



Classic Informality

A TRADITIONALLY DESIGNED NEW YORK HOME COMBINES FORMAL AND INFORMAL SPACES TO SUIT A BUSY FAMILY'S LIFESTYLE.

Writer **Greg Cook** Photographer **Michael Partenio** Field editor **Anna Moivik**



Family Function

An active family of five uses every room in this large estate home in Upstate New York. Classic architecture, exquisite details, and a combination of shared and private spaces make the homeowners and their three young boys feel right at home.

Initially, the homeowners wondered whether it would be feasible to put a house on the scenic but sloping 4-acre site. Architect Dan Contelmo accepted the challenge and turned it into an opportunity to open the home's lower level to abundant light and build a large elevated terrace at the back of the house.

As the plan progressed, a natural division of functions emerged: One side of the house is devoted to the adults, with the living room, library, and office on the main floor and the master suite above. On the other side, the boys' bedrooms, baths, and homework room sit above kitchen and adjacent breakfast/sitting room. Separate staircases serve the two sides.

The on-grade lower level offers an exercise room, playroom, home theater, and wine cellar. A walkway beneath the elevated terrace leads to the pool, and a pool house serves as the center of outdoor living.



ADD A DASH

Fresh touches of color in pillows, flowers, and artwork give the rich-tone room bright focal points.

BROWN ON WHITE The living room's chocolate-brown walls and draperies, *this photo*, provide a soft contrast to deep ceiling insets crafted from white-painted wood.

COLUMN MARCH The view across the front of the house toward the library at the end of the hall, *opposite*, emphasizes the sumptuous woodwork designed by architect Dan Contelmo.



FINE DINING The living room's sophisticated palette carries into the dining room, *opposite*; windows stretch up to capture views of the front grounds.

ART GLASS Circles of cut-crystal prisms embellish the dining room chandelier, *below*, seen here through an arch from the front entry.

KITCHEN CONNECTION Elegant paneled walls in the formal dining room, *left*, adjoin a butler's pantry that occupies the space between the dining room and kitchen.



Comfortable Balance

A decorating style that interior designer Sandra Oster calls understated and calming balances the architecture, which emphasizes meticulous detailing in the home's archways, moldings, and ceiling treatments for a formal look. "My goal was to make the home as livable as possible for the family," she says. "We have trim on some of the drapes and pillows, but it's not overdone. The colors are all earth tones—shades of creams and browns and rusts, soft greens, all easy to live with. The older boys' rooms are navy blue and cream, with blue and white in the youngest boy's room."

Functional fabrics stand up to tough use, too. In the pool house, for example, Oster suggested white couches,

which the homeowner thought impossible at first. To test the fabric, the two of them poured a red soft drink over a sample and left it there for several minutes. The fabric easily cleaned up, so they knew they could use it.

The designer and homeowners learned from each other throughout the decorating process. "They started out thinking they wanted a cream-color house," Oster says of the homeowners, "and although there are creams, the house is far more colorful, and they really like that." And, she says, "I learned on this job I couldn't deviate from my design aesthetic or get too crazy with fabrics or colors—and to always remember there are young children in the house."



ISLAND PARADISE User-friendly stone, *opposite top*, covers kitchen surfaces: Danby marble on the island and Absolute Black granite on countertops. Four drop-down fixtures illuminate the island.

CUSTOM BUILT-INS The kitchen benefits from custom built-ins, including cabinetry that wraps the range, *opposite bottom*.

INFORMAL FUNCTION White-painted beaded board, *this photo*, carries into the breakfast room ceiling from the kitchen, suiting the homeowners' informal lifestyle.



A MODERN FAMILY CLASSIC

ARCHITECT DAN CONTELMO CREATED A CLASSIC YET RELAXED LOOK FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE.

Q What architectural style drove your design?

A The architecture was influenced by Shingle style, which originated in old English country homes. It helped us create a classic look, but one that would not necessarily appear as if it had been there for a hundred years.

