



The main level's predominantly white-painted walls (in Benjamin Moore Soft Chamois) meet warm white oak paneling in the living room (this photo). A similarly intentionally mismatched quality breaks up the expected symmetry of the colonial's exterior (opposite), with a conservatory from Town and Country Conservatories on the left and a cupola-topped garage on the right.

DEFINING character

Classic NANTUCKET-STYLE FEATURES that appear to be built-over time
GIVE A TURTLE LAKE HOME *a piece of the past* THAT'S PERFECTLY IMPERFECT.

BY SHAWN GILLIAM // PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSIE PREZA



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uilding a home that feels old is nothing new for the design team behind this Nantucket-style colonial on Turtle Lake in Shoreview. But the nuance of a look that's evolved through the years—with era-specific additions and tweaks—is far less common. “When you're building a new house, you usually make all of the spaces perfectly logical,” interior designer Marita Simmons says. “But this home has some character—and some quirks and imperfections.”

Those quirky qualities were exactly what the empty-nester owners were after for their home—for it to feel 200 years old but updated over time. The idea takes root in the front garden's dry-set walls. As landscape designer Scott Ritter notes, “The stone picks up the colors of the siding and shutters and brings them back down into the landscape.” But it deliberately does not match the more rust-colored stone on the home itself. “I think that gives it more of a colonial vibe,” Ritter says. “A lot of times, colonials were sort of handed down from generation to generation. And people of different generations would work on and add to the house.”



Rather than install recessed cans in the living room, the design team opted for a wrought-iron fixture from Currey and Company that spreads light on the ceiling. The TV sits on a new piece that looks like an old cupboard, designed and built by local furniture maker Erik Wyckoff. The owners' niece, an artist, painted the moody Mississippi Coast scene above the fireplace.

SERVING UP CHARACTER

In the dining room, new armchairs combine with cherished family furnishings, including side chairs Da Vinci Restoration in Edina reinforced and reupholstered. An antique cart, in the background, is used to move dishes to and from the kitchen and scullery. Rich green paint (Benjamin Moore Topsoil) covers the walls. “It’s a saturated, period-appropriate green,” interior designer Krysta Gibbons says.

“EVEN THOUGH EVERYTHING IS *very planned out*, IT FEELS SELECTED OVER TIME *and like it* CAME TOGETHER *in a way that* IS JUST HAPPENSTANCE.”

—MARITA SIMMONS, INTERIOR DESIGNER

That intentional mismatching applies to the architecture of the home, too, including the front exterior's lack of perfect symmetry. "The right side of the house off the front entry is different than the left side of the house," architectural designer Jeff Murphy says. "You see that a lot in some of the quirrier colonials, which we like. It's more interesting."

Similarly interesting surprises abound in smaller architectural elements, as well, including a diamond-shingle pattern in the siding above the front entry, a roof structure above the garage doors, and a salvaged cupola originally from a building at Macalester College that was found by the homeowners at Architectural Antiques. "[The husband] asked us, 'Do you think the cupola works scale-wise?'" Murphy says. "We checked, and it was perfect."

The cupola's patina was perfect, too. "They loved the fact that we were bringing in something that already had history," says architect T.J. Majdecki, who partnered with Murphy on the architecture. "That was one of the driving forces for the design—that it felt like it had been sitting on Turtle Lake for decades."

The idea also extends to the interior. "It feels very established," Simmons says. "And while [the owners] wanted charm and authenticity and



SPECIAL INGREDIENTS

A commercial hood and BlueStar range (left) combine with plenty of countertop space to accommodate cooking and serving buffet-style meals for as many as 40 guests. Soapstone on the backsplash and perimeter countertops gives way to Vermont Danby marble on the island; the marble's cold surface is ideal for rolling out dough, which is important for the wife, who loves to bake. Copper light fixtures and V-groove-paneled ceilings introduce subtle nautical nods.

PRACTICAL CHARM

A large bay window lets light into the mud-room breezeway (above), furnished with a double-back Windsor bench, an antique rug, and simple wood-dowel pegs for coats, hats, and scarves—perfect for when the homeowners entertain. "The pegs feel authentic versus flashy hardware," interior designer Marita Simmons says. Quartz countertops in the scullery (right) match the subtle pattern of the kitchen's marble.



