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INTERIOR DESIGN / MIRANDA CULLEN AND DEVON TOBIN, DUET DESIGN GROUP
HOME BUILDER / HAL COLVIN, BUILDERS' STUDIO
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / LEANN OSTHEIMER, LIFESCAPE COLORADO

CHARACTER STUDY

THE OLD-WORLD FAÇADE OF THIS BOULDER HOME BELIES A CONTEMPORARY FAMILY HAVEN THAT EMBRACES THE GREAT OUTDOORS.

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—MIRANDA CULLEN

The old saying about not judging a book by its cover takes on architectural significance when applied to the home of this Boulder couple. The stately dwelling is fronted by a formal courtyard entrance and grand doors, but inside an airy, streamlined interior makes for modern family living. It's an unexpected design twist the couple commissioned after deciding to build a custom home for themselves and their daughter.

The style is inspired by the homeowners' travels through the European wine country and their love of gatherings. “We knew we wanted to mimic an old-world home on the exterior,” recalls the wife. “Inside we were looking for a more modern edge with an indoor-outdoor feel, because that's what we like when entertaining.” To achieve this study in contrasts, the couple turned to designer Miranda Cullen, architect Jane Snyder and general contractor Hal Colvin.

On the front exterior, Snyder adopted classical features like stone wainscoting. Inside, the home's open layout soars with high ceilings and sliding floor-to-ceiling glass doors that provide a modern vibe. The H-shaped footprint frames a central terrace, where “on nice days we can open the doors and look over to the Flatirons and the foothills,” says the husband. “I love that you can be inside yet feel like you are a part of the tree canopy.” The blurring of the indoors and outdoors was precisely what the architect intended. “We wanted the rear of the home to be modern and open, and to have every single room lead outside,” she explains.

Despite this modern construct, traditional materials still seep into the interior architecture, though reinterpreted to suit the space's sweeping volume and streamlined bones. To frame the central living room, Snyder incorporated a wall of rustic stones with flush grout lines that echo the traditional masonry of old European houses—a detail the homeowners longed for from the beginning. “I noticed

during our travels through Tuscany that so many of those old houses bring the stone inside,” recalls the wife. “So we tried to envision how the stone could come into our own home. We wanted it to look like maybe this was an older part of the home from way back when that evolved over time as it was added onto.”

This traditional stonework contrasts with the home's more graphic features like the black and white kitchen, which pairs gleaming Neolith slabs with burnished-tin panels on the backsplash and island. The fireplaces also strike contemporary notes with their sleek surrounds, such as the living room's façade of gray plaster and limestone.

Surrounded by this delicate blend of old and new, Cullen—along with designer and co-principal Devon Tobin—focused on pieces that would harmonize with both styles. “Everything we selected was pretty transitional, never overtly modern,” notes Cullen. “Each space contains some elements that are clean-lined, and some that are a little bit more traditional.”

Finding this balance began by expressing the desired feeling of the home through textiles. “For our first meeting, Miranda showed up with three large containers full of fabric samples in different colors and textures for us to explore,” recalls the wife. This initial experience proved “really helpful for us,” adds the husband. “We were pretty sensitive in terms of the right materials. We wanted something that felt comfortable, but also looked right. It's those small details that make it special.”

Throughout the process, the couple were drawn to a serene palette of whites, creams, grays and “anything soft to the touch,” says Cullen, noting textiles run the gamut from buttery suede to lush velvet. “Everything has a really nice hand to it. They were looking for an aesthetic that was not fussy, but more tonal and textural.”

These textiles became central in unifying the classic-meets-modern design, like tempering the living room sectional's angular silhouette with “some really beautiful pillows made in fabrics that have a pattern,” explains Cullen. She also transformed several of the homeowners' existing classic accent chairs “with a more modern print or finish.” Abundant drapery was also employed to balance the dark frames that surround the home's sliding doors and windows, like the taupe double-height Casadeco draperies in the living room. “The architecture is very bold, it was our job to make it approachable,” notes the designer. Custom lighting also introduces more moments of softness, such as the delicate glass sphere pendant floating over the breakfast nook.

When Cullen unveiled the final look to the couple after a week of installation, the experience “was very emotional and touching,” confesses the wife. Their new home “brings all these things that we love together—and it was just beautiful seeing everything we imagined come to life.” ■



When she was hired to help a Boulder couple furnish their new contemporary home, designer Miranda Cullen proved context is everything. In the upstairs hallway, for instance, she placed a traditional console in a more modern, edited backdrop—elements like the oversize giclee print of an egret give the traditional furniture a new attitude.



The great room functions for both entertaining and everyday living thanks to abundant seating including twin Aiden chairs, a Morado Curves club chair—all by Theodore Alexander—and a Thayer Coggin sectional. A painting by local artist Will Day is rigged on a sliding system to screen the television when not in use.

A glass sphere pendant by Wired Custom Lighting and a bench upholstered in onyx leather gives the breakfast nook glamour. It's a look that's amplified in the adjacent dining room, which features a showstopping Ugolino Elliptic crystal chandelier, elegant Fellon armchairs by Artistic Frame and a custom oak table by Michael Trent Coates.



Opposite: On the main floor, the lounge can be closed off with sliding panels, creating a more intimate space “that’s the perfect spot for people to have a cocktail before dinner,” says architect Jane Snyder. To create a conversation space, Cullen centered the four Prentiss chairs by Bernhardt around Thayer Coggin’s Clip table ottoman.

Below: Cullen wanted to add some warmth to the sleek black and white kitchen, so she selected a row of pendants by Legend of Asia for over the island and bronze Visual Comfort Camille sconces. Walnut Cherner counter stools from Design Within Reach also introduce organic lines.



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A bevy of textiles creates a lush haven in the master bedroom, starting with the tufted Theodore Alexander Brougham bed, a plush Daphne area rug by Antrim and custom Taffard Fabrics draperies. Cullen also transformed the couple's armchair from their previous home with a shimmering, foiled herringbone jacquard by Zinc Textile.

