## Devastated by fire, a Victorian home in Hinsdale gets a contemporary rebirth that stays true to its past.

**History Repeating** 

BY HEIDI MITCHELL PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE SCHWARTZ

**6000** 

**AUGUST 24, 2022, 8:29 PM** 



2016 and were still doing roof repairs two years later when the portico of the 119-year-old house caught fire. It didn't burn to the ground, but extensive water damage meant the only way to save the six-bedroom home, which is on the National Register of Historical Places, was to rebuild it from the inside out.

The Reenans asked builder Dave Knecht of Hinsdale and architect

Reenan. They purchased a stunning Colonial Revival in

Michael Abraham of Clarendon Hills to study archival photos at the Hinsdale Historical Society to restore the "American Beauty," as it had been dubbed by neighbors (the original owner, Orland P. Bassett, was a horticultural hobbyist who grew that rose variety onsite), to its finde-siècle splendor.

During the six months the house spent under mitigation, the team

unearthed gorgeous stone and tile fireplace surrounds and original

during renovation. They also discovered blueprints for leaded-glass

transoms and stained-glass windows. Drawings revealed that the third

millwork, which Knecht saved and reused throughout the home

floor was meant to be a ballroom and that the basement could be

expanded to create space for an Irish pub (a nod to Neal's home country). Interior designer Elizabeth Krueger was down for it all. "Jenny was very enthusiastic and was a big part of the process," says Krueger, who's based in West Town. Her client would spend hours on auction websites at night, then email her in the morning about the artwork she'd purchased. "We had all the art sent to our office to inventory, and it was everywhere — not kidding," Krueger says with a laugh. "We worried we wouldn't have enough walls, so we used a few

opportunities, like along the stairs, to load up portraits. She was OK

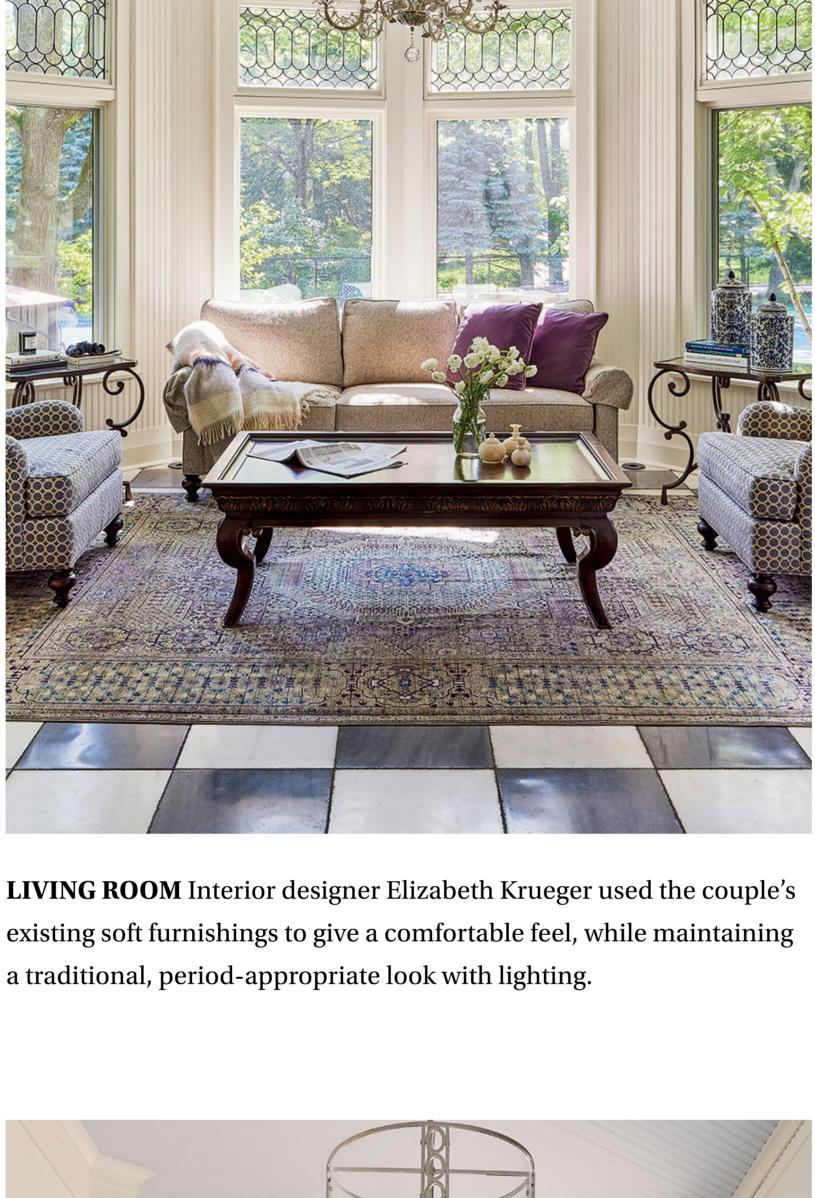
vestibule, where new leaded windows drench with sunlight the 19th-

