

# The Washington Post

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## LocalLiving

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Kelley Proxmire

D.C. DESIGN HOUSE 2014



JOHN MCCONNELL, THE WASHINGTON POST

The D.C. Design House is being held at a 1929 six-bedroom stone house at 4600 Linnean Ave NW. There are 29 design spaces to view on three floors and around the property.

# Roaring '20s to soaring '10s

BY JURA KONCIUS

**W**hen Forest Hills neighbors saw the front door being painted high-gloss turquoise, they knew something special was happening at the stately stone Colonial at 4600 Linnean Ave. NW. † The gracious 1929 house is opening Sunday as this year's D.C. Design House, where 29 spaces have been transformed by designers. The almost-8,000-square-foot home was once owned by Marshall B. Coyne, founder of the Madison Hotel and avid collector of antiques, and has been in his family for six decades.

The six-bedroom, eight-bathroom house is full of features coveted in Washington's upscale, traditional neighborhoods: crown molding, a paneled library, custom cabinetry, three floors of rooms and a swimming pool. Take notice of those doorbell-like buzzers at the entrance to some of the rooms, a relic of the 1920s affluent lifestyle. If you wanted your drink refilled or your

breakfast tray brought up, you could press the buzzer to summon the butler or maid.

Yet designers who signed on to participate in the show house had to deal with a lot of the complicated issues typical of older homes: bulky radiators, small, outdated bathrooms and a worn-out white laminate kitchen.

Visitors to the house, which will be open to the public for a month, will get to

see lots of creative bathroom design, including tiles made of real seashells, slim-line dual-flush toilets, showerheads equipped with wireless speakers and walls covered in exotic Manuel Canovas fabric.

This is the seventh year for the annual design showcase, which has attracted more than 55,000 visitors and raised more than \$1 million for Children's National Health System.

"I have great memories of this house. It's a beautiful home and is a wonderful place for entertaining," says Suzi Wilczynski, Coyne's granddaughter and the home's owner. She is putting the house on the market this week for \$3.85 million.

"I wanted to give it one last big party," she says.

But where a formal sit-down dinner might have been the way to go in decades past, designers have brought the house into 2014. This year's spaces include a moody navy blue wine room for throwing tasting parties, a color-splashed children's playroom, a cozy third-floor guest room equipped with a bar and a new pergola and poolside

## If you go

The D.C. Design House is at 4600 Linnean Ave. NW. It will be open from Sunday to May 11. Hours are 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and noon-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$25 and benefit Children's National Health System. Find more information at [www.dodesignhouse.com](http://www.dodesignhouse.com).

retreat for outdoor cocktail parties.

Designers brought in thoughtful details to dress up and bring attention to the house, starting with that robin's-egg blue front door that David A. Benton, an architect with Rill Architects, coated in C2 Paint Pond Shimmer, from the Barry Dixon color collection.

"If we had done a traditional black or red door, it would have been a safe choice and nobody would have noticed," Benton says. "Pushing the envelope is what this house is all about."

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## Foyer and stairwell

Camille Saum/ Camille Saum Interior Design

**Concept:** I wanted it to be elegant and fun. The foyer is an important space, as it sets the stage for the rest of the house. It is already exciting to walk in through that wonderful turquoise front door that Jim Rill's firm [Rill Architects] did. My space is then a nice welcome. I used all my favorite colors in the foyer, such as chartreuse and magenta, and added unexpected, large, painted checkerboard squares on the floor.

**Best design tip:** Why not have chartreuse ceilings? Mine are C2 Viburnum, a new color by Barry Dixon. I like to surprise people, so it's nice to look up and see something that isn't white.

**Stealable detail:** Round up some old chairs and have them slipcovered in a fun fabric.

**Surprise fact:** The foyer window draperies, which are a metallic silver and magenta fabric lined with chartreuse taffeta, have two layers of petticoat lining.

**Floor technique:** The 24-inch squares are laid out in a diamond pattern. We used C2 Chocolate Therapy and Cotton. First the floor was painted Cotton, then the pattern was laid out and taped off and those squares were painted brown.



Camille Saum

**Glam touch:** The shimmering beaded wallpaper in a pesto color, Arioso by the Romo Group, balances out the strong colors we used in the space.



