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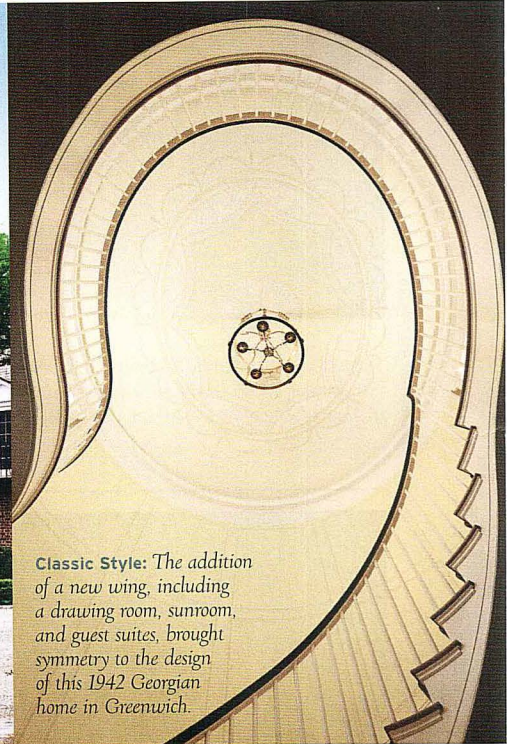


MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Architect **Charles Hilton** shares favorites for the foyer.



Charles Hilton, Principal,
Charles Hilton Architects



Classic Style: The addition of a new wing, including a drawing room, sunroom, and guest suites, brought symmetry to the design of this 1942 Georgian home in Greenwich.

1 Why is an entryway so important? “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” Whatever impression you get upon entering a home sets the tone for the whole experience of the house.

2 What's your favorite architectural style to work with? I honestly like to do a little bit of everything, but what we're probably best known for is Georgian style. I like its formality, its symmetry and balance and sense of organization. But I also like Shingle style, for almost the direct opposite reason—it's casual and you have this playfulness and sense of discovery, and more opportunity for invention than you do in some of the more classical styles. We're always responding to the context, too. In Greenwich,

most of our projects are colonials and Georgians, whereas on the waterfront we do more Shingle and casual styles. But if we're in Manhattan or out on the West Coast, we might be doing more modern. It's very responsive to the location.

3 What's your process when you work with a client? For most people, the entry is not a big focus when you first meet them. Sometimes they have a vision or sense of what they want to see as their first experience, but very often it's more a result of our design work. So what we try to do is make the entry welcoming, and provide shelter and protection. We also like to give a sense of orientation. Usually you can see some of the formal rooms and maybe a staircase from the foyer, so you kind of get a feel for where

