



Georgian Double Take

What's the perfect complement to the perfect colonial house?
A perfect copy in miniature, reports NEELY BARNWELL SPRUILL.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIP DAWKINS | STYLED BY BILL SORRELL



This page, the dining room Persian rug that Anne Hines duplicated in petit point for the dollhouse. It was her second attempt to do so; she lost the first one when it was three-quarters done. It was later found in a bag of toys after she had spent six months finishing the second one. Previous page, the cabinet housing the miniatures.



In the dining room, an English faux-finisher glazed the walls in acid green. An inlaid mahogany demi-lune sideboard and Robert Hines' mother's early 19th-century crystal and silver epergne in the dining room. Opposite page, an 18th-century portrait of the royal governor of Jamaica. Robert says there were 17 paintings made of the governor in his lifetime because he had so many girlfriends. The crystal chandelier dates from the 18th-century.



In the library, a portrait of Douglas Gunter, the Hineses' youngest son's godfather, from whom the Louis XVI settee by the fireplace came. Early 19th-century Imari plates frame the portrait. A 19th-century Venetian blackamoor table sits in front of settee.



A Georgian house and a plum West End Richmond address on Virginia Avenue are almost incidental to Robert and Anne Thomas Hines' home. In a marquetry cabinet, the entire house is replicated in an inch-per-foot-scale dollhouse. The four-story dollhouse takes its inspiration from 17th-century Dutch examples called baby houses, which Anne says were "done for and by wives of merchants." After a trip to Windsor "trotting around Queen Mary's dollhouse" in the early '90s

when they bought their home, Anne sketched her own masterpiece and gave herself a year's deadline to finish. "You can't have any tinkering and dinking when it comes to this." Ten years later, the incredible result resides in the double-doored French cabinet and is exact down to every last picture frame.

Both Hineses have been interested in furniture and design from childhood. Thomas-Hines, the Cary Street antiques shop they have owned together since 1972, opened in a space that sold antiques as early as the 1940s. Anne handles most of the interior design work and Robert manages the downstairs. Today they are on buying trips to Europe several times a year, allowing ample visits with one of their children and three grandchildren in London.

Anne's other childhood interest was dollhouses, but she parted with her girlhood collection of doll furniture. "I'm very sensitive to scale," she says, and those pieces didn't hold up to her refined eye. The first truly legitimate article of doll furniture she owned was an 1880 gate-leg table given to her by a friend. Although Victorian wasn't quite her bag, she threw herself full-tilt into creating an environment for that piece. A cabinet in the living room discreetly contains the result, a hearty scene cast with 21 dolls. "All of them are members of our family," says Mrs. Hines. She did every bit of it except the

In a guestroom, a French 19th-century gilt-mounted dressing table/sewing table and one of a pair of Louis XV blue-upholstered gilt benches.



electricity, even fabricated the dolls' bodies and costumes. A maid bustles through a stair hall while a pantry bursts with tiny foodstuffs. It's "a hoot," exactly as Anne describes it.

Her next move was to duplicate the Virginia Avenue home they bought in 1991. The house is composed of the bricks, woodwork and floors of two houses from Malvern Hill (an estate in Hanover County) that Dr. and Mrs. H. Page Mauck moved to the present site in 1937. The houses date from 1790 but the bricks, as was discovered in papers found when the houses were

dismantled, were ship ballast from 1770. Robert's initiative was that the dollhouse copy she was to make had to be exact. "A replica of where I live with no childlike quality" was his mandate. When the canopied master bed arrived, he felt it was too big and the width was reduced by three-quarters of an inch. "He sees things that way, down to a 16th or 32nd of an inch, and I do too," says Anne. When a sconce came in, he had it sent back as well. "It is not like the original — there are some improvisational to-dos," he told Anne.

"I was fortunate to work with artisans worldwide, and they were very kind to deal with me," says Anne. "I would contact someone in London," she adds, "and send them a picture and a cardboard mock-up." Chandeliers and sconces were made by a Chicago artist who had done work for Malcolm Forbes' dollhouse. They were the last ones she ever did, and Anne had to win her over to do them. Chippendale dining room chairs were made by a craftsman who pulled day shifts in a chicken plant. "The logistics of it are very tedious," says Mrs. Hines of the Herculean effort to pull off her Lilliputian tour-de-force.

The result is truly fabulous. The paired 18th-century Venetian blackamoors that flank the house's front door are there in three-inch versions with 14K gold details. Floral wallpaper in the front hall was scaled down and hung by Mrs. Hines so that the pattern





falls identically flower-by-flower.

The mahogany library, a replica of the refusal room at Carter's Grove, is rendered again in even tinier form. A newspaper stand there is filled with *Richmond Times-Dispatches* and a miniature *Virginia Living*, and a one-inch porcelain figurine from their expansive collection of Meissen and Staffordshire is exact down to the fingernails. In 1998 a photographer shot every view from every

window, and the images were scaled and fitted in the dollhouse's windows.

Moldings are replicated down to the dog-ears and pediments; coincidentally, one of the craftsmen Mrs. Hines tapped for the detailing had been the foreman for the rebuilding of the house after a 1968 fire. (The house burned 23 years before the Hines' acquired it, the day before their wedding.) Back then, he rebuilt from scratch a window arch and corbel. For

Anne's dollhouse, he replicated the scorched walls in the basement.

In a bottom drawer of the cabinet is Mrs. Hines' true coup: the Charles Gillette gardens in late summer bloom. There are hydrangea and violet-blooming crape myrtle picked out in surgical gauze and wire, of which Mrs. Hines did every pain-staking hour by hand. The scheme is seasonally correct: "You wouldn't have crape myrtles and daffodils at the same time," she says. A bed of lilies surrounds a sundial and tiny cast iron grapevine chairs and seat mirror examples outside. An 18th-century English iron gate frames a view of the pre-Hurricane Isabel landscape beyond. A favorite now-deceased dog pokes his nose through the gate. The surrounding brick walls that line

Ball and claw Chippendale chairs in a living room the Hines converted from a porch. The ormolu centerpiece is identical to a silver one in the White House, gilded by Jacqueline Kennedy. The paired Buddhas Robert found separately and made into lamps. Below from left the kitchen, Mrs. Hines and her papillon Florence, and a view of the front from Virginia Avenue.

the drawer were made of plaster compound, and diamond needles were used to outline every brick. "Every baby house has a garden," says Mrs. Hines, and this one is more than worth its salt.

The attic is perhaps the most fascinating part, rendered exactly down to its eaves and bare-bulb fixtures. Leave it to the Hineses; even the attic is chic and antiques-packed. A bonnet-top highboy looms in one corner while miniature Christmas ornaments, Louis Vuitton hatboxes and tiny rolls of wrapping paper abound. Pink plastic bunny grass bursts out of a cardboard box marked "Easter," and perfect replicas of family christening gowns hang nearby.

Mrs. Hines copied the Persian rugs in petit point with no pattern; ditto the tassels on the draperies (of which there are literally hundreds) and flame stitch chair upholstery. "You have to have infinite patience," says Mrs. Hines. But her art appears to be a dying one — "most of the people doing this are in their 70s," she says.

Even the fate of her dollhouses is uncertain, but wherever they end up, they may, like the 1600s baby houses in Holland, inspire someone to do something very beautiful in four centuries or so.



The entry hall's Cowtan and Tout wallpaper and a jappaned table are duplicated in the dollhouse.

