

# A Classic

A couple builds a dream home in the style of an Italianate urban farmhouse—and puts a timeless spin on new construction

BY SALLY STICH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY MINTON REDFIELD

YOU WOULD THINK AN ARCHITECT WOULD LOVE TO HEAR the directive, “Just create something beautiful and original for us.” But John Mattingly says that without any other guidance, such a task is daunting. The architect and his wife Regan co-own Denver-based Chalet, a full-service architecture, construction, custom furniture and design firm specializing in new construction that features the craftsmanship and look of older homes. So he was thrilled when his client just happened to show him a picture of his grandfather’s farm in central Illinois. “He wasn’t showing it to me because that’s what he envisioned for his family,” John Mattingly says, “but I knew that the Italianate Greek revival farm home was going to be my inspiration.”

The homeowners had purchased a lot in Denver’s Washington Park neighborhood, on the same street where they’d once lived years before. They had three children (and another one on the way) and wanted a home they could live in for years. The oversized lot lent itself to a farm-style house, as well as an interior shingle-style layout that allowed for a formal living room, a semi-formal dining room, a large cheery kitchen, a casual family room and even a secret cellar turned game room. The couple was starting anew—everything in the house would be selected specifically for this home.

A transitional space between the formal living room and the less formal kitchen, the dining room is used for both dinner parties and homework. The distressed oak table from Noir is surrounded by burlap-covered French provincial chairs. The wrought-iron chandelier is both elegant and rustic, as are the toned gelatin silver photographs by Roman Loranc from the Susan Spiritus Gallery. The cast aluminum birch vases by Michael Aram are from Ashley Campbell.

# Original







The Mattinglys oversaw every detail of the project, which, from construction to furniture installation, took just about 18 months. “The couple said they wanted a contemporary spin on the historic style,” says John Mattingly. While the red brick exterior doesn’t have the patina of age, for instance, the interior looks as if it could have been a remodel of an existing space rather than one-hundred percent new.

Because the common areas—living room, dining room and kitchen—open to each other, restraint was a key concept in the design. “We wanted to have fewer, more important details instead of too many details that compete,” John Mattingly says. Case in point: the exquisite 10-foot coffered ceiling in the formal living room pairs with simple painted walls and dark, long-planked heart pine floors. “To have introduced any more ornamentation into the room would have taken away from the classic ceiling,” he says. So they kept everything else understated and neutral.



(above, left) In the formal living room, the focal point is the Carrera marble mantle, topped by a mirrored TV. A custom leather sofa sits atop a low-pile neutral rug custom made by Coventry Carpets, and the silver-toned cast-resin stump table from Ashley Campbell adds sparkle. Classicism enters in the coffered ceiling. The black-and-white artwork, *Moonlight* by Bonny Lhotka, is from Walker Fine Art. (right) Anchored by the Duke Beardsley painting, *Come Along*, over the black slate fireplace, this “man cave” is all about comfort and masculinity with wool herring-bone roman shades and big flannel pillows on soft leather chairs.



(left) The small entry—an often neglected space—offers a preview of the classic style of the open main floor just beyond. A dark stained console picks up the colors in the rooms to follow, and baskets underneath store youngsters’ shoes.







The Calcutta Gold marble in the large kitchen island draws the color scheme of the first floor together. “Every color in the marble is somewhere in that first floor,” Regan Mattingly says. (The same principle holds true upstairs in the master bedroom and bath.) The area rugs provide subtle cues for organizing the individual spaces in the open main floor. (Rooms with more shag are less formal.) As do the fireplaces. (Marble, formal. Wood, more casual.)

To leave space for art in the house, which is full of windows, John Mattingly created anchor walls. “But the couple only had some vintage ski posters,” he says. So Regan Mattingly called in her pal and art consultant Ann Benson Reidy, who entered the design process when the house was nearly complete. Reidy started by educating the husband and wife about art. “I brought my computer and we looked at

(left) In the kitchen, white walls and handmade tiles from Waterworks pair with custom white cabinets. The custom island, topped with Calcutta Gold marble, is both a workspace and a casual eating area. The painting on the right wall, Miani Carnevale’s *Red Always Shows Up*, is from Walker Fine Art. (above) To either side of the kitchen is a dry-goods pantry and a “drink/bar” pantry, where guests and kids can help themselves to drinks or grab breakfast. The four-paneled Duke Beardsley painting, *Con Fuerza*, was commissioned for the space.



different artists so I could see what they both liked,” Reidy says. “My key piece of advice: buy what you love no matter where you ultimately decide to place it.”

The couple eventually visited the studio of local artist Duke Beardsley, whose Western themes speak to the simplicity of cowboy life. His aesthetic melded well with the home’s style. After selecting a cowboy painting, *Come Along*, that hangs in the study, the couple worked with Beardsley on a four-panel painting for the kitchen, called *Con Fuerza*.

The art enhances the rooms but never overshadows the classic details, which is the way it was meant to be. After all, art can be moved; timeless details stay put. And, presumably, so will the owners—who plan to enjoy their classic original for years to come.

(above) A cozy space above the foyer, the loft is a favorite hangout. The Calvin Klein sectional can be arranged into several configurations; the Feizy shag carpet is perfect for lounging; and the nature-print pillows, covered in Galbraith & Paul fabrics, add texture and whimsy. (opposite, top) This scaled-back master bedroom is mainly a sleep retreat with its sleigh bed and crisp linens (both from HW Home). The Pottery Barn chandelier is both elegant and lighthearted. The spare paintings, *Me Water 20* and *Me Water 21* by German artist Udo Nöger, are from Walker Fine Art. (opposite, far right column, from top) In the master bath, a Victoria and Albert claw-foot tub and Kohler antique hardware add timeless style. Neutrality reigns, even in the art over the tub (Brigan Gresh’s *Evenfall*, also from Walker Fine Art). The shower walls are 6-by-12-inch brick-style tiles laid in a subway pattern. (opposite, bottom) The eight-foot custom-built vanity is topped with a single seamless slab of Calcutta Gold marble, which repeats in the floor and shower walls. □

## Creating a Timeless Bath

Designer Regan Mattingly created a bathroom in this Washington Park house in Denver that will stand the test of time. With these tips, you can too.

- ❖ Always use some kind of natural stone. “The elegance of stone lasts forever,” says Mattingly, who loves marble and limestone.
- ❖ Choose hardware and accents in polished nickel—the most timeless of finishes, in Mattingly’s opinion.
- ❖ Work the walls. Instead of simply painting them, try wainscoting or a classic wallpaper like grasscloth or toile. (But keep it neutral—a timeless bath is never painted in outrageous colors.)
- ❖ Soak in splendor. There’s a reason people still buy claw foot tubs—they combine beauty with function. Find one that suits your style.
- ❖ Coordinate counters and floors. Whatever stone you select for your floor, choose also for your vanity counter and shower walls. The key is a pulled-together look, not a mishmash of finishes.



**DESIGN DETAILS**

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