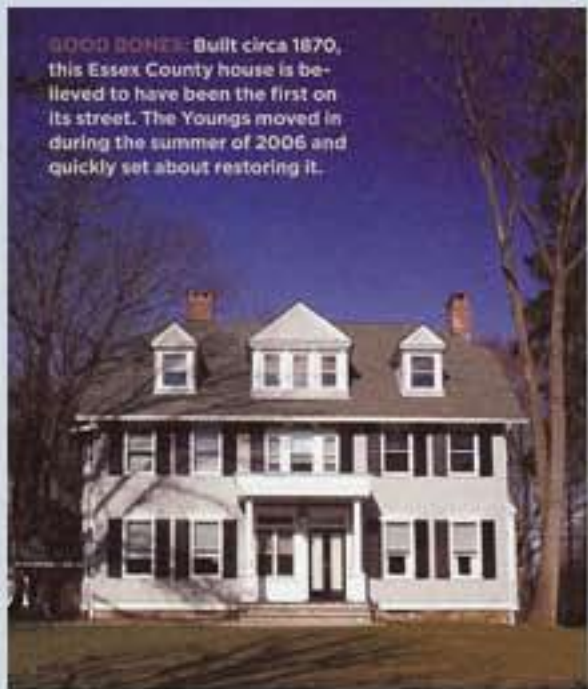


GOOD BONES: Built circa 1870, this Essex County house is believed to have been the first on its street. The Youngs moved in during the summer of 2006 and quickly set about restoring it.



A house for the TREASURES AMONG US

After inheriting a major collection of museum-quality antiques, this Essex County couple put the trove front and center.



BY LAUREN PAYNE PHOTOGRAPHED BY LAURA MOSS

TALK ABOUT an embarrassment of riches. When Susan and Allan Young inherited a large collection of splendid antiques in 2000, they were thrilled but a bit overwhelmed. Lacking space in their small house, they put the antiques in storage for several years. "But driving to the storage place to look at all our things was just not doing it," says Susan. "We needed a place to put it all."

In 2006 they took the logical, if momentous, next step, moving into a much bigger house in Essex County. "This so isn't us," protests Susan, referring to the grand residence. But it does allow them to live with and enjoy all their treasures at once. "We wanted to be surrounded by them," she explains. "We bought this house for the furniture, not for us."

The collection, much of it eighteenth-century English, was handed down from Allan's uncle.

"My uncle was an extraordinary man," says Allan, who grew up admiring the wonderful pieces, and hearing stories of how his uncle came to acquire them. "His interests started during World War II, when he began collecting silver. He had quite an eye—a pure passion for collecting." When the uncle passed away, Allan, along with the other heirs, divided up the treasures.

The Youngs eventually embarked on a house hunt that led them to their grand manse. The previous owners had been there 28 years. With a number of kids to raise, design and decorating "was not their priority," Susan says. But, she adds, "the bones were there. The room dimensions caught my eye."

The Youngs credit interior designer Catherine Engelmeyer with pulling everything together. Engelmeyer, who owns Belle Maison Interior Design in Short Hills, worked with the Youngs on their previous



GRAND ENTRANCE: The striking, beamed-ceiling foyer showcases several significant antiques. The French Kingwood commode, along with the mirror and clock, are mid-eighteenth century. The settee atop the stairs is a George II giltwood (gold-leafed) piece that's been reupholstered several times.

Home
&
Garden



FEAST FOR THE EYES: The dining room walls are upholstered in a brocade fabric that designer Catherine Engelmeyer discovered at a closeout sale. The table and chairs were purchased for the Youngs' previous home some twenty years ago. The light fixture is a massive English-inspired reproduction rather than a formal crystal chandelier. "Catherine steered us toward the unexpected," says Susan Young.



house some twenty years ago. Their friendship and collaborative bond became so strong that the Youngs would not have restored the house with anyone else.

"Susan brought me over and asked if I thought I could do anything with it," says Engelmeyer. "There was an enormous amount of work to be done." The designer gave the thumbs up, and then, over a three-year period, led a team that practically gutted the house. They started on the third floor and systematically moved downward, relocating doors and walls,

reconfiguring rooms (they created a master suite where there was none), updating bathrooms, and more.

When they eventually tackled the living room, the first priority was finding a place to display an impressive library of books. The collection is an inheritance from Susan's father, an avid collector of limited editions. "My father loved literature," she says. "Probably half of these are collectibles. I wanted to live where they would be prominent."

The living room had been "long, dark, and narrow," says Engelmeyer. She suggested a wall of bookshelves on the same wall as the existing oversized brick fireplace. By reducing the size of the fireplace and incorporating it into the custom shelving, "it becomes a very beautiful and practical wall," Engelmeyer says. The room was augmented by some new purchases: Two sofas, a coffee table, and an area rug, custom-ordered because of its



grand size.

The last area to be overhauled was the kitchen. Its design was a collaboration among the Youngs and Engelmeyer, along with architect Joseph Rispo, kitchen designer Larry Fisch, and contractor Joseph Giannotti. "We worked beautifully together," says Susan. "I think all of them will say it's among their best work."

The design is old-world traditional, with a mix of finishes and textures. "It's ageless," says Engelmeyer.

A butler's pantry, added in an unused hallway, plus a light-filled breakfast room, and a cozy, art-filled family room complete the rear of the house. All agree the project is at last finished.

The end result is a house suited for comfortable living as well as entertaining family and friends. "We really live in this house," Susan says. "There are no rooms that are off limits." ■



TRADITIONAL UPDATE: The design of the kitchen is decidedly old-world, with a mix of cabinet finishes and an elaborate tile backsplash. The eye-catching farmhouse sink (top left) features a bronzed facade. The butler's pantry (below) was built in an existing hallway and crafted to look as though it has always been there.

ON DISPLAY: The formal living room has a wall of floor-to-ceiling bookcases, custom built to hold Susan's father's limited editions. The mahogany "rent table" (top right) was used by a landlord in the mid-1700s; numbered drawers held tenants' rent payments. Susan began collecting Limoges boxes (top left) nearly twenty years ago.



RESOURCES

Interior designer:

Catherine Engelmeyer, Belle Maison Interior Design, Short Hills, 973-379-5656; bellemaisoninc.com

Kitchen designers:

Joseph Rispo and Larry Fisch, J & L Design, Custom Kitchens, Millburn, 973-376-0221

Architect:

Joseph Rispo, Dugasz & Brower Architects, Millburn, 973-376-0221; dbarchpc.com

General contractor:

Joseph Giannotti, Creative Designs & Renovations, Caldwell, 973-364-0999

Custom bookcases:

Architectural Woodworking Associates, Frenchtown, 908-296-7868; awecustomwood.com

Area rugs:

Michaelian & Kohlberg, Summit, 908-522-1004; michaelian.com

Window treatment:

Touch of Design, New Providence, 908-665-0550

Kitchen backsplash:

Short Hills Marble and Tile, Short Hills, 973-376-1330

