



Masterful Presentation

Notably poised and designed for sharing, the home of Tom and Ruth Brouster proclaims its presence with a declaration of classic elegance.

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"Next to excellence, comes the appreciation of it." (William Makepeace Thackeray, 19th-century English novelist). Although written in another time and place, this sentiment is echoed in the magnificent Ladue home of Tom and Ruth Brouster and the couple's admiration for its welcoming grace.

Reflecting their affinity for Old English countryside homes, the newly completed residence embraces a refined sensibility found in discerning homes with appreciable history.

A repertoire of the couple's restorations includes a home in Kirkwood, the historic Harriet Bakewell Portland Place residence and an 85-year old, historic house in Webster Groves, where the Brousters lived for 16 years. Embarking on another ambitious venture, the couple decided to build a new home with the feel of a home with history. The 8-year

process originally began with plans to build a home in Huntleigh, working with architect Patrick Nolan of PNM Ltd. Architects, before the couple found the perfect site – a splendid, tree-lined 4.8-acre setting in nearby Ladue.

With a penchant for perfection, the Brousters continued to work with Nolan to design a residence with dignified spaces and unequivocal architectural style. The home's multi-level expanse is punctuated with generously sized rooms that flow one to another and lead outdoors to brilliantly planned spaces that beckon year-round use.

Tom, a St. Louis banking entrepreneur, and Ruth, a busy mother and volunteer, set their hearts on a spacious, yet welcoming, family-focused home with inviting warmth. Researching every aspect of the enormous undertaking and working in tandem with the team, the hands-on couple was instrumental in all of the interior and exterior design decisions, and they could not be more proud of the fabulous outcome.

The primary body of the home is symmetrically arranged in a traditional "center hall" manner with three basic volumes on each floor. The main level features a central entry foyer, grand staircase and living



Carter Noel designed the living room using an elegant palette of soft greens, pinks and yellows.



Opening pages: A spectacular gated entry leads to the Brousters' Ladue home, which is inspired by the historic Westbury House. The primary composition of the residence is a symmetrical arrangement in a traditional "center hall" manner with three basic volumes on each floor, starting on the main level with a centered entry foyer, grand stair and living room, with formal dining and front parlor spaces adjacent to either side. The north wing includes the kitchen, butler's pantry and breakfast room, with the billiard room and conservatory in the home's south wing. Left: With compelling beauty, the stately dining room is punctuated by the sparkle of an exquisite chandelier, fine architectural detailing and 18th-century-inspired, hand-painted wallpaper that wraps the room in luxury. Fresh floral arrangements by Walter Knoll Florist complement the décor on the main level. Above: Natural light fills the formal and graciously cordial living room through impeccably styled draperies. Right (both photos): The large scale black-and-white marble entryway sets the stage for a luxurious dining room and parlor on either side and the architectural presence of a delightfully elegant living room.





This page: Located in the south wing of the home, the billiard room is fully lined with custom mahogany raised paneling by L'atelier Custom Woodworking, Inc. Multiple molding profiles, including 3-piece crown molding that achieved a coffered look at the ceiling, conform to the size of the space. The fireplace surround, like all of the home's surrounds, was custom designed and built to enhance the handsome ambience. The space also includes a custom bar.

room, with formal dining and parlor spaces adjacent to either side.

The north wing includes a carriage house, gated auto court and garage. A family entry area is in close proximity to the kitchen, breakfast room and sunroom, with a billiard room and conservatory to the south. A hearth room, powder room and library are located between the north and south wings.

The south wing is an intentional style departure, with Tudor Revival/Gothic features and a Victorian English conservatory, which achieves textural variety and conveys the impression that this was at some point an "addition" to the original home. Its design concept is intended to belie the "newness" of the home and reinforce the perception of an established estate.

The second floor houses all of the bedrooms, with the master suite occupying the entire south third. The high-tech lower level is dedicated to entertainment and family-oriented spaces, such as a game room and theater, which can accommodate large gatherings. A spacious, state-of-the-art fitness room is a precisely planned space in the lower level, as well.

