunswick & Fils upholstery graces a pair of armchairs with bullion fringe trim as well as a wingchair the wife purchased in the 1980s for \$20 at a country club sale. The wife credits her sister with choosing the Bouquet pattern. Over the years, as they've moved and redecorated, the

wife said they would select a color from the lively print to emphasize in their decor. While the Bouquet print has endured, a unique foil to this traditional pattern is presented by subtly shimmering geometric upholstery by Hodsoll McKenzie on a pair of slipper chairs placed in front of the fireplace.

Graves also gets credit for the incredible trompe l'oeil walls in the dining room, which resemble panels of lilac-colored silk wallpaper, even down to the seam lines. On top of this are hand-painted gold and silver flowers, a design element culled from the silk drapery, which came from the wife's parents. The wife said the unique wall color was inspired by the dining room in her parent's home. At the far end of the room is a bay with floor-to-ceiling windows that is large enough to accommodate a grand piano. The gold-on-grey embroidered upholstery on the dining chairs mimics the geometric pattern on the rug.



The present owners transformed a first-floor bedroom into a cozy study.



The family room pays homage to the rustic folk art aesthetic of the homeowners' previous residence.

Given a position of prominence in the formal living room is a painting by Russian artist Ivan Fedorovich Choultsé. Displayed on the far wall, given a faux finish by Rebecca Graves, is part of a collection of Japanese paintings on silk that belonged to the wife's mother.



Lustrous Hodsoll McKenzie fabric on a pair of slipper chairs in the foreground are a fitting foil to the traditional floral-print Brunswick & Fils found on the armchairs.



Attention-grabbers in a second floor guest room include a wool rug from Masland and a lively print on the accent pillows and bench seat.



Cowtan & Tout fabric is found on the chair and pillow shams in a second floor guest room.



Previous owners converted the original garage into a family room and renovated the kitchen. The latter was left mainly as-is, but Rush redesigned the family room to pay homage to the rustic folk art aesthetic predominant in the homeowners' previous residence. A nearby powder room attains jewel box status courtesy of a burnished gold wallcovering from Folia.

A departure from the predominating color scheme elsewhere in the home, the walls of the study, which the homeowners' created from a former front bedroom, are a vibrant red hue. As part of the renovation, the homeowners had the ceiling coffered, closed a window, and added a fireplace. Fanciful imagined

animals enliven the armchair upholstery, while real ones feature principally in the artwork and accessories.

Upstairs are a pair of en suite bedrooms. One is painted an ethereal shade of blue and features a custom headboard created by the Bittners woodworking shop. A pair of figural lamps that belonged to the wife's grandmother rest atop the nightstands. The wife refers to the pretty-in-pink guest room as "the fun room." The pattern on the wool rug hearkens to similar shapes sprinkled throughout the first floor.

"Stratton Hammon homes have wonderful details to work with," said Rush. "In this case, we rose to the challenge of keeping within the original character while fulfilling the clients' wish list." **sl**

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