

# Warming Trend

CLEVER SCALING AND THOUGHTFUL DESIGN MAKE A LARGE HOUSE IN DARIEN FEEL RELAXED AND WELCOMING.

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INTERIOR DESIGN / TINA ANASTASIA, MARK FINLAY INTERIORS  
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In this Darien residence built by Ryan Fletcher, a custom Lancaster sectional and a Bernhardt low table anchor the family room. Tactile fabrics in soft neutrals—pillows covered in Romo and Osborne & Little, CB2 boiled-wool ottomans, a striped herringbone carpet from Palace Rug—lend a warm, welcoming feel. A sheer fabric from Robert Allen filters in natural light.

It's a very deceiving house," builder Ryan Fletcher says of a two-and-a-half story, five-bedroom Darien residence designed by architect Robert Cardello and his project manager, David A. Lapierre. "It doesn't look very big—but it is." Conceived for an active couple in their 40s and their three young children, the cedar-shingle home was intended to be family-friendly yet enjoyable and sophisticated for adults, too. Not an unusual goal, except for one special request: an expansive and flat rear lawn, so that the husband, a hockey enthusiast who works in finance, could set up a temporary ice rink in the winter.

This meant that the home, which is situated on a slope 20 feet above the road, needed to be built relatively close to the street. "I didn't want it to be a huge mass that looms over the road," says Cardello. So he came up with the discreet design for a gambrel roof, which drops the roofline down to the first floor. "It gives it a friendly aesthetic," he says. Which is exactly what the homeowners wanted. "They didn't want an ostentatious box Colonial; they wanted more of a cape style," says Fletcher, who was brought onto the project by a mutual friend of the wife, a board member of a non-profit who works in educational technology. "It fits who they are as people."

A conventional layout unfolds indoors, with a double-height entry, main living areas on the first floor, bedrooms on the second and an open plan for the basement—for indoor hockey practice, of course. For the interiors, Fletcher brought on Tina Anastasia, who devised a plan for light-filled rooms done in a beachy palette at the request of the wife, a native of the Southeast. "I'll never get used to the long, dark winters," she says. "I wanted it to feel a little coastal, even if we're hitting a record number of snow days." Anastasia laid down warm grays and beiges, plus a range of soft blues in varying hues. There is "just a touch" of the beach influence, she explains. "It's implied—not too literal and not strict." The design team added stained wood to soften crisper painted pieces, such as in the kitchen, where a glossy white shiplap was selected for the ceiling and quartzite tops the stained-gray wood island. Soft gray wood continues on the round kitchen table and overhead on beams in the adjacent family room in a shade that plays nicely off the stones of the fire surround. Throughout, Fletcher treated white-oak flooring with an oil-based finish, lending it a natural luster.

The dining room continues the subtle palette with its L&M Custom Carpets wool rug and Four Hands dining chairs, which were reupholstered by Tudor House Furniture Co. The dark tones of the custom table from Mortise & Tenon in Los Angeles, the distressed-metal cabinet from Dovetail in Los Angeles and the Quoizel lighting are a nice counterbalance.



The butler's pantry features distressed cabinetry by Fletcher and a cool Phillip Jeffries linen wallcovering with silvery rivets that pick up the metal touches in the nearby dining room. The accessories are by Zodax.



A breezy spot for casual dining, the breakfast room features a Universal Furniture dining table with a Greystone finish and steel base paired with Zuo Modern chairs upholstered by Tudor House Furniture Co. in Romo fabric. The polished-nickel Regina Andrew pendant also appears in the kitchen.

The palette translated to relaxed furnishings and inviting spaces in monochromatic tones that help bring the feel of the interiors down to scale. In the family room, pale gray walls envelop the plush dark-gray sectional stacked with an array of pillows. Upstairs, cream and seafoam green soothe the master, where a photograph of crashing waves evokes the sounds of the shore.

While the residents wanted a designated dining room and a living room, they didn't want anything to feel off limits. To that end, Anastasia chose a colorful poppy wallcovering for the hall between the family room and the living room that feels like an invitation to enter. "It's an interesting, deep hallway, so it draws you in," she says. Quarter-sectionals in the living room offer less formal seating perfect for conversation.

More casual seating is offered in the kitchen, where Artistic Frame custom counter stools in Romo metallic faux leather pull up to the counter. Regina Andrew light fixtures add a sleek, contemporary finish to the mix of soft, stained or painted woods and the oiled floor.



Natural, organic texture in a guest room is present in the Serena & Lily bed with a woven frame, Bed Bath & Beyond linens and the woven-fiber Made Goods light fixture overhead, while the Resource Decor chair injects a dose of color. A pair of Four Hands bedside lamps top Mr. Brown nightstands.



The dining room exhibits another technique for friendly formality that diminishes the appearance of size. The clients wanted a large dining table, but they didn't want it to look imposing. A custom table with a splayed-metal base helped minimize its mass, and a stained-wood surface provided a softer sensibility. Dining chairs with cut-out backs, upholstered in velvet with nailhead detailing, "help break up the number of chairs," the designer says. Her continued layers of dark metal—a black metal sideboard, a geometric bronze pendant light—make an otherwise dressy table look "unique and comfortable."

With the family settled in, the wife reflects on the design and how they live in it. "I like that the home is livable but still beautiful," she says. She describes a typical Saturday morning making breakfast in the kitchen, with the kids playing at the counter or making pillow forts with the sofa cushions. At night, they love to do movie night on the big sectional. "There's enough room for everyone to have their own spot," she says. It might be a big house but, just as intended, it still feels very much like a home. ■

A Phillip Jeffries wallcovering wraps the powder room, where Visual Comfort polished-nickel sconces and an Uttermost mirror with a beaded frame add decorative contrast. The blue vase is from Sagebrook Home.