

MASTER CLASS

When a young family hires Thomas Pheasant to design their Washington, D.C., home from scratch, he offers them an unparalleled education in architecture and decoration, with fabulous shopping and gallery tours along the way.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY THOMAS PHEASANT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX KIM-BEE
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The monochromatic entry hall has a polished audacity, with contemporary art and furniture placed within a classical envelope. A Nadia Pasquer sculpture from Pierre Marie Girard rests on a custom table. Benches, Thomas Pheasant for Baker. Pendant, Charles Edwards. Stair runner, Stark. **OPPOSITE:** Designer Thomas Pheasant beside an artwork by Jane Puyllagarde. Walls, Benjamin Moore's Simply White.



A painting's rich hues animate a living room done up in neutrals. The sofa is from Pheasant's collection for Baker, and the cocktail table and slipper chairs, in a Romo fabric, are from his Studio line. Painting, Paul Jenkins from Galerie Diane de Polignac. OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: Sea Anemone 3 side tables by Pia Maria Raeder; stainless steel wall sculpture, Lori Cozen-Geller; sculpture on pedestal, Kelli Bedrossian. Cabinet, Thomas Pheasant Studio; painting, James Austin Murray; walls in a Romo linen; curtains in a Schumacher velvet.



ORDINARILY, THE YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE in Washington, D.C., would have laughed off the idea of taking time to study abroad. Their hands were full—with a toddler, an infant, two successful careers (his in real estate development, hers in business consulting), and a prime empty lot near Georgetown awaiting the 12,000-square-foot residence they yearned to build. But when Thomas Pheasant, the D.C. designer they had chosen to decorate their new home, asked, “Why don’t you join me in Paris while I’m at my apartment there?” they jumped at the chance.

The ensuing week of Pheasant-guided architecture tours and gallery visits laid solid groundwork for spaces yet to be sketched out back home. “I showed them how we could pare away the ornament in a French period room to do a fresh version that gets at its classic essence,” he explains.

Meanwhile, on the same trip, visits to contemporary art galleries resulted in major purchases. Pheasant encouraged the novice collectors to make bold choices, and they rose to the challenge. Rather than shy away from an oversize canvas by Abstract Expressionist master Paul Jenkins, they snapped it up. Today, the husband admires the painting’s gestural swirl above an angular living room sofa: “It’s massive, and very cool.”

He has been a fan of Pheasant ever since he hired him several years earlier to refresh his former bachelor pad. “Tom’s clean lines and neutral colors make me feel at peace,” he says. “He narrows things down to two excellent options, like ‘beige or gray?’ There’s no bad choice.” Although his wife shares his comfort with a minimalist palette, she requested an occasional pop of color. Pheasant, who happily responded by enveloping the dining room in a vibrant



An adventurous color, citron, feels harmonious in the dining room with draperies matched to the walls in a Romo fabric. Table and chairs, Thomas Pheasant for Baker. Mirror, Barbara Saltarelli. OPPOSITE: In the kitchen, the range is by Wolf and the wall ovens are by Miele. Stone flooring, island countertop, and faucets, Waterworks. Stools, Design Within Reach. Pendants, Holly Hunt.



citron, smiles at the irony of his clients' one hesitant moment. "When he first showed us that yellow green," the husband admits, "it was, *boom!* 'Tom, are you sure?' Because he'd always done 50 shades of gray." Before long, though, that warm, inviting glow made the room a favorite gathering place. Pheasant demonstrated equal skill at balancing the two different roles—parenthood and hospitality—that center the couple's lives. Big get-togethers for a large extended family crowd the calendar (Christmas Eve feasts for 40 are the norm), as does formal entertaining in the proper Washington tradition. "My mother-in-law gave me great advice," the wife recalls. "Instead of babyproofing everything, teach your children to live in the home that you have."

The kitchen and family room blend child-friendly pragmatism with casual style, while the living and dining rooms unabashedly cater to the grown-ups. "Our kids aren't forbidden to go in," says the wife, "but growing up in Tom's rooms, they know how to behave." That includes keeping little hands off the living room's sea anemone-inspired side tables, a prized Paris discovery.

In the entry hall, artist Jane Puylagarde's vast, subtle *White Cosmos*—an acrylic painting commissioned especially for this spot—partners with white paneling, ebonized mahogany doors, and geometric marble paving to compose an elegant, graphic backdrop for charity events.

Upstairs, the master suite defines a secluded retreat with hushed tones and cocoon-like contours. The pièce de résistance, however, isn't the dazzling French chandelier, velvet-lined bed alcove, or Left Bank gallery finds, but a personal collaboration between designer and client. Rather than adorn the bedroom ceiling's oval recess with a classical rosette, Pheasant conceived his own take on an abstract slate floor installation by British sculptor Richard Long at the National Gallery of Art. The white-on-white assemblage in featherweight balsa wood—created by the artistic husband—is transformed by shifting light and shadow. The wife can't help gazing up at it "when I'm trying to fall asleep, or while I check morning e-mails in bed." Her husband says: "The random pattern never gets old. It's just shapes, and that is timeless." □



Outside the master bedroom, a rotunda leads through the bathroom to the wife's dressing room. Marble table, Thomas Pheasant Studio. Genet & Michon frosted-glass chandelier, Bernd Goeckler. Sculpture, Delphine Brabant. OPPOSITE: The custom bed, nightstands, bench, and armchairs, in a Pierre Frey fabric, are by Thomas Pheasant Studio. Lamps, Lucca Studio. Rug, Harcourt. Custom ceiling sculpture. For more details, see Sourcebook.

