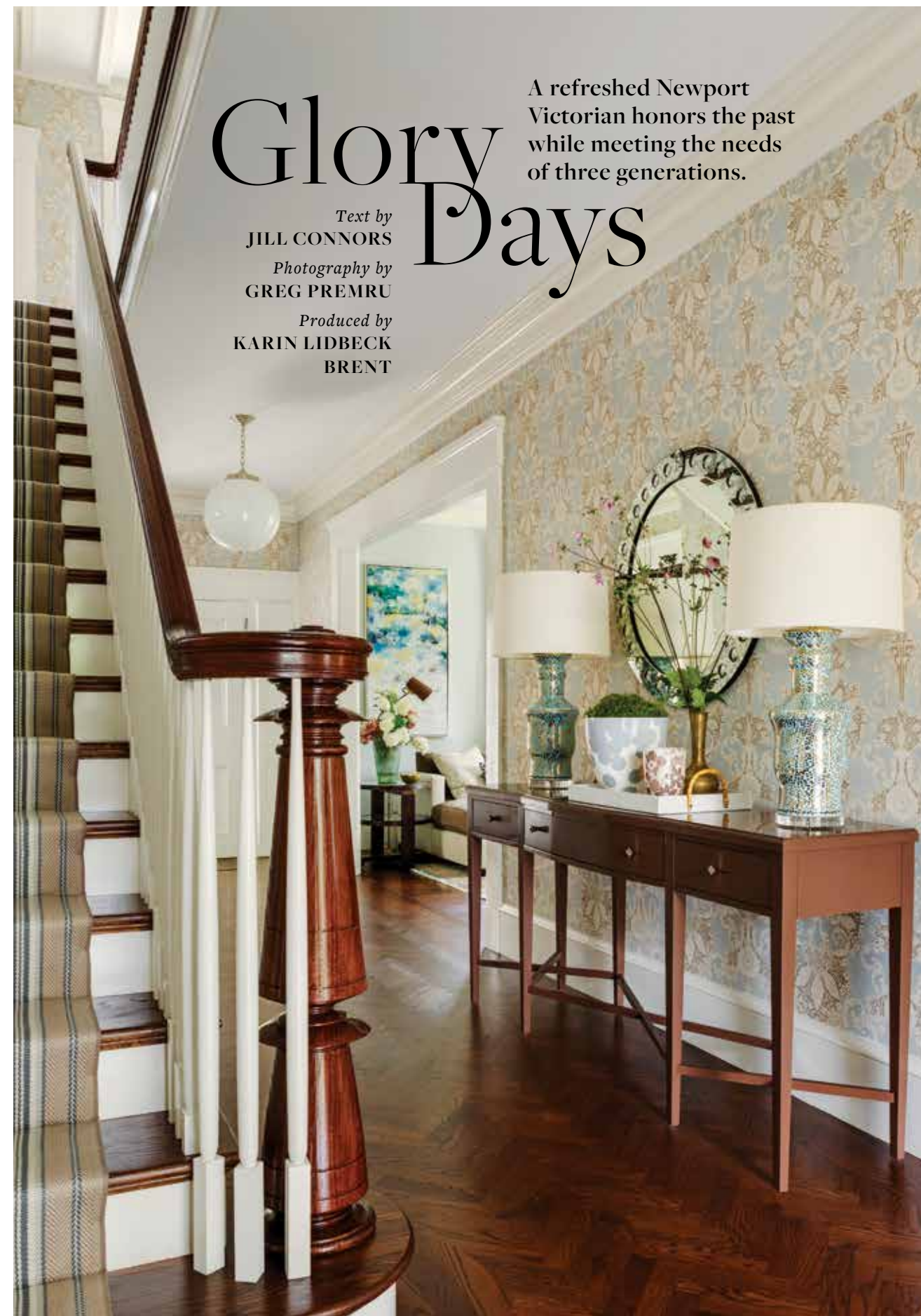


The 1850s Victorian house features roofline and dormer brackets, a front piazza, and the original central double door. **FACING PAGE:** The front entry showcases a rebuilt stairway with oak treads, a mahogany handrail, and a period newel post. The damask Lewis & Wood wallcovering in the hallway set the color palette for the entire house.