Q How did you plan spaces to suit the owners' lifestyle?

A The owners' main objective was to create a comfortable home that would accommodate both children and adults. The plan gives each child a bedroom and bath, with home offices, a retreat for adults, and areas for entertaining.

Q How do the built-ins make life easier in the home?

A Each was designed with a specific use in mind. In most cases they provide additional storage. I find that built-ins are the easiest way—other than the layout of the rooms—for owners to feel they have created a custom home.





Elegant Aesthetic

Inside and out, the house evinces attention to detail. Small rooflines on the front exterior provide a human scale, and the textures of shingles and stone all around add interest. At the back of the house, the sloping site accommodates three levels: a lower-level walk-out leading to beautifully manicured grounds and two levels above with multiple rooflines for visual interest. “The exterior style was meant to be classic in appearance but not too formal,” Contelmo says. “Anything that’s not stone is shingle. Because English styles inspired the architecture, stone is a good fit.”

POOL PARTY A beautifully appointed pool house devoted to indoor/outdoor fun, *right*, serves the backyard swimming pool.

SHINGLED RETREAT The screen porch, *opposite*, adjacent to the elevated terrace overlooking the backyard and pool, makes a beautiful transition space between indoors and out.

PRETTY PERCH The property’s natural slope was a challenge but allowed Contelmo to incorporate a large rear terrace, *above*, and gave him the opportunity to bring a lot of natural light into the rooms.



SLEEP CENTRAL The master bedroom, *below*, reflects the understated and sophisticated look of the public areas of the house.

BATHING BEAUTY The oval bathtub with an elegant custom wooden surround, *right*, sits below columned windows outfitted with privacy shades.



FINE FORM

A luxurious tub deserves a posh filler that fits in with feel of the master suite—as well as the spirit of the entire house. We think this two-hole, deck-mount mixer would be great in a formal bath.



From Czech & Speake's Edwardian Fittings line, this gorgeous mixer with a hand shower is available in chrome, platinum, platinum matte, and Durabronze™ finishes; prices start at about \$2,000. Go to czechandspeake.com.

Warm and Cozy

Gorgeous millwork, lavish arches, a wealth of custom built-ins, and wood floors warm the spaces throughout the house. "The ceiling heights outside each of the bedrooms were lowered so that you feel the space you are entering is special," Contelmo says.

The architect says he also wanted natural light to lighten and brighten both public and private areas of the house. In the master bath, for example, a bank of windows on the tub wall makes the space feel more spacious and airy. The shower next to the tub is fitted with a window as well, bringing in natural light to an otherwise dark space.

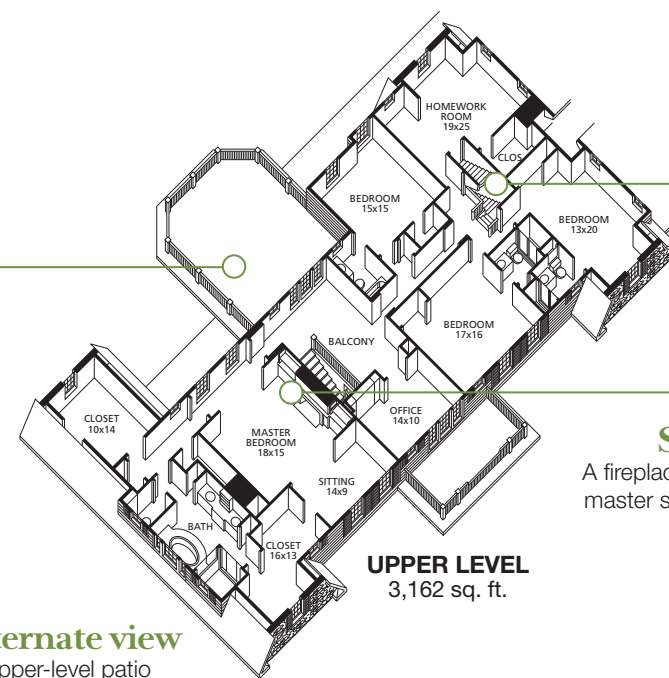
Architect **Dan Contelmo** Interior designer **Sandra Oster**
RESOURCES ON PAGE 98

The right balance

Architect Dan Contelmo and interior designer Sandra Oster created a traditional-style home that lives large but still feels warm and intimate.