PHOTOS BY JOHN MCDONNELL/THE WASHINGTON POST

## Living room

Kelley Proxmire/ Kelley Interior Design

**Concept:** A relaxed, comfortable living space. I wanted to play up the history of the house. I focused the seating around the fireplace and put in a baby grand because lots of people had pianos in their homes back then and it was wonderful for entertaining.

**Surprising detail:** I couldn't figure out what art to hang in the room, and then I picked something right out of my own living room. It's a 1920s portrait of Sen. William Proxmire, my late father-in-law, and his brother Ted as boys, painted in the 1920s in Lake Forest, Ill. The time period of the portrait was perfect for the 1929 house.

**Best design tip:** Place a mirror behind a painting; it brings more light into a room. Here I had a custom mirror cut at Hutchison Glass & Mirror. It's the same width as the mantel. They cut a hole in the middle so I could hang the portrait on the wall behind it, layered over the mirror.

**Favorite feature:** The warm gray lacquer on the walls that was sprayed on using a custom color from Fine Paints of Europe.



Kelley Proxmire

**On the floor:** Sisal and a wool Oriental rug. Ten years ago, we would just have used sisal, but here I layered on top of the sisal with a gray and gold rug to give it warmth.

**One word that describes the room:** Elegant.

Kelley Proxmire

HOME

D.C. DESIGN HOUSE 2014

Wine room/butler's pantry

Nadia Subaran/Aidan Design

Furnishings by Victoria Sanchez of Victoria at Home

**Concept:** The idea for this space really came out of the kitchen design. Since my firm was also doing the kitchen, we discovered that it didn't offer enough storage or dedicated space for entertaining. The custom cabinetry we installed here now provides an elegant place to keep glassware and china. You can have wine tastings here or serve a buffet dinner.

**Favorite thing:** The Wood-More cabinets with the Vintage Navy finish. The fieldstone of the house originally inspired our palette of brown, gray and blue in the kitchen. We think the navy is traditional, yet modern and crisp. It was a nice change from black or gray.

**Built-in features:** There are two Thermador wine refrigerators. There are lots of shelves for wine glasses, plates and serving pieces, plus drawers for linens and flatware.

**The hidden radiator:** When we saw the room, it had an eight-foot radiator with an old cover and a wooden top. We covered it with the same navy cabinetry and added brass radiator grills, and a marble top for serving.



Nadia Subaran

**Paint colors:** They are all C2, Noodle on the walls, Sheer for the trim and Kind of Blue for the ceiling.

**The term "butler's pantry":** It's really an entertaining pantry. I don't know anyone who actually has a butler, but I know a lot of people who wish they had one.



PHOTOS BY JOHN McDONNELL, THE WASHINGTON POST

Dining room

Marika Meyer/Marika Meyer Interiors

**Concept:** I wanted a space that was elegant yet approachable, since it is the primary eating place. It had to be family-friendly, so I used indoor/outdoor fabric on the chairs and chose a table with a distressed top.

**Theme:** I used two themes: chinoiserie and jungle. The room is a combination of elegant and playful. There is a neutral backdrop in grays and whites, and I added blues, greens and yellows.

**What makes the room 2014:** The room feels updated, but it keeps with the traditional architecture of the home. I used Lucite hardware to hang the draperies. The bar cart and the blue and white ikat plates are also 2014.

**Surprising detail:** When I set the table, I wanted to do something kid-friendly. I bought a bucket of 60 plastic animals for \$17.99 and spray painted them gold. I put them around the table for the kids.

**Working with the room size:** The room is 15 by 17 feet. I would say for older homes in Washington, it's a fairly average size. But in comparison with new homes, it's on the smaller end. I put a 60-inch round table in there, and there is plenty of room to walk around. For seating, I used six vintage Louis XVI dining chairs from my own house that I bought about seven years ago at Miss Pique's and reupholstered.

**What she's sitting on at home now:** A hodgepodge of desk chairs and kitchen chairs and a guest room chair. We aren't doing a lot of entertaining these days.



