

Texture, imperfect surfaces, and a global mix of furnishings imbue a new Virginia home with inviting old-world charm.

Character BUILDING

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The gathering room, specifically designed for large-scale entertaining apart from the home's more casual family-oriented areas, features an intricately inlaid custom sideboard and a tapestry that interior designer Arlene Critzos values for its color and size.



Cocooned by deciduous trees instead of cypress and nestled on a flat lot rather than a vineyard-dotted hillside, this new

suburban Virginia home nonetheless translates the language of Italian style so successfully that the family who lives here wakes up every morning feeling as though they're on vacation. "The owners have an Italian heritage and travel to Italy often," interior designer Arlene Critzos says. "They wanted a house that would look at home in Tuscany. Above all, it had to be warm and livable—they have six daughters ranging in age from 7 to 17."

To satisfy the owners' prerequisites for comfort and authenticity, Critzos teamed with interior designer Andrea Blamphin to casually—versus slavishly—embrace old-world character. Honey-hue, textured plaster walls envelop the interiors; dark-stained wood floors marked by imperfections ground them. A burnished color palette of amber, caramel, chocolate, terra-cotta, and loden green mellows everything in between. "None of these are clear, bright colors," Critzos says. "They're natural and more diffused."

The hues evoke visions of the Italian countryside, unite an eclectic mix of furnishings, and cozy up generously proportioned rooms. "This house is filled with antiques from all over the world," Critzos says. "Some are Italian, some are French, some I found traveling up and down the Eastern Seaboard, and some I have no idea where they're from. This house isn't about being pure; it's about things that feel right."

Critzos' global approach includes new pieces aged to perfection, such as a dining room table crafted in Brazil and a shapely chair that hails from Afghanistan. Yet a poetically worn and weathered daybed—which she discovered in a Shenandoah Valley antiques store—is just as welcome; to Critzos, provenance, pedigree, and price matter far

less than patina. "As long as a piece has texture, it can work," she says. "Nothing is pristine in this house, not even in the most formal, glitzy rooms; even they have textured, comfortable fabrics that contribute to the home's authenticity while being forgiving to children."

Fostering the welcoming aesthetic is the home's architecture, a storybook amalgam of arched openings between rooms, hand-hewn wood beams, and cut stone. "We created patina on every element, from rustic shutters to hefty, wrought-iron French doors," architect Richard Foster says. Abundant connections between indoors and out strengthen the home's graciousness. "Nearly every room on the first floor leads you outside," Foster says. "Although that's uncommon in Virginia, it's just about the most Mediterranean-style thing you can do to a house."

OPPOSITE: An ormolu and-alabaster chandelier illuminates the symmetrically furnished seating area in the formal gathering room. Reminiscent of those commonly found in stately European homes, the custom limestone fireplace is one of two identical fireplaces in the room. **ABOVE:** An entrance leading to the kitchen of this new Virginia home exudes charm thanks to a copper canopy, handcrafted shutters, and cut stone.

The spacious family room invites the family of eight to relax together, thanks to a wealth of upholstered furnishings, including an Edwardian-style wood-framed sofa. A 7-foot-square coffee table crafted from reclaimed timbers communicates put-your-feet-up comfort; pillows tucked beneath supply perches for casual dining.





Distressed corbels grace the kitchen

THIS PHOTO: A mix of hand-painted and heavily distressed custom wood furnishings distinguishes the dining room, where the family gathers nightly for meals. **OPPOSITE:** An iron pot rack and pendant lights punctuate the kitchen, which features a mix of cabinetry colors to create a built-over-time look.



*"All the furniture is lush and plush
and makes you want to lie down."*

—INTERIOR DESIGNER ARLENE CRITZOS



OPPOSITE: In the master bedroom, an upholstered headboard ups the luxe factor of a formally styled French bed. A distressed, washed finish on the bed frame blunts the piece's formality. **ABOVE:** A study in contrasts and comfort, the screen porch is outlined by hand-hewn timbers and stone. Furnishings are slipcovered for toss-in-the-wash ease. Critzos shortened the legs of the iron daybed to sofa height so the family can snuggle in and play board games. **LEFT:** Creamy limestone flooring and an expansively arched window lend the master bath a sun-kissed ambience.