

TRADITIONAL HOME

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1999 DESIGN AWARDS

CRYSTAL CRAVINGS
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THE FORCE OF SYMMETRY AND BALANCE
IS WITH INTERIOR DESIGNER BARBARA LIONE
IN THE EXPRESSION
OF HER OLD-WORLD HERITAGE
IN A "NEW TOWN" CHICAGO HOUSE.

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DESIGN
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BY ELVIN MCDONALD PHOTOGRAPHY BY J



THERE ARE THOSE WHO FAVOR BREAKING THE RULES for themselves in the world of decorating. Not so Barbara Lione. She grew up in Germany, she's always had a soft spot for classic beauty. From major furniture groupings to the smallest of tablescapes, symmetry and balance is everywhere evident in the rooms of the townhouse her husband, Richard, built 20 years ago in the "New Town" neighborhood. "It's best not to confuse the eye," she says. "I'm against crazy angles and those things over which we have no control. In your own home, it's your matter. Balance puts you at ease."

The Lione living room, which runs across the front of the house, has 12-foot ceilings. A fireplace at one end anchors a seating arrangement played by the early-18th-century French *Régence* mirror, which still hangs. Flanking it are framed etchings, seven on each side. At the other end of the piano determines the placement of a sofa, a slipper chair, and a corner chair. Barbara delights in arranging tablescapes with her collection of top-quality upholstery fabrics are all Fortuny in muted rather than primary colors. The linen velvet-covered slipper chair," Barbara points out, "is extra deep and comfortable to the chair. The Europeans, particularly the French and English, used fringe instead of a skirting treatment for seating because it was less like men's shoe polish."



PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPH: PETER WALTERS

There are three sets of transoms in the living room. "These are the living room," she says, "and I have given them the same treatment in the form of a cord set. They are attached to a pulley system pulled back by a cord set construction. There is no holder. The secret to sumptuous tablescapes, tablecloths, and linens—lots of handwork, and a third interlining



The kitchen runs across the back of the house parallel to the living room. The cabinets and a countertop island at one end are balanced at the opposite end by a late-18th-century mahogany cylinder desk with matching *étagères*, which Barbara designed, on either side. "For the chairs, I chose a French linen in an old design with roses and a check plaid," Barbara says. "To me, it's English, soothing, and fun. The leopard print on the ottoman adds a touch of chic. Animal prints—but not too many—are always in, for a rug, an ottoman, or some pillows." Mid-room, a draped, round table provides an inviting place for informal dining.

An octagonal floor lamp recently been added. "It happened," Barbara says. "Regency mahogany table. I had no place to put it. My husband says the table is a good addition. Richard G. wanted a place for it, which are now at home in the kitchen and two to the



GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHS: PETER WALTERS



MY MOST HAPPY MOMENTS ARE WHEN I AM HAVING A DINNER PARTY. —BARBARA LIONE



the round table inspired the design from the outset," Barbara says. "It looks best in square or octagonal rooms." The metal and crystal chandelier is from Russia, and the tiebacks, in a printed linen from England, hang from exposed rings on the wall. She chose a high opera tieback to let in more light. The floor is French of terra-cotta-colored marble.

Barbara says that her overall goal as a designer remains constant but not dated. "To that end, she regularly submits her work to a test: 'Have a fad slipped in?' No one wants to be a home decorator. 'Have I added something that is ostentatious in this setting?' Elsie de Wolfe, our doyenne of decorating, said it all in a nutshell: 'ability, suitability, suitability.'"

Designer Craig Bergmann helped Barbara conceptualize the back garden. "I've simplified it over time," she says, "so there is box hedging for structure and only white flowers." The four clipped hornbeam trees define the central terrace. Lattice in a square pattern ornaments the side and back walls. Purple wisteria grows across the back.

"For me, the best of all possible worlds is Saturday," Barbara says. "I get up early and turn the music on, and I cook, with my husband helping me. I like setting the table, arranging the flowers, fixing up the house, making it smell good. It takes time, but entertaining is such a personal expression of love, I find it highly motivating." ■

Regional Editors: Sally Mauer and Hilary Rose

For more information, see the Reader's Resource on page 238.