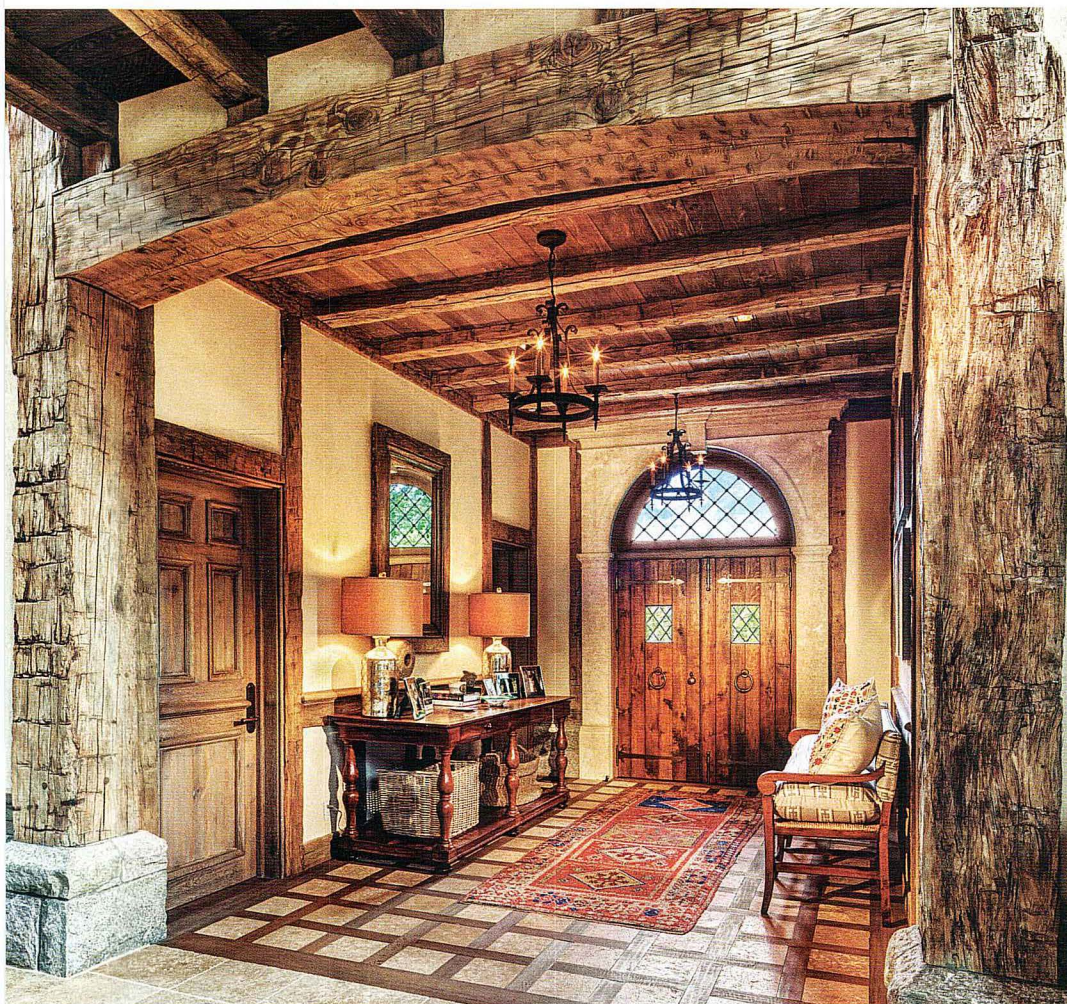
you are in the house. It's also a preview: You walk in and it's your first flavor of whatever that experience is going to be, so it's important that it represents the home, that it has good scale, that it has the right character, and transitions well to the other spaces in the house.

4 What's the hallmark of a Hilton entryway? They do have some characteristics in common (including some of the things I just mentioned). Usually people want a good covering, kind of a welcoming for their guests. Scale is important: We try to exude a sense of quality, but keep the scale in proportion to the house. And that sense of orientation—it's important to understand where you are and potentially where you're going. The entryway is a

Riverside Remodel:

Hilton took this “builder’s special” in Riverside and renovated all the interior spaces.

Features like an upgraded mahogany front door and new portico give the home a look with much more personality.



Elements of Style: The foyer of this French Normandy barn has all the statement-making elements, like an interesting floor, mix of materials, and a gorgeous front door. “We had this deliberate compression at the front entry before you walk into an amazing great room, 35-foot square with a 30-foot ceiling,” says Hilton. “It’s pretty spectacular.”

place where you often put as much or more detail as what’s in the rest of the house. The floors and walls are often patterned with tile or wood; there might be a panel treatment or wallpapers. The ceilings could be round or domed or beamed. All those surfaces are thoughtfully considered and the treatment is appropriate to the style of the house. Detail on all the surfaces is fairly characteristic of our work, and the foyer usually has the highest level of detail and quality in the house.

5 What is a worthwhile splurge?

Something that’s maybe underappreciated is good lighting, whether it’s decorative lighting, where you’re actually looking at the fixture, or accent lights that are hidden or built-in. In either case, having good quality, balanced lighting, and lighting artwork or whatever happens to be the feature of that hall, is very important.

6 What’s on everyone’s wish list?

A really beautiful, generously sized front door is on everybody’s list. They’re usually wider, thicker, and made of an interesting wood with a nice finish. Often the best hardware in the house is on the front door, too. A lot of people also go for some kind of upgrade or special touch on the flooring, whether it be wood or tile, something beyond what’s going on in the rest of the rooms. A special chandelier and/or really beautiful artwork are also at the top of the list.