



balanced beams

Although architectural details such as heavy beams and paneling can connote baronial splendor or rustic charm, they—and the cavernous spaces that often accompany them—can also be challenging to design around. Here, a trio of designers makes the most of these features. >



Ann Pyne
Kips Bay Boys & Girls
Club Showhouse
 New York, New York

For the don't-alter-the-paneling room she inherited at the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club Showhouse, Ann Pyne interpreted a whimsical literary source—*Alice in Wonderland*—to lighten the attitude of a space defined by dark woodwork. The children's tale sparked design magic that fills what could have been a deeply serious room with beauty and a bit of sass.

"I wanted to maintain the Gothic look guided by the decorative beams, but I didn't want to create a 19th-century period room," says Pyne. "I wanted that proper, formal dining room that today is an old-fashioned notion."

Pictures of scenes from Alice's fanciful world were hung on the wall to establish the thought behind the room's decoration. An exaggerated checkerboard pattern on the ceiling with alternate taupe and pearlized squares provides contrast to the ethereal dogwood pattern on the walls. In the center of the ceiling, a fixture evocative of a giant mushroom hangs over the dining table. The table looks as though a silver-leaf tablecloth carved from wood has been magically spread across a surface supported by a tree-trunk base. Fantasy chairs with triangular backs and seat aprons have a house-of-cards temperament, coordinating playfully with a pair of Parsons chairs covered in a brown-and-white chevron fabric. The room's imaginative plan is reflected in a Gothic arch mirror that suggests Alice peering through the looking glass.

Produced by Bonnie Maharam Photographs by Bruce Buck