In whole, the setting provides a backdrop for "an album of wonderful memories" with the couple's daughter, grown children, seven grandchildren, and community of friends.



"We like to think of our home as a gathering place for our families - a place to create memories." - Ruth Brouster



"We feel we've been very blessed, and we try to give back to the community through various organizations that are dear to our hearts," say the couple.

The Brousters' goal - to create a new, generously capacious home with a turn-of-the-century aesthetic - was achieved with pinpoint attention to detail. They worked closely with Patrick Nolan, builder Jim Minton and interior designer Carter Noel throughout the long-term process. "Just the way older homes are built appeals to our taste," remark Tom and Ruth. "We spent a lot of time looking at older homes to pick up ideas about traditional design," Tom explains.

Desiring the authenticity of a period home with a strong English influence, Tom was inspired by the historic Westbury House on Long Island, a Georgian

Above: The rhythmic repetition of traditional and architectural elements, with traditional wall sconces, wainscoting, raised paneling and matching pilasters, visually divides the linear hallway and adds variety and texture to the space. The features frame the adjacent spaces, such as the opening to the front entry foyer and classically fashioned living room. Left: The home's front parlor awaits guests with its richly bold, welcoming feel. Deep-toned wall and settee colors define the traditionally decorated space and are emphasized by pattern and texture on the chairs, draperies, pillows and a needlepoint Wilton rug.



Above: The exaggerated depth of the rich architectural details in Tom's library spotlights a blend of custom millwork and integrated custom shelving, bringing an intentionally striking, handsome character to the personalized space. This room is one of many in the home with high-tech capabilities. Below left and right: The kitchen's French Country style is a subtle departure from the home's traditional English historic architecture with its classic Georgian roots. The butler's pantry doubles as a catering pantry. Ruth fondly refers to herself as "an amateur gourmet cook" and has an extensive cookbook collection.





Revival-style mansion and a superb example of an English country manor home. Surrounded by one of the finest English gardens in the U.S., the Charles II-style mansion was designed in the early 1900s by English architect George A. Crawley, in conjunction with American architect Grosvenor Atterbury. The landmark estate embodies the style and image Tom wanted, and it became the inspiration – the starting point – for the basic composition and many of the period-appropriate details for the Brousters' new home.

Builder Jim Minton explains, "Selecting materials that were consistent with the Westbury House and its architectural style – such as the limestone carvings that are part of Westbury and were masterfully replicated by Leonard Masonry – provided authenticity to the overall appearance and feel of the Brousters' home."

The exterior, especially the west and east façades, include many ornamental features reinterpreted from Westbury, with design elements as rich and diverse as those from the Charles II, Beaux Arts and Adam style.

According to Nolan, "The home was designed to have a firm stance and a grand presence – but most importantly, to display an attentive respect to detail."

Commanding rooms were designed as a consistent reflection of the form and composition principles of the home, primarily symmetry and order, but with features that uniquely characterize each space.

"From a design standpoint," says Nolan, "the large scale of the home reinforced the need for 'depth' in the details – mere surface appliqué would not be successful." Working closely with Tom, the design team wanted the home to showcase a rich variety of well-executed details that, when woven together, express a high level of refinement. Nolan continues, "We projected the keystones, quoins, and carved limestone details to create shadow lines and

Above: A favorite family space is a cozy screened porch with an outdoor fireplace and cooking station. A breezeway punctuated by arched transoms connects the space to a window-lined octagonal-shaped breakfast room. **Opposite page:** Crown molding and dentils are "scaled up" in proportion to the massing – even the copper downspouts and leaderheads are larger than a more typical two-story home. At the main chassis of the home, the cornice is composed of an egg-and-dart pattern at the frieze and modillions support the soffit in lieu of dentils due to the scale of the façade. The roof is a random-sized, non-fading green Vermont slate. **Below:** Ruth's charming rose garden adds vibrance to a traditionally inspired English courtyard garden setting on the south end of the property.

