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Hines Ward

A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO DESIGN FOR THE PITTSBURGH STEELERS WIDE RECEIVER

Architecture by David Grace | Interior Design by Ann Davis
Text by Michael Frank | Photography by Jeff Herr



Hines Ward has been called the greatest wide receiver in the history of the Pittsburgh Steelers, the team for which he's played since 1998. A two-time Super Bowl champion, he holds every receiving record in franchise history. He was the MVP of Super Bowl XL and a four-time Pro Bowler. He's been an all-time team leader in receptions, receiving yards and receiving touchdowns. He has established his own charitable foundation, Helping Hands, which focuses on improving literacy among underprivileged children in the United States (in Korea, where Ward was born, it targets biracial discrimination).

All this, and he has been described—by President Obama, no less—as the happiest man in football.

Charismatic, accomplished and big-hearted, this major football talent also happens to have a surprising interest in the way houses are put together: “Before I built my dream house,” Ward says, “I spent years clipping pictures from magazines. I watch design shows on TV; I make mental notes wherever I go—friends’ places, hotels. You can be amazed at what you pick up just by paying attention.”

To help him realize his vision for his new Atlanta home, Ward engaged the services of architect David Grace, of A

For his Atlanta home, Hines Ward (left), wide receiver for the Pittsburgh Steelers, commissioned architect David Grace and interior designer Ann Davis. Turfdoc handled the 15,000-square-foot residence's landscape design. **ABOVE:** The front elevation, says Grace, received classical detailing in keeping with Hines's desire for “a grand gesture from the street.” **OPPOSITE:** A distinctive double fireplace defines the living room.



"I spent years clipping pictures from magazines," Ward says.



Classical Studio, and interior designer Ann Davis. And Ward had a vision too: He wanted a house that respected the flavor of fairly traditional Atlanta houses while at the same time having a contemporary airiness and ease of function. "I find houses that are all modern to be way too cold," Ward says. "I wanted my place to look as though it had been built now but

to have a classical feel. Above all I wanted it to be comfortable and particular to my taste and interests."

Impressed with Ward's house sense, David Grace began by taking his client through a survey of architectural styles before settling on a Neoclassical vocabulary with a Mediterranean inflection. "Hines was pretty decisive," Grace re-

members. "He liked stucco; he preferred a standing-seam to a tile roof; he did not care for excessive ornament or detailing; he wanted a house that felt strong, confident, masculine—which, when you meet him, makes perfect sense."

Ward was especially specific as to how the house should live—and look—inside. He wanted a master suite in which he could



cocoon himself after a demanding series of games, and he thought it out down to the detail of having a washing machine in his closet (“I saw this at a friend’s house. Like many players, I travel a lot of the time. What’s more logical than washing your laundry as you unpack?”) He liked the color chocolate. He was drawn to frosted glass and wood finishes. He wanted an in-

terior water element, and it’s now a favorite of his six-year-old son, Jaden.

Ann Davis turned Ward’s wish list into a subtly integrated, well-crafted set of interiors by thinking of the house as a very high-end, unusually personal hotel. She chose a palette that was earthy and warm in tone. She used lots of wood, suede and leather, as one might imagine,

OPPOSITE ABOVE: The dining room mixes metallic and lacquered finishes. “Hines’s goal was to build a house that was resort-looking, hotel-chic, modern,” says Davis. “Also it had to reflect his personality. It had to be fun, upbeat, exciting. Hines is an outgoing person. He loves to entertain.” **ABOVE:** The billiard room.



He wanted a master suite in which he could cocoon himself after games.

but also taffeta, lacquer and mirror: "Like most clients," she says, "Hines isn't only one note."

Much of Davis's energy went into organizing spaces in the house that are closest to Ward's heart. Unsurprisingly, these are the rooms in which he likes to entertain:



LEFT: Ward's master suite. "After 13 years of service in the NFL," he says, "I decided I wanted to build a real home of my own." Samsung TV. **ABOVE:** The trophy room. "Of course he had a lot of ideas about this space," the interior designer says. "We fitted it out to house his collection very specifically." **BELOW:** In the media room, Ward is encouraged to multitask. Wine refrigerator in bar, G.E. Small TVs, Samsung.



the media room, the billiard room, the poker room, the spa area and, probably the most personal of all, the trophy room. "I wanted to preserve the history of my time in the NFL," Ward explains. "I wanted it to feel like a museum, a place where I could display hall-of-famers' jerseys from

guys I've played and become friends with and old-timers I've learned from."

The designer also helped Ward recreate his own Steelers locker, where he keeps his Super Bowl jerseys, the cleats and helmets he wore in those memorable games, the record-breaking balls

he carried and even his Super Bowl ring.

"I'm proud of the whole house," Ward says, "but this room is special. It's where I can reflect on my adventures and my life. As my son grows older, it will be a way for him to know me better—me and my past." □