





enough to host a hundred 23-year-olds for breakfast before the steeplechase, or the president of the United States, or the rock star Bono,” says Mrs. Frist, who speaks from firsthand experience.

In updating the house for the twenty-first century, Dixon and renovation architect Daniel Lee expanded the spaces for entertaining. They designed a two-and-a-half-story living room addition—the mansion’s focal point—replete with Greek-inspired pilasters and twin fireplaces. Dixon softened the formality of ornate millwork with gentle, creamy tones and richly textured, patterned fabrics.

“When I’m working with scale like this, I want to make the spaces approachable and human,” Dixon says. “I couldn’t let the living room become a hotel lobby. I had to maintain a sense of intimacy and graciousness. There is almost a laid-back feeling, which comes from the plush, comfortable upholstered furniture and the light, understated colors.” He balances the neoclassical with a decidedly modern restraint. “No swag curtains here.”

Similarly, in the middle of the room—halfway between a pair of stately grisaille wall panels depicting classical Italian landscapes—a contemporary, metal mesh pedestal adds an edgy energy.

The family room—also an addition, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings—is another place where the designer played with generous proportions. Geo-

“When I’m working with scale like this, I want to make the spaces approachable and human.”





A tall pedestal topped by a massive urn anchors the room. OPENING PAGES AND THESE PAGES: Wing chair, Rose Tarlow Melrose House, in Taffard fabric. Stools in Rubelli fabric. Sofa table and sconces, Niemann Weeks. Pillows in Boussac stripe. Daybed, Paruche, in Clarence House velvet. Sofas, Barry Dixon for Tomlinson/Erwin-Lambeth, in Myung Jin fabric. Custom pedestal, Club chairs, Donghia, in Clarence House fabric. Fringe, Samuel & Sons. Antique iron table, Gold log table, Phillips Collection. Wall panels, Zuber. Oushak, AMS Imports. Chandelier, Dennis & Leen.