

Breakfast Room of Champions

Architect Spence Kass's English-inspired, vaulted dining space enriches an addition to an 1889 Haverford Tudor home.

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In houses built before the end of the 19th century, kitchens were usually an afterthought: dark, with low ceilings, often tucked away in the back. And this 1889 Haverford Tudor was no exception—that is, until Fairmount architect Spence Kass got his hands on it. “We added a 6,000-square-foot addition and moved the kitchen to the south side of the house, with an adjacent breakfast room that anchored the whole design,” he says of the new floor plan. “It became the heart of the home.” Kass wanted to give the room presence without using fancy materials—to make it feel grand but not overwhelming—and to stay true to the Elizabethan sensibilities of the house. The barrel vaulted ceiling, all tongue-and-groove pine, is modeled after a medieval banquet hall, specifically the one at the Biltmore Vanderbilt estate in Asheville, North Carolina. “People liken it to the hull of a boat,” says Kass. Interior designer Amy Miller filled the room with reproductions of early English furniture, including a dining set, buffet and cupboard; a Gothic-style chandelier adds a rustic touch and serves to pull the room together. “I tried to incorporate the old part of the house into the new,” says Radnor’s Miller. “I didn’t want to use anything that looked like it didn’t belong. The finished room feels almost magical.”

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By AMY DONOHUE and MEG COHEN RAGAS Photograph by PASCAL BLANCON

For more information on each room, turn to page 128.