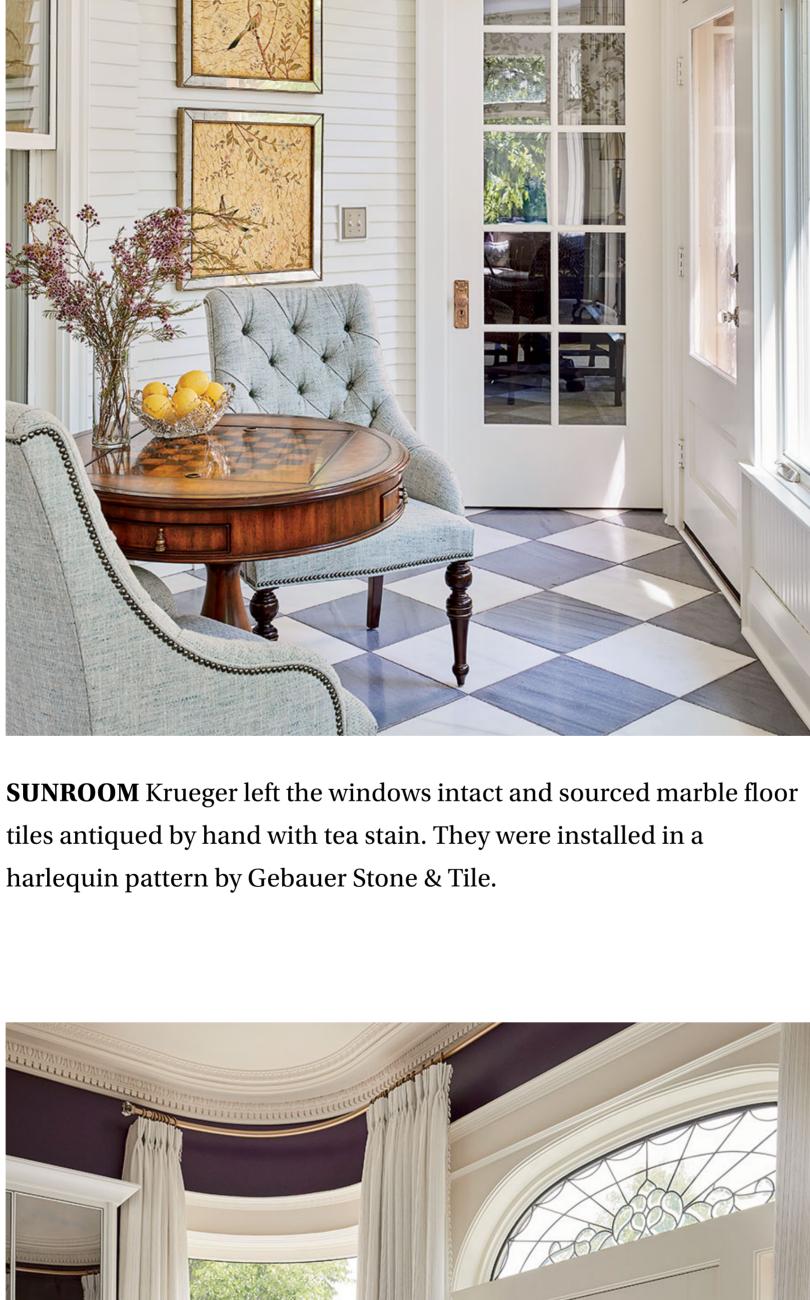
Now guests cross the wraparound porch to enter through the