"Tom and I went to the Missouri Botanical Garden and spent hours looking at plants, discussing every detail of how the plants and outdoor space would flow together."

— Matt Moynihan, landscape architect





Left top: The pool house, with its British Colonial atmosphere, is yet another fun area for entertaining and has doors that recess to transform the space into an open-air room. It is decorated with sea-inspired art, family photos and touches of artwork by the couple's daughter, who is a budding artist. Styled with a feel of the tropics, a bar and serving window connect the gathering space to the grilling pavilion for barbecues with family and friends. Left center: Meyer Landscaping planted 250 large trees from eight states that sweep the landscape. Left bottom: The careful detailing of the Brousters' home extends to the meticulously planned, color-rich landscaping that surrounds it. Below right: A tennis court and putting green near the home's koi pond (previous page) are perfect for summer enjoyment. Opposite page: A custom Roman rectangular saltwater, heated diving pool with a spa and cascading waterfall dominate the outdoor living area as the centerpieces of the "staycation-inspired" setting.

enhance the three-dimensional qualities of the house."

French doors open to levels of outdoor patios and terraces, extending the home's entertaining venues. Interior designer Carter Noel explains, "While the house is extremely formal, I wanted to make it very family-friendly and inviting without taking away from the classical details." Tom adds, "Carter has incredible taste and vision and understood what we were about, with our fondness for English traditional style."

The home's well-orchestrated flow encourages guests to experience the variety of spaces and move from interior to exterior with ease. The first-floor terrace at the east flows gracefully with symmetrical curving limestone stairs that lead to the pool and pool house setting – a striking focal point for the axial organization of the outdoor living areas.

From the beginning of the project, Tom and Ruth were determined to give their new residence the same link to the land as the historic English country manors they admire.

Blending the home into the hillside began with Tom walking the land to personally inventory the existing trees, selecting approximately 90 that would be spared during the building process. As early as 2006, Meyer Landscaping brought in and planted a screen of 18-foot-tall Norway spruce, Colorado blue spruce and southern magnolias to shield the nearest neighbors from the sights and sounds of construction.

To further bond the home to the land, landscape architect Matt Moynihan balanced the formal drive leading to the home's grand entrance with a series of less formal terraces off the side and back of the residence to "provide an architectural layer between



