



by Poki Hampton  
photography by Thomas B. Growden

# Dream House

AS A LITTLE GIRL growing up in Plaquemines Parish, Valerie Poole always dreamed of having a beautiful home. Her husband, Sam, dreamed of having easy access to the Causeway. Their dreams finally came true when they found this lovely house with large windows overlooking a backyard filled with wildlife. Val's vision combined warm colors with soft, comfortable fabrics for an elegant look. Sam wanted a more formal approach.

*Above:* Antique moss walls are textured to resemble aged leather in the Tuscan-style dining room. *Right:* Homeowner Valerie Poole with designer Leo Kennedy. *Opposite:* A mirrored cocktail table holds giant amaryllis in a Bacarat vase.



Valerie and Sam have worked with other designers on previous homes, but when she connected with Leo Kennedy, of ck & kennedy fine interiors, she met her artistic soul mate. "Leo was fantastic to work with on this project. I have great respect for his taste and talent. Leo was able to combine Sam's more formal style with my contemporary side," says Valerie. Leo is equally complimentary about Val's talents.

"Valerie was so down to earth and fun to work with from the start. Sam and Val wanted elegance and comfort that would give the home a New Orleans feel. I think we achieved that for them. They are great clients."

As a student, Valerie studied art at every

opportunity, and she has worked to fill their home with art from the couple's extensive travels. "We love to collect pieces as mementoes of our trips," she says.

As you walk up the graceful entrance steps to the front porch of the Poole home, you are greeted by two large spiral evergreens in cement urns. Stepping into the foyer provides a panoramic view of the living room, back porch and pool area. The pool area seems a natural extension of the home because of the combination of the brick that matches the home's exterior and the chestnut brown copingstone on the pool perimeter. Pennsylvania





flagstone, ceramic pool tiles and decorative matching accent tiles are positioned at the water line and on the raised walls, which accommodate several bronze spouts. To frame the water feature, the brick planters incorporate fire bowls.

Inside, the living room walls are faux painted in a palette of rich metallic shimmering suede with a gold-and-bronze wash. The floor is anchored by a large Oushak oriental carpet in gold, bronze and cream. The subtle colors of the rug are pulled into two matching deep, comfortable sofas covered in Lee Jofa mocha silk velvet with striped silk throw pillows in Kravet Couture. Flanking the travertine fireplace mantle are luxurious draperies, also in Kravet Couture, with gold silk tassels and crystal-bead trim. Two Louis XVI-style chairs are upholstered in Vervain cut-velvet damask in shades of gold and silver. Over the fireplace are an



antique French tremeau hand-carved and gilded mirror, c1830, and two Herman Caro metal candlesticks. "Leo helped to bring in both antique and contemporary elements that work beautifully together in this space," says Valerie. The mirrored cocktail table, by Ken Marquis, is one such contemporary piece. It holds a Nicola Prinsen bronze rabbit entitled "Fast

*Above:* The gold color palette of the Pooles' living room is both comfortable and elegant. *Right:* The pool, created by Specialty Pools Company, is a natural extension of the home.

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Bunny II" that the Pooles bought on a trip to Banff Springs, Canada. Giant white amaryllis fill a large Baccarat "Tornado" vase, a housewarming gift from Sam's mother; a matching vase is on the mantle. One walnut table at the end of a sofa holds a bronze-and-



stained-glass replica of Louis Comfort Tiffany's "Flying Lady, c1910." Two Ecri ceramic vases and a bronze-dust double-mask sculpture, "Beso," by Hindi are positioned on a game table used as an end table.

A large bookcase/entertainment center, which is faux painted in a silver grey with bronze glazing highlighting the carved elements, has a panel that opens to reveal a flat-screen television. Antique books, family photographs and several Ecri ceramic pieces fill the bookcase. To the left hangs a work by local artist Shannon Marie Loup. Of particular interest in the room are two Swedish pieces. One is a canapé, c1730, in a distressed white finish, which has been upholstered in cowhide stenciled to resemble zebra skin. Photographer Josephine Sacabo used reflection in water to create unusual photographs, which are reminiscent of



Drysdale. The other Swedish piece is a grandmother clock, c1830, in a distressed silver-grey finish that picks up the color of the entertainment center across the room.

