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# A NEW TWIST

MODERN FORMS BLEND WITH CLASSIC  
ARCHITECTURE IN A TRADITIONAL STONE  
MANSE IN HINSDALE.

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ARCHITECTURE / MICHAEL ABRAHAM, MICHAEL ABRAHAM ARCHITECTURE  
INTERIOR DESIGN / ELIZABETH KRUEGER, ELIZABETH KRUEGER DESIGN  
HOME BUILDER / BRYAN J. FREEL, VINE PROPERTIES  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / SCOTT BYRON, SCOTT BYRON & CO.



Sometimes throwing things slightly off kilter is the best way to strike the right balance. That's how architect Michael Abraham approached the design of a new residence for Chris and Nicki Hutter and their three young children in a charming Hinsdale neighborhood known for wide boulevards and traditional homes.

"We wanted it to feel like it's been here for a long time," Chris says of the family's desire for their home. "We didn't want to go with trends." But the historic character didn't mean the house should be antiquated, Abraham acknowledges. "They didn't want it to be a period piece," he says.

The home's stone exterior with limestone detailing, traditional gables and black slate roof belies the more modern architectural moves that characterize its interior. Instead of a traditional center entrance, for example, the main entrance is on the left side of the front façade, and there is no central corridor. "Most houses go from front to back as quickly as possible," Abraham points out. "In this house, you move side-to-side, so you have to walk through rooms to get to the back."

In the front foyer, a double-sided 6½-foot stone fireplace creates a dramatic focal point, especially when illuminated by a glass-and-inlaid-bronze light fixture by designer Tim Thompson. Handsome oak paneling wraps the entrance to the foyer and connects to exposed ceiling beams that run along one side of the dining room and through the exterior wall, becoming the ceiling for the front entry. Abraham repeated the detail on the lofted ceiling over the breakfast area in the back of the house. "The beams warm it up," he explains, "and it's always nice to bring the outside in."

That feeling of warmth was important to Nicki. "I wanted a home that felt inviting and comfortable," she says. Embracing that ethos, designer Elizabeth Krueger created a casual seating area in the dining room underneath the exposed beams using a neutral two-sided settee and a modern steel chair covered in light-colored hide. "This room doesn't get a ton of natural light," she says. "So it made sense to me to make it a little dark and moodier." Dark gray walls make the

light-colored upholstery and abstract art stand out against the deep backdrop. Adjacent to the gallery wall, an oversize mirror reflects the sculptural chandelier with glass globes hovering over the dining table and its patterned fabric chairs.

By contrast, lofted beamed ceilings and tall windows bring plenty of daylight into the home's great room, and Krueger responded accordingly. Light-colored walls allow the focus to remain on the fireplace, which has a long mantel detailed with Venetian plaster and stained limestone. A pair of chairs covered in purple velvet adds depth and interest yet still feels soothing.

That sense of serenity is also a hallmark of the adjacent open kitchen, where a large gray island with a white quartzite countertop contrasts the white perimeter cabinetry. Dressed up with a dazzling book-matched quartzite backsplash, the range wall is flanked by entrances to a pantry outfitted with open shelves, gray-painted wood cabinetry and walls covered with vertical shiplap. "It's classic," Krueger says, "but with a twist."

The twist is literal in the case of the home's sculptural stairway, which connects the basement to the top floor. Located along a bank of windows overlooking the side yard, the serpentine plaster-clad stairway with a ribbon-like metal railing was inspired by architect David Adler's designs of the 1920s and '30s. Setting off the feature is a simple chandelier, from which crystal balls seem to float down the center. "The staircase looks like it's hanging from the ceiling, and the chandelier emphasizes the void," Abraham says. The staircase was not an easy undertaking. "It was a multistep process to get it to come together," says builder Bryan J. Freel. Installing the light fixture at the top might have been the most difficult part of the entire project, requiring the construction of a special platform over the open space.

Another intriguing feature appears in the master bedroom, where the bed is recessed in a wall niche framed by shiplap and distinguished by cashmere wall panels with nailhead trim in a darker shade than the surrounding light gray walls. An upholstered headboard, thick draperies and a bench covered in a fringed fabric reinforce the monochromatic palette. "Layering textures is more fun than just using paint, and it softens up the space," Krueger says.

Outside, landscape designer Scott Byron also added layers. "We wanted to bring the house and the site together and emphasize the beauty of the architecture," he says. He incorporated trees and bushes to create a privacy screen from the neighboring homes along both sides. In front, a new stone wall supports a berm that likewise offers a measure of privacy from the street, and a second wall defines a handsome new entry courtyard with bluestone pavers.

The Hutters compare their new house to a five-star hotel in the city. "This home far exceeded our expectations in terms of comfort and quality," Chris says. Nicki adds, "It's a wonderful place to raise a family." ■

A custom Anees Upholstery sofa and a pair of armchairs covered in Holly Hunt fabric from Eli-Wyn Upholstery create a convivial conversation area in the great room of a Hinsdale home. An RH chandelier adds a punch of drama. The wool rug is from Oscar Isberian Rugs.



## “THE HOMEOWNERS DIDN'T WANT THE RESIDENCE TO BE A PERIOD PIECE.”

—MICHAEL ABRAHAM



In the breakfast area, a table with custom metal legs and a wooden top is surrounded by a dining bench covered in Perennials fabric from David Sutherland and chairs from The Bright Group wearing Holland & Sherry material. The custom ombre Carolyn Ray drapery panels are also from David Sutherland, and the pillows are from Jayson Home.



**Above:** A John Pomp Studios chandelier from A. Rudin illuminates the center island in the kitchen, which has been outfitted with handsome cabinets from Abruzzo Kitchen & Bath, a custom hood from Avenue Metal Co. and Calacatta quartzite countertops. The barstools are from RH.

**Left:** Shiplap-covered walls, dark gray cabinetry by Abruzzo Kitchen & Bath and open shelving foster a more casual feeling in the pantry. Gebauer Tile & Stone installed the counters, and the oak flooring is by Apex Wood Floors.





Accented with Holland & Sherry throw pillows, Ligne Roset's Prado sofa ensures the entry foyer can be used as a place to inhabit rather than just pass through. The Gregorius Pineo lighting is from Holly Hunt, and the painting is by Barry Lantz.



A tall stone fireplace adds a unique focal point in the front foyer and can also be viewed from the adjacent dining room. A Porter Teleo wallcovering from David Sutherland and C&C Milano curtains from Holland & Sherry complement the wood accents and limestone floor from Paris Ceramics.





Farrow & Ball's Down Pipe paint fosters a moodier feeling in the dining room, where a Modern Artifax chandelier illuminates a wood-and-metal dining table by Tim Thompson Designs and chairs covered in Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams fabric. The artwork is framed Porter Teleo wallpaper samples from David Sutherland; the metal-and-cowhide chair is from Jayson Home.



**Opposite:** A metal-and-glass Ochre light fixture highlights the tall ceilings in the master bathroom, which is outfitted with dual-facing vanities from Abruzzo Kitchen & Bath. The tile floor, laid in a herringbone pattern from Paris Ceramics, features an inlaid mosaic-tile rug from The Tile Gallery. The faucets are from Waterworks.

**Below:** In the master bedroom, upholstered wall panels and shiplap distinguish a wall niche containing raffia-wrapped nightstands from Made Goods, a bed covered in Holly Hunt fabric and Porta Romana sconces from Donghia. The suede-fringe bench is by Bradley, and the bed linens are from RH.



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**—ELIZABETH KRUEGER**



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