

# HOME & DESIGN

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Inspired by Napa Valley style, a design team evokes casual elegance in a meticulous Northwest DC renovation

# CALIFORNIA DREAMING

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A premium lot on a hillside in Northwest DC lured a businessman and his wife—despite the 1954 fixer-upper on the property. They intended a major redo to suit their lifestyle and family, which includes four children ranging in age from eight to 13.

The couple turned to Monarch Interior Design Group to guide them through the process. East Coast principal Charlene Kennerknecht and Arch Williams, the firm's West Coast counterpart, worked in close collaboration with Charlene's husband, Jim Kennerknecht of Monarch Building and Development, to help the homeowners fulfill their dreams.

"We asked Monarch to create a home that felt like an Aman hotel in Napa Valley," recalls the wife. "It was a lot to ask for, considering it was a Colonial-style house in a traditional neighborhood. But we really wanted to channel the rustic, casual feeling of Napa with an open, minimalist aesthetic, blurring the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces."

Though the five-bedroom, 5,177-square-foot home retained its basic footprint, the gut renovation added two more bedrooms and dispensed with compartmentalized spaces on the main floor. The former center hall became an airy colonnade punctuated by squared-off, 12-inch-thick cased openings that lead into the formal dining room on the left and the revamped kitchen and breakfast area on the right. The existing living room's fireplace was shifted to an adjacent wall to allow for a 15-foot-long NanaWall that seamlessly opens the space to the backyard. Meanwhile, a brand-new, 1,000-square-foot rear addition off the kitchen encompasses the family room and a wine bar, with a home theater and exercise room below.

Since the homeowners like to entertain, the design team not only expanded the home's overall footprint, they also installed an additional NanaWall in the family room with panels that stack to emphasize the open flow from the indoors out. Designed by Jim, the inviting backyard centers on a spacious flagstone terrace with a fire pit; an al fresco dining area nestles picturesquely on pea gravel beneath poplar trees nearby.

Throughout the home, Jim masterminded one-of-a-kind, artisanal elements. He replaced the traditional main stair with a floating one combining open oak treads and steel-reinforced stringers. And he broke up the angularity of the interior spaces with a dramatic, curved steel staircase forged on site that connects the family room to

Renovation & Landscape Design and Construction: **Jim Kennerknecht**, Monarch Building and Development, Vienna, Virginia. Interior Design: **Charlene Kennerknecht** and **Arch Williams**, Monarch Interior Design Group, Vienna, Virginia; Salt Lake City, Utah; Los Angeles, California. Kitchen Design: **Shawna Dillon**, ASID, NCIDQ, Snaidero DC Metro, Alexandria, Virginia.



Previous spread: An open floor plan unites the family room addition with the kitchen. Beyond the main stair (above), the living room (below) is visible on the right; it features a Gregorius Pineo coffee table, a Holland & Sherry rug and an Ecocrete fireplace wall. In the dining room (opposite), chairs covered in a Holly Hunt pattern surround an iron-and-wood Formations table.







In the family room (this page and opposite, top), a NanaWall opens out to the patio. Marcali chairs pull up to a Gregorius Pineo console with a hammered-metal base. An A. Rudin sectional, a contemporized wingback chair by Gregorius Pineo and a custom Paul Ferrante coffee table offer room to relax. Bordered by a curved feature wall (opposite, bottom), a curved steel staircase leads down to the lower-level home theater and gym; a dramatic fixture by Alison Berger hangs above.



the lower level. The curve of the stairway is echoed in the hourglass form of the feature wall that borders it. “Great houses take details and repeat them in different ways,” Jim observes. Glass panels in the feature wall replicate those in the NanaWall; they offer a glimpse of the wine bar beyond where both the ceiling treatment and crescent-shaped bar continue the curved motif.

A minimalist envelope ensures serene, almost monastic interiors that serve as a neutral canvas for furnishings and art. “The house is completely trim-less,” notes Jim, who oversaw its meticulous detailing. “There are no crown moldings or window casings; the baseboards are recessed into the walls.”

Honed-limestone floor tile, mottled and textural with layers of tonality, sounds a sleek, sophisticated tone. “It was a bold choice,” observes Charlene, noting that most clients request wood floors in a French oak finish. “We felt that limestone was perfect for this family, where no rooms are off-limits to their children. All our selections were made to withstand the test of time. Limestone is elegant, unique and indestructible.” In the colonnade, the tiles are laid in a herringbone pattern that defines the space. Meanwhile, the limestone’s organic quality and varied coloration beautifully offset the cerused-oak kitchen cabinetry and stained-oak grid of main and ancillary beams that crown the family room ceiling.

“The home’s palette, like the limestone, combines warm and cool grays,” Williams comments. “Sometimes people get caught up in a





monothematic color scheme. When you look at a forest, if all the trees were the same color, it would lose its interest and vibrancy.”

When it came to décor the designers channeled Napa Valley casual. “Our furniture choices were about creating a serene, neutral and textured look. We married contemporary lines with traditional forms to be true to both the East and West coasts,” recounts Charlene, who spent two days in California visiting design centers with Williams and the homeowners. After gauging what they liked, she and Williams tailored their clients’ preferences to achieve the perfect fit for their lifestyle. Every selection was premeditated and curated. For instance, a custom cocktail table in the family room was scaled down from a dining table design the clients liked, and a row of traditional lanterns in the colonnade was thoughtfully juxtaposed with a contemporary Alison Berger fixture above the curved staircase. It all works and flows together.

“We love every inch of our new home,” the wife enthuses. “When we walk in the door, we are always struck by the airiness and beauty of it all. It instantly makes us feel at peace.” ■

#### SOURCES OF NOTE

Kitchen Chairs & Stools, Dining Room Chair Fabric: [hollyhunt.com](http://hollyhunt.com). Windows: [lepagemillwork.com](http://lepagemillwork.com) through [twoperry.com](http://twoperry.com). Owners’ Bathroom Tub: [vandabaths.com](http://vandabaths.com) through [fergusonshowrooms.com](http://fergusonshowrooms.com). Hanging Chair in Daughter’s Room: [serenaandlily.com](http://serenaandlily.com). For a complete list of resources, see [homeanddesign.com](http://homeanddesign.com).



Clockwise from opposite, bottom: The sleek kitchen designed by Shawna Dillon of Snaidero DC Metro centers on an island with waterfall quartz countertops and stools by Holly Hunt. In the breakfast area, a Paul Ferrante chandelier hangs above a Keith Fritz dining table and Holly Hunt chairs. Seating abounds on the patio, where Country Casual Teak furniture gathers around a large fire pit. Both the family room and living room open to the patio via NanaWalls.





“Great houses take details and repeat them in different ways.”

—JIM KENNERKNECHT



Opposite, top to bottom: In the owners' tranquil bedroom, a custom chaise by O'Henry House invites repose; Conrad shades and Romo drapes fabricated by Jose Goncalves & Co. frame the window. An original Picasso hangs above a Victoria & Albert tub in the owners' bathroom. Above: A daughter's playful bedroom boasts a Serena & Lily hanging chair; Kathryn Ireland sheers and Romo pompom trim adorn the bunk bed.