

# MODERN



Georgian Colonial estates inspired this home's perfectly balanced exterior. It intentionally stands in contrast to the neighborhood's many low-slung, asymmetrical ranch homes.



# CLASSIC

A Georgian floor plan and Hollywood Regency detailing come together to create a new home with an old soul.

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The term “spec home” often brings to mind adjectives such as “builder grade,” “run-of-the-mill,” and “vanilla.” But interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare aims to have potential buyers think “spectacular” when she starts drawing up interiors for a yet-to-be-found owner. Certainly there was no holding back on finishes—or standing out from the crowd—when DeCesare, fellow interior designer Michelle Grams, and architect Matt Thomas embarked on a project together in Phoenix.

“The neighborhood is full of squat, asymmetrical ranches,” Thomas says. “We wanted to do something that would make a grander statement.” That sentiment produced a two-story home showcasing elements of the Georgian Colonial aesthetic, including abundant millwork and the continuous alignment of doors and windows.

Yet while the architecture is rooted in the past, the home is far from staid. Throughout, there are subtle—and not-so-subtle—updates to the vernacular, including a frequent play on scale. “We took the aligned door and window treatments found in Georgian homes and enlarged them everywhere we could, adding tons of glass to create a more modern connection between the exterior and interior,” Thomas says. “And we tried to keep the design one room deep to maximize light intake.”

To further manipulate scale, Thomas played with ceiling heights. Transition spaces were designed with deliberately low ceilings so that tall ones in spaces such as the living room and master suite could make more of an impact.

When up-for-anything clients purchased the home just as construction was wrapping up, DeCesare decided to take the interior detailing in a glam direction that would complement the home’s fine craftsmanship and also give the rooms a fresh spin. She walked that fine line by bringing in luxe details inspired by the Hollywood Regency movement (think geometric motifs plus ample brass and acrylic resin) and a jewel-tone color palette. Black steel windows, glossy white trim, and wide-plank oak floors—which were first stained an impossibly dark ebony finish and then cerused (whitewash applied with a wired brush) for a soft, weathered look—provide a timeless backdrop for the bold hues.

“We stayed classic with architectural elements like molding and paneling, and then shifted more modern as we got closer to things you actually touch, such as pillows and sofas,” DeCesare says. “The home’s many pops of colors like rose quartz and turquoise do a lot of the heavy lifting. They introduce a modern scheme that won’t soon tire and also take the edge off the architectural elements.” FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 122.





THIS PHOTO: Interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare went classic in the grand entryway with elegant millwork and a black-and-white marble checkerboard floor. OPPOSITE: High-gloss ebony dining room walls wow, but don't overpower, thanks to large openings—two spacious windows and two oversize doorway casings.







“Lots of glass  
amps up the  
home’s modern  
edge. Light  
pouring in from  
multiple  
directions is  
always more  
flattering.”

ARCHITECT MATT THOMAS



LEFT: Soaring 16-foot-tall ceilings in the living room create a sense of grandeur that DeCesare warmed up by using a wealth of rich fabrics on the furnishings (chenille on the sofa, velvet on the armchairs and sofa pillows, mohair on the chair pillows and barstools beyond). TOP: The home’s yin and yang between ceiling heights is most pronounced in the hallways that flank the entry. Here the ceilings intentionally drop to 8 feet so there’s more of an impact when guests step into adjoining spaces such as the living room. ABOVE: Throughout the home, DeCesare and architect Matt Thomas introduced fresh tweaks to classic Georgian architecture. A case in point is the office, where the ornate ceiling millwork—a hallmark of the vernacular—is painted the same color as the ceiling, walls, and trim. Traditionally, the detailing is showcased in a contrasting color; the monochromatic look creates a more modern, enveloping effect.







DeCesare went all-in with a Hollywood Regency vibe in the kitchen. Nods to the era include geometric detailing on the upper cabinets, contrasting black and white accents on the island, and a trio of acrylic-resin chandeliers.



## Q&A with Interior Designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare

The Phoenix-based designer shares her strategies for infusing color into a home and dishes on color trends.



**Q: Where do you find color inspiration?**

**A:** I look at a client's current home, images they pull, as well as something as simple as the colors they choose to wear—these things can all provide insights and serve as a jumping-off point. I think every room benefits from a

pop of color or whimsy. Sometimes you need to push clients to take the plunge—even if it's just a small one.

**Q: How do you help color-wary clients?**

**A:** We suggest adding color in a way that can be easily—and cost effectively—changed down the road. A purple throw pillow is simpler to remove than a purple sectional! Accessories and even paint colors are painless swaps. Things like tile, plumbing fixtures, and large-scale furniture—not so much.

**Q: What's your favorite way to introduce color?**

**A:** I am personally drawn to black and white. It's a timeless combo that can truly be paired with any other color. When I have my druthers, I'm all about a black-and-white backdrop layered with colorful rugs, artwork, and textiles such as pillows and upholstered ottomans.

**Q: Where do you see color trends heading?**

**A:** I think as a design community we are revisiting the jewel tones of magenta, hunter green, and navy. They pair so well with the neutral interiors that have been in vogue. Plus, they can go feminine or masculine and add drama without feeling unapproachable.

