

New England HOME CT

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DREAM BIG

A family itching for more space imagines their forever home in Darien.

Text by ALYSSA BIRD | Photography by JANE BEILES

In the foyer, a blue Phillip Jeffries wallcovering, console table from The CEH, blue-and-white benches from Highland House, and a navy lantern from Mitzi all work in harmony with the door, which is painted Benjamin Moore Evening Dove. **FACING PAGE:** From the front door, guests look through the house into the great room and then the courtyard beyond.





It's quite a quandary when a couple adores their home but is completely maxed out on space. Having already added a wing to their Darien house, the parents of four decided that it was time to move on. However, when nothing on the market compared to their own residence, they realized that their best option would be building something tailored to their needs.



After one meeting with the father-and-son architect team of Jim and James Schettino, the couple felt confident they were in the right hands. "Jim offered so much wisdom, and his son, James, really understood how we wanted to live since he has a young family himself," explains the homeowner. "I even showed him the labeled linen closets in our old home so he could

ABOVE: The classic look of a center-hall colonial inspired the father-and-son architect team of Jim and James Schettino. **BELOW:** No rooms are off-limits to the couple's kids, so all fabrics, rugs, and surfaces were selected for their durability. **FACING PAGE:** The architects designed the floor plan to be more open than a traditional colonial, with a great room that contains the living and dining areas, which are separated by a library table.



see the level of organization I wanted to carry over into the new house. With four kids, it's crucial that there be a place for everything."

On a one-and-a-half-acre lot about a mile from the clients' previous residence, the Schettinos set out to erect a traditional 6,500-square-foot five-bedroom center-hall colonial. The interior floor plan, however, has a contemporary twist, as the main living spaces are divided into two large open rooms: one for the living and dining areas, and another for the kitchen, breakfast area, and family room. These two wings join at a ninety-degree angle, which allows both spaces to open onto the rear courtyard and pool area.

"This is a unique floor plan in that all the main living areas are located along the back of the house," explains James Schettino. "It's nice when those areas have a connection to nature, especially since outdoor living was very important to the clients." Indeed, a covered patio with a fireplace and a television was a must-have



ABOVE: Artwork by Kim Romero presides over the dining area, which features a custom table, Jessica Charles chairs upholstered in a Fabricut velvet, and a chandelier from Generation Lighting. **LEFT:** To designer Michelle Morgan Harrison's delight, the clients wanted to experiment with high-gloss color, so she paired a Schumacher wallpaper with Benjamin Moore Oxford Gray in the butler's pantry.

"Nothing is off-limits. We use every inch of this house. It's warm, inviting, and not too precious."

—THE HOMEOWNER



RIGHT: In the kitchen, Morgan Harrison customized The Urban Electric Co. light fixtures with Benjamin Moore Blue Heron to match the island. **BELOW:** The kitchen flows into the family room, where a linen-wrapped game table pairs with a window seat. **FACING PAGE:** Benjamin Moore Dusk to Dawn coordinates with a Schumacher wallpaper and a Lucite-and-glass desk in the wife's office.



“The office ceiling has a purple polka-dot paper, which most clients would have paired with white cabinetry, but I love the fact that she suggested lavender.”

—INTERIOR DESIGNER MICHELLE MORGAN HARRISON

for this couple, as it was a favorite spot in their previous home. A pool house featuring both a bath and a laundry room rounds out the expansive outdoor entertaining area.

To help bring the interiors to fruition, the clients hired designer Michelle Morgan Harrison at the recommendation of the Schettinos. “I had never worked with a designer before, which was a little intimidating,” says the homeowner, “but I knew we needed the help. I could tell right away that Michelle would give us something

clean, classic, comfortable, and sophisticated.”

It didn't take long for Morgan Harrison to tap into the wife's style. "It was clear she wanted to play with color, so we have periwinkle in the kitchen, a lovely blue-gray in the butler's pantry, and lavender in her office," says the designer. "The office ceiling has a purple polka-dot paper, which most clients would have paired with white cabinetry, but I love the fact that she suggested lavender."

Given that the clients have four children, the other major mandate was durability. "We selected practical materials, such as quartz countertops, porcelain tile, performance fabrics and rugs, and chrome versus polished nickel," says Morgan Harrison. As a result, the homeowner says that "nothing is off-limits. We use every inch of this house. It's warm, inviting, and not too precious." The best part? There's plenty of space for everyone.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.



Landscape designer Jennifer Anderson selected low boxwood hedges, hydrangeas, boxwood globes, a seasonal mix of Angelonia, and stepping-stones to "soften the transition between spaces," she explains. **LEFT:** The pool house is divided into two sections: one contains a bath and outdoor shower, while the other has a laundry room and storage area.



ARCHITECTURE: Jim Schettino, James Schettino, James Schettino Architects
INTERIOR DESIGN: Michelle Morgan Harrison, Morgan Harrison Home
BUILDER: Fox Hill Builders
LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Jennifer Anderson, Jennifer Anderson Design & Development