

GRAND PROCESSION

High-contrast interiors play up architectural elements in a dramatic Hinsdale home.

WRITTEN BY LIZ ARNOLD | PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN MCDONALD



Architecture: Michael Abraham, Michael Abraham Architecture Interior Design: Lauren Warnock and Aimee Wertepny, Project.
Home Builder: Bruce Ritter and Linda Ritter, Tiburon Homes LLC

I've always been drawn to a sophisticated and modern but cozy style," Seema Sheth says of her new Hinsdale abode, noting Michael Abraham's striking architecture and bold interiors by Lauren Warnock and Aimee Wertepny. "But first and foremost, I wanted to make sure our house was functional for our needs as a busy family of five." When she came across the designers' work, she felt "immediately drawn to their cool and edgy style, how they mix textures, finishes and layers, creating really sophisticated but unique spaces," Seema recalls.

This is, in fact, exactly what the firm is known for. As Wertepny notes, "We see contrasts—light and dark, subtle and bold, textured and glamorous—as our color palette." The pairing was perfect. Warnock remembers Seema sharing a collection of design ideas—a lot of "texture and materiality," the designer says. "It was all very much in our genre."

Given the owners' aesthetic leanings, it's no surprise that Seema and her husband, Anish, wanted to work with Abraham on the architecture; his modern, minimal approach suited the direction of both the interiors and their lifestyle. The couple loves to entertain groups small and large, so flow was important. Hence, the first floor is an open plan with varying ceiling heights to define spaces and dramatic portals between rooms that help delineate functions with appropriate scale. "The smaller arches introduce more intimate areas, such as the one going into the bedroom or primary bath," Abraham says, "whereas a large, square opening leads from the foyer to the dining area."

The interiors were inspired by these moments of contraction and expansion, Warnock explains. "Michael created these interesting moves and design elements, and that's where this idea of high-contrast interiors came into play," she says. Working with builders Bruce and Linda Ritter, the designers played up the portals with dark, slatted-wood paneling. Meanwhile, the team installed wide-plank wood flooring in warm taupe to serve as the ideal grounding element. Not only did it set the stage for layers of neutral furnishings, but its diagonal installation on the

main floor created intersections that look like arrows or pathways that change orientation from room to room.

Warnock deployed a warm greige palette throughout, mixing textures to lend a feel—literally—of modernism. Case in point: the family room's clean-lined, leather-framed sectional with bouclé cushions, paired with a faux-leather chaise, marble-base side table and sheer, double-height draperies. Beneath a lowered ceiling is the fireplace, surrounded by dark-stained, rift-sawn oak panels.

Material interest continues across the abode. "Some of the walls and partitions are like pieces of furniture," Abraham says, pointing to the floating mirrored-tile bar in the dining area as well as the wood enclosure, detached from the walls and ceiling, that elegantly conceals the refrigerator, freezer and oven. Looking at the kitchen from the living room, "rather than seeing drywall, you see the back of this piece of furniture," Warnock notes. In the cooking space, which was planned with a large island so the family can chat over breakfast, honed, marble-like black porcelain tops the island while the backsplash features a white polished variety, its reflective quality echoing the high-gloss white cabinets. Sculptural pendants over a wood-topped table further play with the theme of juxtaposition, as do the adjoining keeping room's white linen curtains and coffee table paired with black shelving and metal accents.

Upstairs in the primary suite, the bedroom's high volume is tempered with dark wood beams and softened with a channel-tufted headboard in an ivory upholstery. Velvet swivel chairs and luxe bedding in soothing neutrals invite rest. "The idea here was just to put all of these kinds of really lush, yummy textures together," Warnock says.

The effect exemplifies the perfect balance of design elements, ones that Warnock credits her clients for daring to try. "It was so refreshing how open they were to collaborating and doing things that some consider risky," she says. But for Seema, it resulted in exactly the kind of chic warmth she'd envisioned, and the family loves it. "Ever since I can remember, it's been a dream of mine to build a house," she says. "They understood our vision and over delivered in every way. It's a dreamy and peaceful vibe." ■



At the base of the floating stair, a glass rail disappears behind a black Venetian plaster accent wall, in front of which hangs an Il Pezzo Mancante chandelier. A matte-black steel table by Noir anchors the space.



“WE SEE
CONTRASTS—
LIGHT AND DARK,
SUBTLE AND BOLD,
TEXTURED AND
GLAMOROUS—
AS OUR COLOR
PALETTE.”

—AIMEE WERTEPNY

Modern, minimalist furnishings in the family room continue the monochromatic palette. The custom bouclé-and-leather sofa, Rove Concepts daybed upholstered in Holly Hunt’s Great Plains faux leather and Interlude Home lounge chair put the emphasis on texture.



A deep, wood-paneled portal by builders Bruce and Linda Ritter creates a dramatic transition between the entry and dining area. The bar, clad in Ann Sacks tile, serves as a backdrop for a custom dining table, Holly Hunt chandelier and chairs from Casa Spazio.



Above: Mixed materials in contrasting finishes continue into the kitchen. There, cabinetry by New Style Cabinets and brass ring pendants by Resident Lighting from Lightology pair with a porcelain island and walnut-topped table from Casa Spazio.

Opposite: Adjacent to the kitchen, the keeping room serves as a hangout for the kids. Accordingly, it was furnished with durable pieces, like the custom sofa covered in a Pollack Hospitality fabric and stonecast table by Bernhardt. The Koen Lybaert artwork is from RH.





Above: The primary bedroom exudes quiet elegance. A tufted headboard, fabricated by C Sanchez Upholstery, dramatically mirrors the height of the windows, while a pyrite table by Bernhardt between two Interlude Home velvet lounge chairs invites intimate conversation. The artworks are from RH.

Opposite: Designed with spa-like serenity in mind, the primary bathroom showcases white oak flooring and walls coated in Benjamin Moore's Intense White, with cabinetry fabricated by New Style Cabinets painted to match. They are finished with leathered quartzite countertops from Sprovieri's Custom Counters.