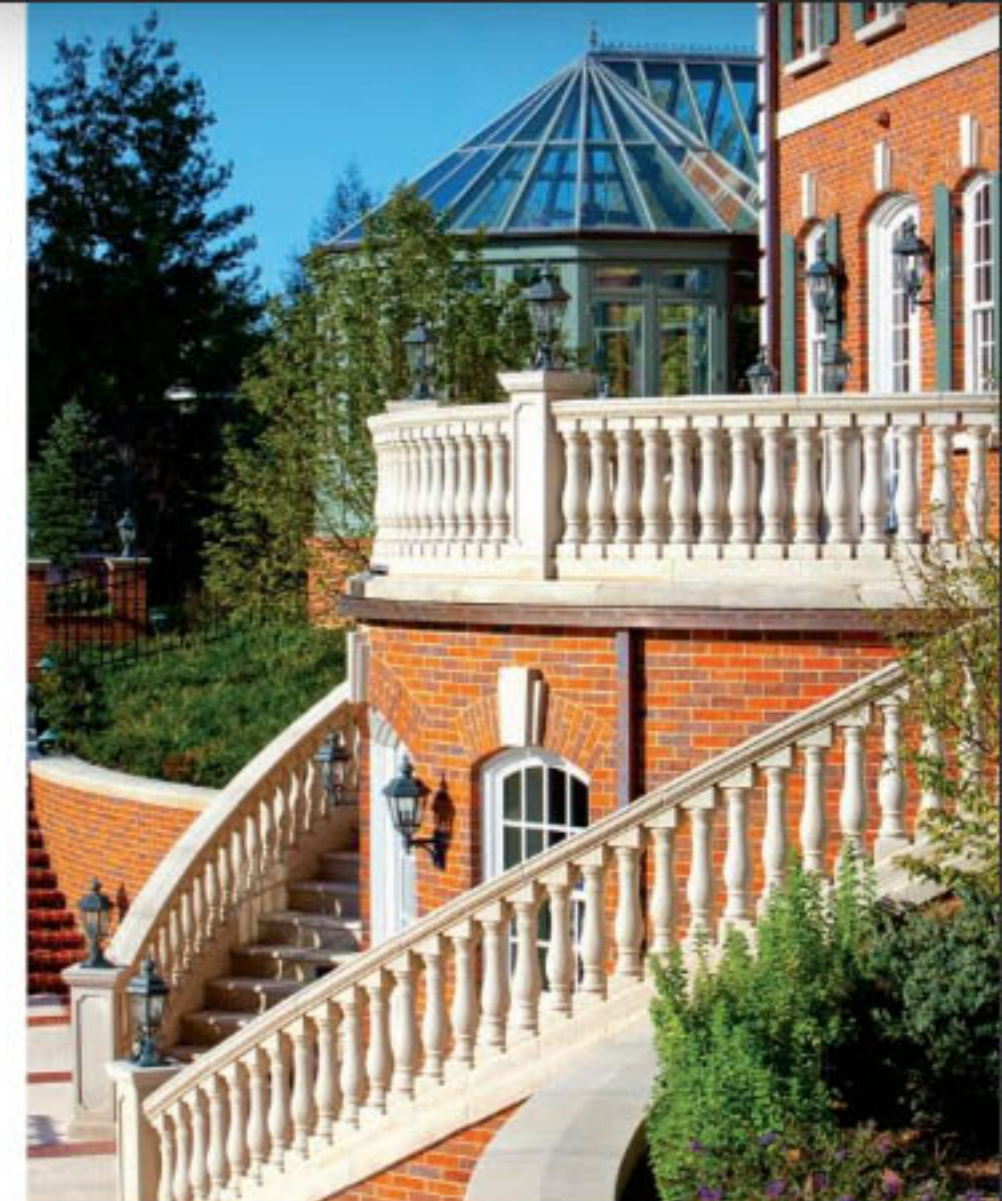
the house and natural landscape beyond the home.” He notes that a progression of increasingly less formal levels, bridging the space between the home and the countryside beyond, is one of the hallmarks of English landscape gardening.

As with selections for the interior of the home, Tom had a hand in choosing most of the 250 ornamental and shade trees and hundreds of perennials and shrubs that provide year-round color and interest to the landscape, making it a breathtaking setting for sharing special occasions with others.

And in that spirit, Tom and Ruth are always in motion – preparing for their next special gathering. Last summer, the Brousters hosted a family reunion and a traditional Fourth of July celebration at their newly completed home, each for nearly 100 guests. These were the first of many occasions that will enliven the halls of the Brouster residence in the coming years. “Our family gatherings typically include as many as 45 to 50 people. We are together a lot,” the couple remarks, happily. “We built this home to share with family.”

Below and right: The red terra-cotta-colored modular brick is punctuated by buff-colored smooth dolomite limestone at the quoins, keystones, windowsills, door casings, stair treads and balustrades. Ornate barrel-vaulted dormer casings, trim and pediments are limestone, with some surrounds made of hand-carved limestone, reminiscent of the elaborate designs of the Westbury House. A detailed, carved limestone center cupola adds authenticity to the home’s inspired historic background. The proportions of the Greek Ionic order are maintained at every column and pediment throughout the home. Wrought-iron gates and railings by Todd Kinnikin of Eureka Forge are defined by brick piers with limestone caps and lantern lights. The view toward the carriage house speaks to the magnificent design of the setting. See page 78 for design resources.

Majestic stairs from terraces off the conservatory, kitchen and breakfast room descend, almost like roots, to tie the landscape to the pool area.



For more spectacular photos of the Brouster residence, visit www.stloushomesmag.com.