Marika Meyer



## Playroom

Katherine Vernot-Jonas/Katherine Vernot-Jonas Designs

**Style:** Modern, bright and contemporary. I used bold C2 paint colors Cordon Bleu and Viburnum.

**Describe your room in one word:** Fun.

**Concept:** The room was inspired by my 12-year-old daughter and is meant to encourage children to be active, healthy and get exercise. I wanted to bring the outside playground inside the house. I think technology is consuming our kids. There isn't any technology in this multipurpose room meant for physical or creative activities. There is a climbing net, a stretching bar, workout rings and trapeze bar combo, and a rock-climbing wall, but no computer, TV or radio.

**Favorite item: The Tree Bookcase.** I was looking for a creative contemporary place for books. I liked this modern design that could encourage little ones to read by a tree.



Katherine Vernot-Jonas

**Light fixture:** I think it looks like a galaxy with shooting stars. It's the Possini Euro Design Galaxy Chrome Light.

**Interesting detail:** The 6 1/2-inch-high carpeted platform gives the kids a little stage. All children love to perform. I created a wood platform and put in a layer of cork for resilience and topped it with FLOR carpet tiles in the Ambrosia pattern in the color Ocean.



PHOTOS BY JOHN MCCONNELL, THE WASHINGTON POST

## Powder Bath

Joanne Fitzgerald/  
Gatèga Interior Design



Joanne Fitzgerald

**Concept:** It was just a sad little room the size of a closet, about a five-foot square. I wanted to give it as much drama as possible without making it too crazy.

**Indulgence:** The pair of Waterworks Opus tube sconces of glass and polished chrome. They were about \$700 apiece.

**Favorite element:** The wallpaper, Albemarle Byron by Cole & Son, is the focal point of the whole bathroom. When I first saw this paper, it took my breath away; the quality of the printing is exquisite. There is so much depth, and the pewter, evergreen and teal colors are so rich. It has such sophistication. It only took one roll, about \$200, to make an enormous impact in this tiny space.

**Elegant detail:** The Roman shade. I was able to find a satiny silk in a warm pewter color that matched my color scheme perfectly. It shimmers and balances out the elegant wallpaper but doesn't attract too much attention.

**Eco-friendly touch:** The small-scale toilet. I used a Kohler Saile, which has a slim tank and offers a dual-flush option. I love the full skirted bowl, instead of exposed pipes.



## D.C. DESIGN HOUSE 2014



PHOTOS BY JOHN MCDONNELL, THE WASHINGTON POST

### washingtonpost.com

**Chat Thursday at 11 a.m.** Cindy McClure of Grossmueller's Design joins staff writer Jura Koncius for our weekly online Q&A on decorating and household advice. Submit questions at [washingtonpost.com/home](http://washingtonpost.com/home).

**Gallery** See more photos from the 2014 DC Design House and vote for your favorite room.

**Video** Take a virtual tour of the D.C. Design House and meet the designers.

**At Home newsletter** Go to the Home & Garden page to subscribe to our e-mail newsletter, delivered every Thursday.



### Master bathroom

Cindy McClure/Grossmueller's Design

**Concept:** An open, light-filled retreat that is warm and enveloping. We merged an adjacent dressing closet with the original bathroom and gained two windows. This doubled the floor space, making the bathroom much more inviting.

**What influenced your choices:** We were looking for something that took your mind to a relaxing place. For many people that is the beach. We didn't want to turn the entire bathroom into beach kitsch, although we have several beachy details. We tried to keep it neutral.

**Favorite thing:** The first thing you see when you walk in is the wall of Beach Shell Floral tiles by Somer Tile, actually made of real cut seashells laid in a pattern to create flowers. I like it because everything in the room is very smooth and clean-lined and the tile is so textural. The George V chandelier from Currey & Co. against the shell tiles looks like gold medallions, an underwater treasure.

**What makes it look 2014:** Very classic and simple lines and the squared tub, Drazque by Signature Hardware.

**Broken design rules:** Usually storage in a bathroom is emphasized. We purposely did not put in a lot of storage because we wanted a serene space. We did not even put



Cindy McClure

in medicine cabinets, but they can easily be added later.

**What might look dated in 10 years:** Maybe the decorative screen located between the

vanity and the toilet. We generated a computer pattern that represents air bubbles for the design. It's removable and could be changed out.

