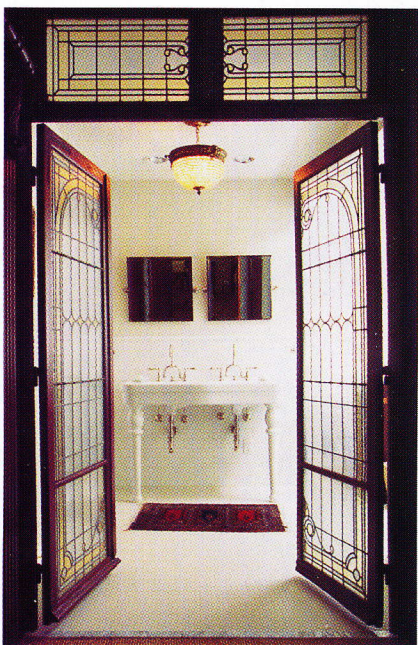


A study in contrasts

STORY BY BARBARA DEMARCO BARRETT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW TEMPLETON



LIGHT CONTRASTS DARK throughout the home. The Donahues used dark wood antiques and stained glass doors as accents against all white walls.



TEA FOR TWO: A heavy, velvet curtain separates the tearoom from the dining room. A silver tea set on an antique English tea table awaits guests to the Donahues' home.

The tipoff is the glossy black woodwork around the exterior windows and the black front door. Then, inside, dark floors and dark furniture — mostly antique or reproductions — contrast white upholstery and brilliant white walls.

Kim and Tim Donohue began with the floors when they moved in three years ago. They ripped out every inch of carpeting and installed wood flooring, covered with sisal rugs. They removed the wet bar and fireplace, and redid the master bath, a compendium of dark browns and gold plate. They drywalled the heavily textured, light green walls and repainted the interior entirely in bright white. The floors, kitchen cabinets and furniture are stained in the same dark shade so everything would match.

"A home is an evolution; one thing leads to another," Kim said. "Once we decided to do hardwood floors, everything else just followed."

They also transformed the former living room into a roomy dining room. "It didn't make sense to have a living room since we knew we'd always be in the family room."

And the smaller, former dining room is now a tearoom. Textured fabric covers the walls and a heavy velvet curtain separates the room from the dining room. Two silver sconces hang on the wall and an antique silver tea set on a tray sits on an antique

English tea table with emperor's chairs on either side.

Dark antiques, many from Lyman Drake Antiques in Santa Ana, occupy most rooms and contrast the sparkling walls, white slipcovered sofa, and white bed coverings. The contemporary white tiled bathroom holds a narrow, marble-topped sideboard from the '50s.

"I read that to soften the bathroom it should have at least one piece of furniture," Kim said.

The Donahues' master bath makes a powerful design statement with its antique leaded glass doors from France that open into a bright and airy bathroom. An antique chandelier hangs in front of the walk-in closet, also with the same leaded antique doors. French sinks, tub, and Époque nickel fixtures and curtain rods contrast the antiques. And a sheer glass shower stall sans door provides an element of surprise.

"I saw a picture in a magazine of a shower like this and I cut it out," Kim said. "I do seek advice. I used to buy so much stuff and regretted it later. I would just buy things because I wanted them. Now I have a definite theme. I can like something and not buy it if it doesn't go with my house. John, a decorator friend of mine would say, 'Don't be desperate, Kim.' He taught me to wait for the right thing."

Would you like to suggest a remodel for Environs? Send a short description to Orange County Home, 625 N. Grand Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701 or Chris_Meyer@notes.freedom.com