**Q: What color craze are you ready to give a rest?**

**A:** In the rush away from heavy browns, some have gone too far with the really cool gray tones. I see a lot of exteriors, and even interiors, painted in bluish whites and purplish grays. They just look cold and institutional. Picking the right gray or white is a challenge but worth taking the time to get right.

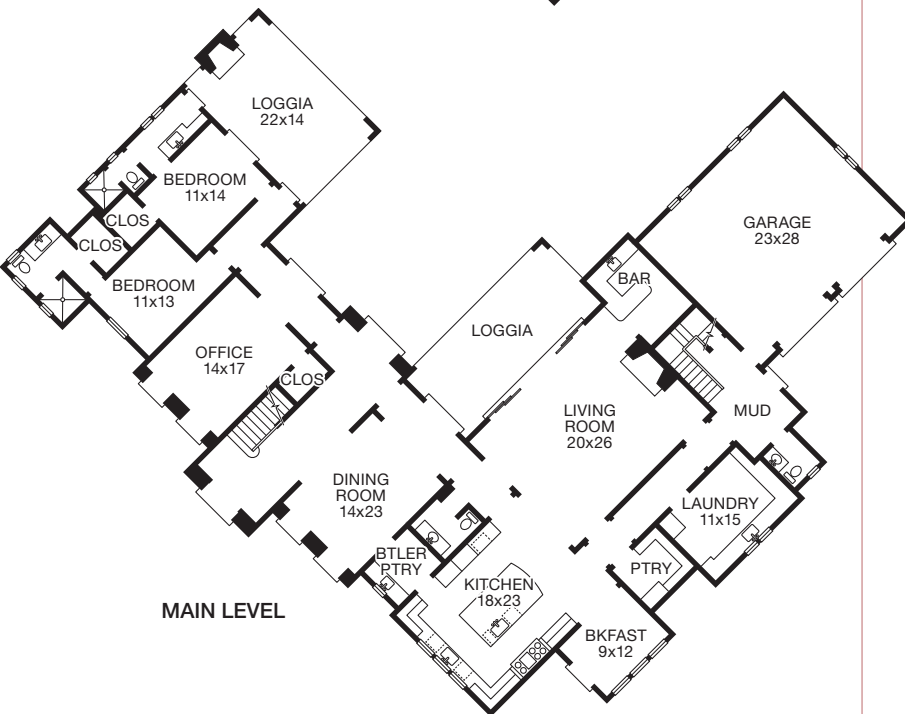
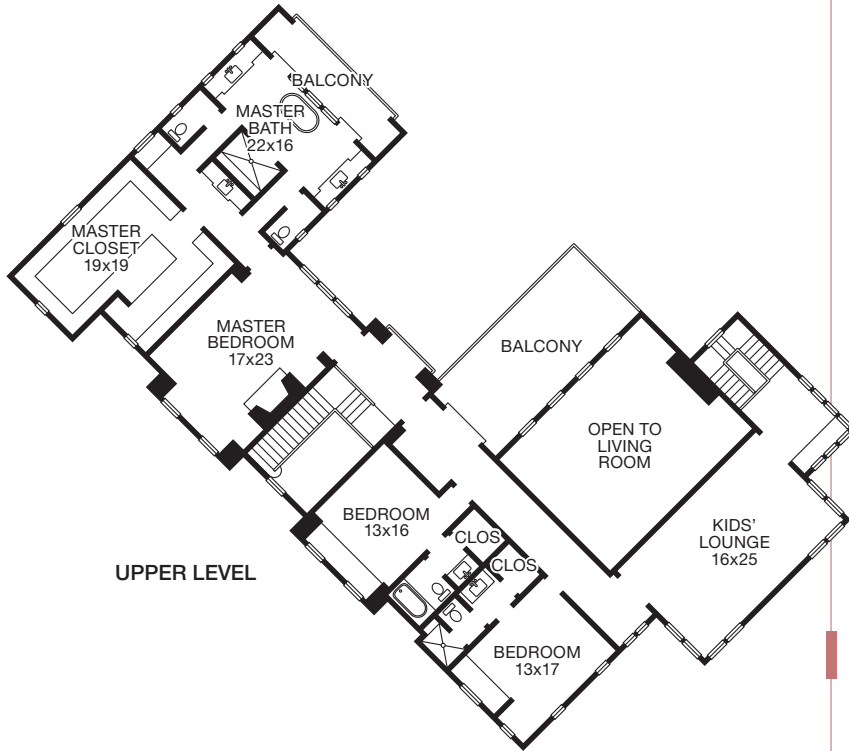


# Floor plan

TOTAL SQ. FT.: 6,971

BEDROOMS: 5

BATHROOMS: 5 full, 2 half



Floor plan © Matthew Thomas Architecture, LLC

An acrylic-resin canopy bed pulls off the tricky feat of both accentuating the master bedroom's high ceilings (12 feet tall with a tray embellishment) and not obscuring the view of the picturesque windows. Another smart move: The pink settee is exactly the depth of the recess, creating a window-seat effect.





