



This Keith Fritz bed is modern in style, but finials in an antiqued finish give it an Old World feel. A chandelier casts a romantic glow.



An all-white decor allows architectural features like the staircase to stand out. "It's very serene," says Lee Forman, shown with her husband, Howard, and their Maltipoo, Rachel.

## lighting the way

How do you make a dark, historic house shine? Think white—and add some shimmer.

**LEE AND HOWARD** Forman were in love with their 1860s McLean home but not with its dark, narrow rooms.

Designer Barbara Hawthorn specializes in "timeless, trend-resistant design," but the old farmhouse—possibly a stop on the Civil War's Underground Railroad—was a challenge.

"The ceilings are low, and I had to give a sense of space," she says. "Also, you walk right into the living room, so it has to be welcoming."

The new interior makes the most of the home's features. The dark beams are beautiful but bring the ceiling even lower, so Hawthorn visually raised the roof with pure white paint between the timbers.

While traditional decors tend to feature dark colors, Hawthorn went all white for everything from the walls and

upholstery to the carpet and the paper artwork over the fireplace. White gives the illusion of spaciousness, brightens the room, and brings out architectural elements such as the period staircase.

Separate conversation groupings also make the space—29 by 17½ feet—feel even roomier. One large carpet, rather than separate rugs for each seating area, pulls the room together.

The Formans already owned a nice sofa and chairs—his granddad made the chairs—so Hawthorn had them re-covered. The simple lines and solid colors offer an uncluttered elegance, while the skirts on the sofas and the dark wood of the chairs and coffee table respect the period. Shimmering upholstery and drapes reflect an antique richness—and reflect much-needed light from the few windows.



To make the living room brighter, designer Barbara Hawthorn chose fabrics that reflect light.



Photograph by Dorothy Madsen

In the master bedroom, the centerpiece is a custom-made mahogany four-poster bed. The style is modern, but the crystal chandelier, which the Formans already owned, makes the yellow-sheened cotton draperies glow. The curve in the headboard is echoed in the round bench and bedside table to soften the impact of the imposing bed and chandelier.

Hawthorn also made a room for some 7,000 bags the Formans have amassed over the years. Lee, a graphic designer, and Howard, who is retired from his family's wholesale liquor business, plan to open a "bags as cultural icons" museum in Washington someday ([museumofbags.org](http://museumofbags.org)). For the space, a small apartment over the garage, Hawthorn designed a "brown paper bag" armoire and a painting of a shopping bag.

## SOURCES

**Paint colors:** On the living room walls, Benjamin Moore White Dove. On the bedroom walls, Benjamin Moore Calming Cream.

**Sofa and chair upholstery:** J. Lambeth, Airon fabric. From Exclusive Draperies & Upholstery, Chantilly; 703-968-9506; [exclusivedraperies.com](http://exclusivedraperies.com).

**Chairs in front of the fireplace (in which Lee and Howard Forman are seated):** from Hancock & Moore, North Carolina; [hancockandmoore.com](http://hancockandmoore.com). Chairs start at \$1,150.

**Handmade needlepoint rug:** from Carpet Impressions (to the design trade only), McLean; 703-761-0606.

**Living-room floor lamp:** from Timothy

Paul Carpets & Textiles, Northwest DC; 202-319-1100; [timothypaulcarpets.com](http://timothypaulcarpets.com). Timothy Paul's lamps range from \$500 to \$2,000.

**Custom four-poster mahogany bed:** made by Keith Fritz, [keithfritz.com](http://keithfritz.com). Available at the Michael-Cleary showroom (to the design trade only), Washington Design Center, Southwest DC; 202-488-9787. \$8,900.

**Bed panels:** Kravet Fabrics material with York tieback trim. From Exclusive Draperies & Upholstery, Chantilly.

**Interior design:** Barbara Hawthorn; 703-241-5588; [barbarahawthorninteriors.com](http://barbarahawthorninteriors.com).

designer  
**tip**

Barbara Hawthorn's first rule in decorating: Declutter. "With any style, less is more," she says. Take a photo, she suggests—it will show what's too much. "People are always surprised; they say 'Boy, isn't there too much stuff on the table?' It's hard to get rid of things, but start with the things that aren't meaningful."

NPR's Midlife Crisis | The Real Condi Rice  
Don't Order the Tuna? | Homes of the Political Stars

# WASHINGTONIAN

great

# home design

**Free Advice From the Pros:** Interior Designers Share Their  
Tricks for Making a Room Comfortable and Beautiful

Plus, a List of the **Area's Best Interior Designers**  
and Where They Like to Shop



MARCH 2007



How **Arch Campbell** Became the Comeback Kid