"The house is right on the lake, so we wanted a good spot where we could fully enjoy that," the wife says of the back porch. That meant an outdoor fireplace and heaters so that the space would feel comfortable from spring to late fall. The wide mortar joints between fireplace stones pick up on a stonework detail from England's Cotswolds, one of the project's initial inspirations.



"THE OWNERS WERE ALL ABOUT THAT *indoor/outdoor experience*—A PLACE WHERE, ON NICE EVENINGS, THEY COULD GET OUTSIDE, *cook a meal, and have dinner.*"

—T.J. MAJDECKI, ARCHITECT

these happy accidents in the architecture, they also wanted a sense of grandeur. We lovingly refer to it as a Nantucket captain's home in that if this house were to be in Nantucket, it would have more prominence than many other homes."

But that doesn't mean grand spaces. "For the homeowners and guests alike, you're finding these spaces as you walk through the home," builder Amy Hendel says. "There's not just one big area and 'Here's the home,' but more of discovering rooms and details as you meander."

Compartmentalizing rooms with different wall finishes helps achieve that goal. While most rooms' walls are painted—many in different hues thanks to the wife's love of color—the living room is paneled in character-grade oak. "We thought, 'What are we going to do that's going to make it feel important and that's going to deviate from these other spaces?'" interior designer Krysta Gibbons says. "Paneling is atypical, especially in new construction. But that warm tone was the right answer from minute one."

The white oak floors are just a touch lighter. "We wanted to tell the story that the floors came first, the walls came later," Gibbons says. "It wouldn't have all come at once."

A similar idea takes shape in the scullery, which is saturated in color with Farrow and Ball Hague Blue on the cabinets and Benjamin Moore Gray Pinstripe on the walls. "It feels more ephemeral in nature, like what you'd see in an older home, with two colors that are somewhat monochromatic but not the same," Gibbons says. "That's because the entire room wouldn't have been

EASY ALFRESCO

Fully outfitted with retractable screens, the back porch opens wide to views of the lake without worry of bugs. The V-groove-paneled ceiling connects to the kitchen, as do the room's corner windows—seen just beyond the outdoor dining table—which provide a convenient pass-through for plates of food. After sunset, gas lanterns keep the space aglow.

done at once. Sometimes you'd have an oil paint and sometimes you'd have a milk paint, and the paint colors would vary not only in when they were applied and how they were absorbed but in how they'd change over time."

Cabinets embody an altogether different quirk in the main bath upstairs. "We wanted the vanities to feel like furniture," Simmons says. The "flaming" pattern in the mahogany veneer grain of the pieces is indeed furniture-like, as is the way the two pieces don't perfectly match.

The quirk factor of the vanities even went as far as placing the wife's vanity against a window. "It was something that, when you look at it on paper, you scratch your head and say, 'Is there a more balanced way we can do this?'" Majdecki says. "But she wanted to be as close to that window as possible. 'And if that vanity presses right into the window,' she said, 'That's 100 percent fine with me.'" ■



“CAN WE *perfect things* SO THAT THEY ALL *look the same*?
 YES. BUT HERE, WE WERE REVEALING *the story of how*
a home WOULD TRULY EVOLVE OVER TIME.”

—KRYSTA GIBBONS, INTERIOR DESIGNER



A window seat, walls painted Benjamin Moore Herbal Escape, and French colonial-style bamboo bed outfit one of the home's three guest rooms. It's already been put to use by the owners' son and daughter-in-law, who stayed there several months during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Their goal is to make every guest feel impeccably cared for and comfortable," Simmons says. "And that's reflected in that space."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The drop-down section of the guest bath vanity, flush with the windowsill, is an example of a "let's figure something out" quirk that architect T.J. Majdecki and the design team embraced. The beadboard, he says, has an early 20th-century vibe. // The space off the mudroom breezeway is "treated like a potting shed and boot room," Simmons says. "It's for when [the owner] comes in from gardening and takes off her gardening boots and where she might cut her flowers." // The homeowners, avid cyclists who travel on protected trails nearby, often ride to Taste of Scandinavia Bakery and Café in North Oaks for morning coffee. "Our primary mode of transportation if we're going to go to dinner or the grocery is bicycle first, car if necessary," the husband says. // In the main bath, the wife's vanity presses right up against the window, and the husband's includes a warming drawer for towels. That balance of elevated style and cozy character guided the design team. "Between the light fixtures and the blue on the wall and the furniture style of the vanities, it feels very much like captain's quarters," Simmons says.



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