

## TRACY SCHLEGEL

*When Tracy Schlegel bought a Bethesda home to tear down, she knew she wanted to keep its quaintness while still going contemporary.*



PHOTOS BY ANDREW HARNIK/EXAMINER

# Hansel and Gretel find their way home

By Katie Wilmeth  
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If Hansel and Gretel followed a trail of bread crumbs to Bethesda, the Schlegels' house is where they'd end up.

"The house was very, very cute, but it was really like Hansel and Gretel's house," said Tracy Schlegel of the Brothers Grimm-esque home she moved into with her family six years ago.

Not wanting to do away with the cottage-in-the-woods look of the home — but wanting to create more space for her husband and two children — Schlegel and her husband tore down the entire house. But they saved the front exterior in order to keep the quaintness.

"We knew when we bought it we were going to tear it down, but at the same time we didn't want to be the McMansion," Schlegel said. "The goal was for somebody to walk into our house and not know if it

was an old or new house. When you come in, it looks new and modern, but the outside looks cottagey."

The house does stay true to its cute roots. In addition to the original exterior, guests are greeted by a — what else? — picket fence. Inside, the house — which went from about 1,200 to 4,500 square feet during construction — is a mix of traditional and contemporary design with some natural touches. The main level features an open floor plan with a large staircase running from the walkout basement to the top floor that plays up the windows overlooking the C&O Canal at the back of the house. In the spring and summer, the canal disappears into a burst of blooming flowers and trees. A slate floor in the foyer, cherry wood built-in bookshelves, a sleek honed-stone fireplace and hardwood floors throughout all play up the home's natural setting.

"I wanted to really stay focused

on nature," Schlegel said. "Nature definitely influenced the interior design of the house. I'm a firm believer that natural stone is just beautiful. You never get tired of it."

But Schlegel didn't design the five-bedroom house so you'd feel as if you were camping. The natural touches are nice, but when they are mixed with the aforementioned contemporary and traditional décor, and you get a house worthy of its high-end Bethesda address.

The living room, for example, is painted a creamy off-white and filled with clean-lined neutral furniture. The couch and chairs in the room could be considered traditional, but covered in a light linen, they go the contemporary route. A large map of Paris on the wall — purchased to remind the couple of their babyhood in the City of Lights — also gives the room a classic feel. But the map is cut up into sections with about 16 separate frames for

a more contemporary edge. The sleek black fireplace also gives the room a cutting-edge accent. The dining room has the same mixed style. A quintessential mahogany dining table and chairs from Sloans & Kenyon give the room a formal dinner party feel. This is offset by built-in display areas in the wall that are painted a deeper, dramatic tone and filled with Asian-inspired vases and flowers. An ornate, gold, slightly funky chandelier takes the classic edge off the room.

Upstairs, the bedrooms are a bit of a departure. The kids' rooms are brightly colored with hand-painted flowers in Schlegel's daughter's room and sailboats in her son's.

The master bedroom was inspired by Miami. The light blue room was designed to resemble a spa, complete with sheer white curtains that look like they should have palm trees, not the Potomac River behind them.

Schlegel made the curtains her-

self after seeing a similar pair at the famed Delano Hotel in South Beach.

"Every once in a while when the wind blows, they toss back," she said. "So that was my inspiration."

This isn't the first time Schlegel has decorated her house. She and her husband, who is the president of Bozzuto Construction, have revamped and remodeled several previous homes. With the success of this one, Schlegel finally decided to branch out beyond her own space and set up an interior design firm.

She's currently pursuing her master's in interior design at the Corcoran College of Art and Design, and she recently began Waterlily, an interior design firm, with her sister. "I've been married 13 years and we've done lots of renovations and that's really where I learned I loved it," Schlegel said of her knack for turning houses into homes.

Hansel and Gretel would surely approve.