# Glory Days

A refreshed Newport Victorian honors the past while meeting the needs of three generations.

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**BELOW:** The living room's marble fireplace and coffered ceiling are original; designer Jocelyn Chiappone chose durable furnishings that include a velvet-covered sofa and a leather ottoman. **FACING PAGE:** Dowel Furniture midcentury-style chairs upholstered in Jab Anstoetz velvet surround a game table in a living room alcove.



In a mission to find a place where they could gather regularly with their adult children and young grandchildren, Tim and Susan Davis found an in-town early Victorian in Newport that spoke to them. “I walked in and immediately knew this was the place,” recalls Tim Davis, a real estate broker in New York’s Hamptons luxury market—in other words, someone who could see beyond the pink walls and odd configurations that had befallen the 1850s house over the years.

Enlisting a Newport-based dream design team, the Davises worked with interior designer Jocelyn Chiappone, architect Paul Weber, and builder Mark Horan to bring the house back to its original glory while also making it bulletproof for toddlers.

“One of the biggest challenges initially was deciding what to salvage and what to change,” notes Chiappone, who points to coffered ceilings, marble fireplaces, crown moldings, and front







doors as original elements well worth preserving. A modified main stairway, sub-par bathrooms, and oddly inserted interior columns, however, all needed to go.

“Our goal was reconfiguring first- and second-floor spaces so they were truer to traditional Victorian style and detailing,” says Weber. Horan was inspired by the original house as well. “The house had great bones, and we were able to keep some original details intact, but we ended up rebuilding some things to bring back the Victorian feeling.”

Case in point: the main stairway just inside the front entry. Previous owners had modified it to add a landing and stairway return a distance from the front door; Weber’s design called for a gracious stairway extending closer to the front door and featuring oak treads, period balusters, and a mahogany handrail.

Throughout the house, Chiappone



**ABOVE:** The oak cabinet with leather-paneled doors in the family room functions as a toy chest. **BELOW:** The family room’s comfortable seating includes a two-ended Highland House chaise perfect for curling up with a good book. **FACING PAGE:** In the dining room, with its original coffered ceiling, a round table seats eight; the accompanying mahogany-and-brass director’s chairs with navy canvas nod to Newport’s sailing heritage. The seascape painting, part of the client’s existing collection, is by Ken Zier.



established an elegant but grandchildren-friendly combination of old and new.

“The goal was to be historical in nature, but create a feeling that was chic, fresh, and sophisticated,” she says. As unifying elements, she used velvet and leather fabrics, wool rugs, and damask and grass-cloth wallcoverings. “We wanted to create an intimate year-round look, so we chose things like the velvet fabrics and wool rugs to go beyond the beach-house-sisal-rug vibe.”

Practicality led to challenges the designer loved solving; for example, when the homeowners requested a toy chest for the family room, Chiappone found an oak cabinet with leather-paneled doors that looks elegant and echoes the room’s aesthetic when closed.

An intricate damask wallcovering chosen for the first- and second-floor





hallways inspired the color palette for the entire house: the interior trim, for example, matches a background color from the wallcovering, and the walls in the first-floor rooms and all the bedrooms pick up the grays, blues, pearls, and tans.

Bold touches appear throughout the house as well, including the navy blue walls in the homeowner's office and the grasscloth-covered walls and highly lacquered millwork in the dining room.

The end result makes for happy gatherings for the family, which now includes three grandchildren under the age of five. It also makes for enchanting moments, Victorian style: "We didn't set out to buy a historic house," notes Davis, "but we love it. This house had ten fireplaces, and we got eight of them working again. One of my favorite things is lighting them up."

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.

**ABOVE:** A guest room features a neutral color palette and an eye-catching mirror from Massachusetts-based Carvers' Guild. **RIGHT:** A new bathroom off the first-floor primary bedroom showcases cabinetry designed by Digs Design paired with white marble. **FACING PAGE:** The homeowner's office makes a statement with high-gloss Benjamin Moore Hudson Bay navy walls and an antique campaign desk in mahogany.



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*—Interior designer Jocelyn Chiappone*

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Jocelyn Chiappone, Digs Design  
**ARCHITECTURE:** Paul Weber, Paul Weber Architect  
**BUILDER:** Mark Horan, Horan Building Company