Upstairs, downstairs

A second staircase gives kids and guests easy access to the kitchen and breakfast/sitting room below.



Alternate view

An upper-level patio above the great-room is an ideal spot to spend a quiet evening or watch over the backyard pool.

Sweet and secluded

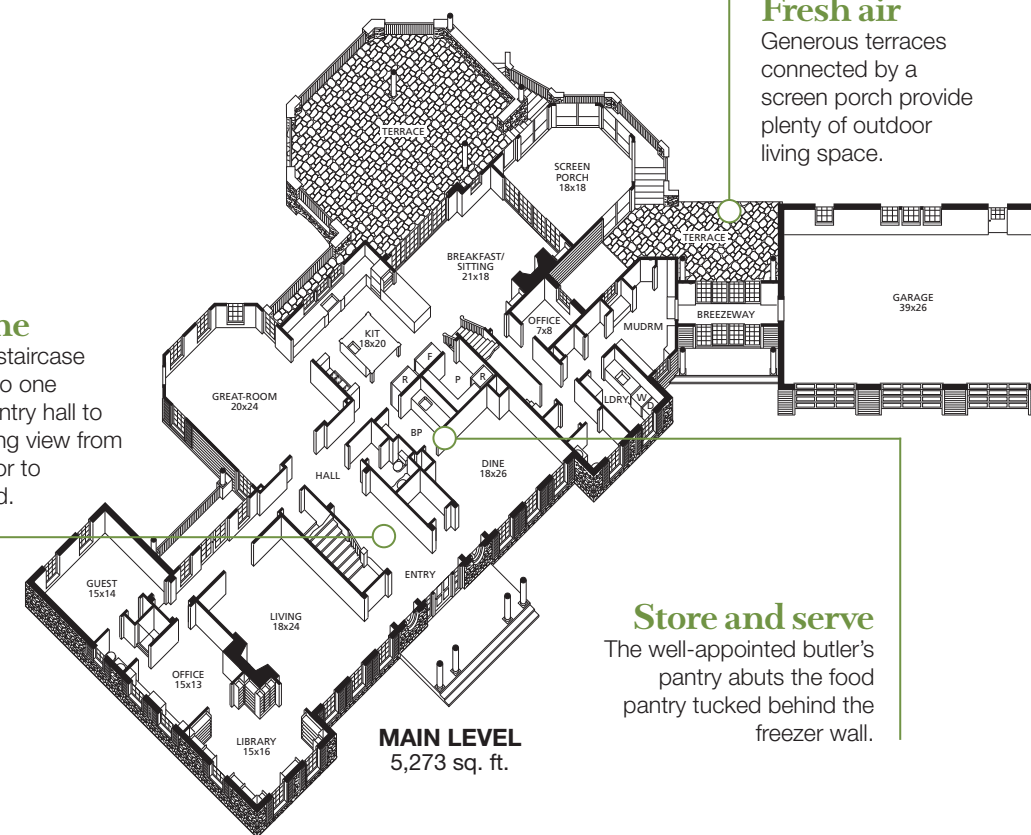
A fireplace and sitting room make the master suite feel like a private retreat.

Fresh air

Generous terraces connected by a screen porch provide plenty of outdoor living space.

Sight line

The central staircase was set off to one side in the entry hall to provide a long view from the front door to the backyard.



Store and serve

The well-appointed butler's pantry abuts the food pantry tucked behind the freezer wall.