A favorite room for anyone visiting the Poole house is the exquisite powder room—a golden jewel box where Val and Leo pulled out all the stops.

Antiqued gold leaf in a broken distressed finish covers the ceiling, while the walls are Old World plaster with brown and crimson stain over a Moroccan gold base with a gloss finish on top. The ceiling medallion and crown molding are also finished in an antique distressed gold leaf. Completing the jewel box, the window treatment is silk Bergamo damask, with a silk tassel centered on the inverted-pleated shade.

The cozy, elegant dining room has the ambiance of a Tuscan villa, with walls that are faux painted with an interesting texture to resemble distressed leather. To achieve this, the faux painter used five colors to obtain the desired shade of antique moss and added a mahogany-and-brown glaze to create an aged look. A large grand European-style chandelier of bronze and Austrian Straus crystals hangs from a plaster medallion that has been brushed lightly with gold leaf. Above a Tuscan hand-carved and hand-stenciled sideboard is a baroque mirror. Artist J. Ross Neder created the large art glass piece that rests between two torchères set atop tooled leather and walnut pedestals. The double-pedestal table is surrounded by side chairs upholstered in leather and arm chairs covered with silk-velvet damask that is hand-stenciled in a pineapple pattern, the sign of hospitality. Black-and-gold china and Waterford stemware grace the table, which has three crystal vases filled with white hydrangeas down the

*Above:* A contemporary work by Shannon Marie Loup pulls the red color from the three tulip arrangements by Pugh's Florist in Hammond, in the breakfast room.

*Left:* Photographs by Josephine Sacabo hang over a faux zebra-covered canapé.

*Opposite:* The Old World plaster-and-gold-leaf ceiling by Royal Illusions sparkles in the glow of a small chandelier in this powder room.



the legs; they are the perfect place for guests to visit while Val cooks.

The breakfast room was large enough to be a keeping room, but Valerie opted for a large, casual French-style distressed walnut table with a parquet top. The side chairs are upholstered in brown and gold diamond-patterned chenille. Soft dog-eared shades are unlined Bergamo linen, lending a bit of privacy but thin enough to let in light. Another contemporary painting, entitled "Sin City," lends vitality to the space. Bunches of red tulips draw the red color from the painting onto the table. A large bronze-and-crystal chandelier is suspended over the table.

The master bedroom, which overlooks the pool, is a quiet retreat that holds a king-size sleigh bed covered in a diamond-quilted coverlet. The silk-velvet Euro shams feature a hand-stenciled Poole

center. The gold silk-satin, two-tone draperies falling from exquisite gold-leaf rods are tied back with oversized silk tassels, framing the large arched window. A room-sized leather-bound sea grass rug completes the room's décor.

A study in symmetry, the kitchen is open and spacious. Stainless steel appliances are complemented by the dark espresso color of the cabinetry. "I love the large drawers on either side of the cook top," says Valerie. "They are easy to organize and so much more convenient than traditional doors." On the tumbled marble backsplash hangs a small landscape painting by Jan Harrison. Granite countertops pull the gold and mocha colors from the living room. The pendant lights were a bone of contention that worked in Valerie's favor. "Sam picked out most of the chandeliers in the house, but I knew I wanted pendant lights for over the counter. They were hard to find. These, by Tracey Porter, were perfect. They are a bit Bohemian, with tortoise-finished bronze fleur-de-lis and distressed crystals." The walnut counter stools, upholstered in black leather, also have a slight fleur-de-lis carving on



family crest. To this, Valerie added her own special touch of an oilrig at the top. "Leo created the stencil for the crest on these custom pillows," says Val. Silver-mirrored chests serve as contemporary nightstands. A leather bench at the foot of the bed is a great place for putting on shoes in the morning. Photographs decorate the back wall. The rug is an oversized Turkish floccate, which feels luxurious underfoot.

"Leo and I worked hard to get everything right the first time around on the design of this house," says Valerie. "I now have my dream house in a dream area, the northshore. This is a wonderful place for Sam and me to live and to start our family."

Above: Pendant lights from Fischer Gambino add a Bohemian flair in this spacious kitchen.  
Right: Custom stenciled velvet pillows with the Poole family crest to which an oil well has been cleverly added.

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