

Triangle

APRIL/MAY 2022

HOME

DESIGN & DECOR

GREAT
ESCAPES



PLUS:
STAYCATION
BACKYARD OASIS

TO HISTORIC HEIGHTS

A BOYLAN HEIGHTS HISTORIC HOME IS TRANSFORMED INTO A MODERN BOUTIQUE HOTEL JUST STEPS FROM DOWNTOWN RALEIGH.

WRITTEN BY **BLAKE MILLER**

Sarah and Jeff Sheppard weren't exactly sure what they were getting into. The couple had never renovated a property before, let alone a historic one, and then on top of it transform the house into a boutique hotel. But they were more than eager to try. When I first laid eyes on Montfort Hall, which is now Heights House Hotel, I knew it could be something incredibly special," says Sarah. "From there, I put all my energy into making the project come to fruition."

The project was a two-year-long renovation of a historic 10,000-square-foot pre-Civil War Italianate-style mansion (and National Historic Landmark). Nestled in the tree-

lined area of Boylan Heights and within walking distance from downtown, Montfort Hall was completed in 1860 and was home to several families over the last century—it was even a Baptist church in the 1950s. British architect William Percival, whose architecture can best be described as a blend of Victorian villas and Italian farmhouses, designed the home. Percival oversaw the renovations of the State Capitol rotunda, an experience that was said to have influenced the architect's design of Montfort Hall's cupola.

For the Sheppards, maintaining the integrity of the home's original architecture was just as important as creating a



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During the two-year renovation, the Sheppards worked closely with Preservation North Carolina, the Raleigh Historic Development Commission, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, and the National Park Service to maintain the historic integrity of the home. **OPPOSITE:** Heights House features nine en suite guest rooms as well as common gathering spaces like the drawing room, library, and parlor. The home's fifteen-foot ceilings, original hardwoods, oversized pocket doors, and ten fireplaces add to the luxe getaway feel with a dose of charm.



TOP: The honeymoon suite includes two fireplaces, a glass-enclosed clawfoot tub and walk-in shower alongside a cozy sitting room, two ultra-luxe vanities, floor-to-ceiling windows, and a separate bedroom.

MIDDLE: Guests at Heights House enjoy Brooklinen waffle robes, Grown Alchemist toiletries, and Frette linens, as well as Samsung Frame TVs and Bose wireless speakers.

BOTTOM: From the library with its many oddities and books to the dining room bathed in light—where you can contemplate the original Salvador Dali painting over coffee—Heights House is the ideal space for a unique staycation.



boutique hotel with nine en-suite rooms that offered luxury modern amenities to guests. “It was all about letting the original architectural details shine while incorporating new and vintage pieces that felt fresh and updated yet timeless,” explains Sarah. To achieve that level of detail with the interior design, the Shepards enlisted designer Bryan Costello to help bring their vision of an iconic, modern Victorian hotel to fruition. “My method is rooted in trying to find a meaningful story among the space, the objects, and the client,” says Costello. And this project was no different. “They were trying to capture an atmosphere: grand, magical, discoverable, warm, and memorable. Those feelings, and the house itself, were the cornerstones for our design decisions.”

Taking cues from the home’s architectural details like its tall arched doorways, niches, and windows, Costello would echo them with rounded light fixtures and curved furniture. “We even repeated these shapes in the branding. All of the layers add up to something really special,” he says. The result is a historic home with a modern aesthetic that still pays homage to its classic pre-Civil War roots in its lines and detailing throughout. “The pursuit of designing a genuine experience rooted in authenticity and storytelling is what we were striving for,” says Costello. “Sarah and Jeff have known from the start that the best way to make Heights House special was to honor its story and find collaborators who wanted to share in that authenticity, and that’s exactly what they did.” ♦