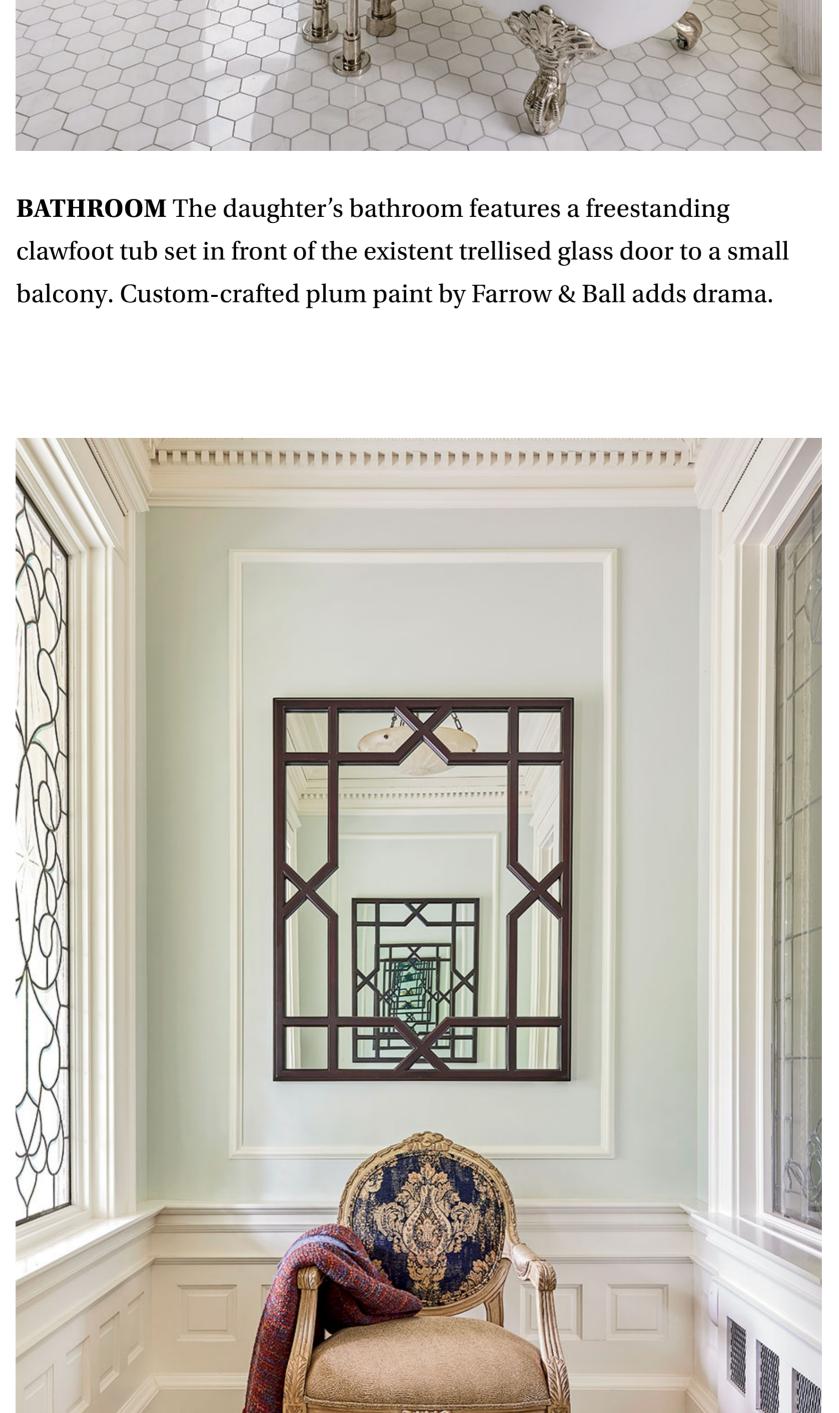
with 'more is more,' which is so fun."

century tiles found during demolition. Up the portrait-lined stairs, which are illuminated by stained glass, each bedroom has its own fanciful style and a bathroom to match. Downstairs, a fireplace framed in Pewabic tiles from Detroit anchors a moody living room with exposed beams. Barrel-vaulted ceilings give shape to the basement snooker room and cypress bar. Today, after 20 months of mitigation and restoration, the home would make Mr. Bassett blush. "There is a refinement," says Krueger. "It's not

balanced modern-day interpretation of what this 1899 home could have looked like." With, she notes, one notable difference: "This time, it's fully fireproofed."







ENTRY VESTIBULE This area is important to the home's design,

says Krueger.

introducing a thoughtful balance of old and new. "It sets the tone,"



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overly gilded and carved, but it has its ornate moments. It feels like a

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