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It's one of the most overlooked areas of a house, yet it's what visitors see right away. Five designers show Bethesda-area foyers that make a good first impression.

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Diane and Richard Monash live in Bethesda, right near the Washington, D.C., line—but their home retains its rural farmhouse feel, with furnishings that pay tribute to a well-traveled past.

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PHOTO
BY MICHAEL
VENTURA



BE OUR GUEST

A grand home deserves a grand foyer, and that's what Bethesda-based designer Kelley Proxmire had in mind for this 10,000-plus-square-foot center hall colonial in Chevy Chase's Kenwood neighborhood.

The owners, a family of five, usually use the side entrance of the home. The front entry is more of a guest entrance, so

Proxmire could afford to be formal in her approach. "It's almost a room in itself," the designer says of the foyer, which has an alcove tucked into a winding staircase.

She crafted an elegant vignette with a pair of matching antique chairs and a skirted circular table with a lamp. A collection of framed artwork and a small mirror create a gallery effect.

The color scheme is fairly neutral with creams and pale blues, but Proxmire introduced patterns on the skirt fabric

and accent pillows, and with painted stripes on the walls. A sisal rug adds texture to the floor, and durable wool carpeting runs up the staircase.

"I tried to set an inviting mood and make it pretty," Proxmire says. "I didn't want anything too harsh or dramatic."

Similar colors appear throughout the rooms on the first floor, which Proxmire also designed, and the foyer gives guests a preview. "It makes you want to see more," the designer says.

Kelley
Proxmire





BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

Crisp and clean was the plan for this town house foyer in Rockville's King Farm neighborhood. Bethesda designer Kelley Proxmire was working for empty nesters who travel widely and collect European antiques. They wanted something sharp and sophisticated. The couple loves black, so Proxmire used the color for dramatic impact.

She took her cues from the black-and-tan living room, and started with neutral, clay beige walls as a background. The staircase is the largest element in the room, and she played it up by painting the railing and stair treads black and the risers white. "Painting the stairs added punch," Proxmire says. "It would not have the same impact with just wood tones."

She outfitted a niche next to the stairs with a small bench covered in cut velvet with two patterned accent pillows. The designer displayed one of the clients' antique mirrors on the wall above it. The stairs are covered with a black carpet runner with an all-over pattern. "It's very forgiving, and quite practical for an entry," she says.

The design has timeless appeal and is easy to live with. "A good foyer can be done pretty simply," Proxmire says. "It's the application of black that makes this one dramatic."

Kelley Proxmire

