



An 1800s portrait of George Washington and a floral accent in the library. Below: Jacqueline and Doug DeLuca.

# Extraordinary in Fairfax

Builder Doug DeLuca adds a new chapter to the story of a 19th-century “ordinary” in the Langley Historic District.

—BY CARRIE NIEMAN CULPEPPER—

—PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER CHASE—

**W**HEN DOUG DELUCA FIRST SET eyes on the big 1841 tavern in Fairfax County’s Langley Historic District, he pictured a family home with a wraparound porch, an orchard, and holidays at long farmhouse tables. He just never pictured it would be the setting for his own family, especially since he didn’t have one at the time.

No one can accuse DeLuca of lacking vision. The artist and founder of Federal Construction makes a living restoring historic homes and building new ones using reclaimed materials, but when Old Langley Ordinary became available, it required more than vision. “It had been sitting empty for seven years, water was pouring in the roof, and it was mold-ridden. Then,

a tree fell on it,” he remembers.

During a 19-month, \$1 million-plus renovation, his team gutted the nearly 200-year-old structure, removing the horsehair plaster it had been constructed with to bare the studs so they could update the electrical and plumbing. The home was on the National Historic Register when DeLuca purchased it. He “danced” with the Fairfax Historical Society and the county’s Architectural Review Board to maintain the historic structure’s original footprint.

“This house had multiple layers. It was a home; a drovers rest [where those traveling by stagecoach from Leesburg to Lynchburg stopped to rest]; an inn, or ‘ordinary,’ a Civil War headquarters and hospital; and where the



architect of Hickory Hill stayed during construction of that historic landmark and Kennedy family compound, just down the road,” says DeLuca. “To me, it’s all those layers that

# HOME



make up the character of this house.”

As part of the renovation, the rear section of the home’s wraparound porch became a living space and connecting hall, or “historical hyphen,” to the garage behind it. The back of the home opens via handmade Dutch doors painted red. “In the spring and fall, we open the doors to the breeze, and it creates great visuals when you’re looking out from the dining room,” says DeLuca.

That 40-foot corridor, with its stone wall and fireplace, also serves as an atmospheric site for Thanksgiving dinner. The family can seat 50 at long tables running the length of the space. And Thanksgiving is the DeLucas’ holiday: Doug and

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*DeLuca’s own work adorns much of the home. He specializes in flag art, painting on old reclaimed wood of various sizes.*

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his wife, Jackie, were married in the backyard overlooking the Potomac on Thanksgiving Day when the house was under construction.

Inside, the couple was lucky to be able to preserve the home’s original heart-pine flooring, doors, and staircase. The doors were stripped of many coats of paint and left in a natural state with some paint remaining. In one of the walls, they discovered the original bill of sale for the staircase, totaling \$4.80. In an upstairs bedroom, the names of Civil War soldiers, carved into the wall when the home was a hospital, were preserved.

For décor, the DeLucas have paired early American antiques with rustic custom pieces and accents. They used reclaimed barn wood to create furniture such as headboards, coffee and side tables, and used interior finishes like the distressed, robin’s-egg blue paint on the library’s bookshelves. And, DeLuca’s own work adorns much of the home. He specializes in flag art, painting on old reclaimed wood of various sizes. “When I started out a long time ago, I couldn’t afford art, so I’d make my own,” he says. Today his work is sold at Atelier Newport gallery in

Newport, Rhode Island, and displayed in Ralph Lauren store windows in New York City and the Hamptons.

DeLuca’s career began at Ralph Lauren’s Rhineland Mansion store on Madison Avenue. “Nobody can fold a tie or wrap a box better than I can,” he jokes. But DeLuca credits that early job selling menswear in a carefully curated environment to opening his eyes to the whole production involved in creating a lifestyle. He even remembers being told to read *The Bridges of Madison County* to prepare for the rollout of



Clockwise from top left: Guest cottage; hyphenated room accented with flowers; Jackie with Scout and Wilhelmina; children's teepee playhouse; arrangement of ranunculus, tulips, and veronica; 17-foot shirtmakers' table in the kitchen with flowers, vegetables, and canning jars; fireplace on the wraparound porch.

Thanks to Margaret Kincheloe and The Garden Club of Fairfax for the floral arrangements.


Ralph Lauren's country line. "We were living this lifestyle by working there; what we wore and how we wore it, down to the furniture," says DeLuca. "It was like a complete production, and we were the characters. Working at Ralph Lauren is where I fell in love with creating environments."

Today when DeLuca works for clients, he brings the same lifestyle vision, hand-drawing plans, designing the gardens, and outfitting interiors with custom furnishings similar to those found in his home or sourcing industrial pieces

and antiques. "To me, a home is a story," he says.

His own home is filled with pieces that lend chapters to its story, like the 18th-century shirtmakers' table he found in Boston. At 17 feet long, it's the focal point of the kitchen. He jokes they can never sell the house because of the table—it's too unique to part with.

Outside, the large vegetable garden and orchard with apple, pear, and peach trees continue the story. The family cans 600 pounds of food per year from that garden. "I think it has bettered our lives to live in this farmhouse," says

DeLuca. "We have Baldacci's two miles down the road, but I'd rather my kids understand that a tomato came from their garden, and it tastes better. ... I always thought there would be a family sitting in this garden; I just never thought it would be mine." 

*The Garden Club of Fairfax will feature homes and gardens in McLean, including Old Langley Ordinary, on Tuesday, April 30, as part of Historic Garden Week. Visit [VaGardenWeek.org](http://VaGardenWeek.org) for a complete schedule.*