

COMFORT & JOY

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A YOUNG COUPLE FINDS THEIR BLISS
(AT THE HOLIDAYS AND YEAR-ROUND) IN A
RENOVATED GEORGIAN THAT BLENDS
MODERN AND TRADITIONAL







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hristmas is always magical, but there's something extra special about the first big holiday in your first house. For Heather and Joe Kachinske, that milestone came in 2020—with memories they never imagined. The couple, along with their newborn son and 2-year-old daughter, had just moved into their Georgian-style home in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania. The pandemic kept guests away and canceled Santa's annual fire-truck ride with bundled-up kids, a tradition in the village that skirts Philadelphia. With a renovation still under way, the holiday decor was sparse. Heather managed to adorn a tree with a few ornaments from the boutique toy store she was closing. At just 5 feet tall, the tree was dwarfed by the great-room's 28-foot-high ceiling.

"It was a strange year for everyone," Heather says. "But we enjoyed a cozy Christmas with just the four of us."

As odd as the holiday felt, Heather knew many more Christmases were to come in the house as the couple—who are set to welcome their fourth child in the new year—put down roots. "My husband, in particular, never wants to move again," Heather says. "He wanted to buy a house where we would still be happy there in 30 years. We were thinking for the future."

The couple took ownership of the house in March 2020, confident that the leap from a one-bedroom condo in the city to a five-bedroom, nearly 9,000-square-foot house in the suburbs was the right move. "We got lucky," Heather says of the prepandemic timing. "Right after we bought the house, everybody else was trying to make the same move."

Both Southern transplants, Heather and Joe appreciated the home's classic architecture inside and out, including a covered balcony that reminded Heather of the porches that are part of Southern vernacular. "We've always gravitated toward a more modern design, but this house was just perfect," Heather says. "The challenge was we wanted it fresh and modern, but we didn't want it fighting against the traditional design."

Interior designer Glenna Stone led a renovation that eased the formality of the house, which had not been updated since it was built in 1993. "The house had a very different feel from

Exterior Symmetry and a grand entrance define the Georgian-style home. **Entry** Interior designer Glenna Stone preserved the inlay detailing when she darkened floors for modern contrast with the millwork. Mirrors lining the curved wall reflect light. **Previous pages** Flowing draperies soften the lines of the great-room's tall windows and trusses. Stone removed a band of wood above the French doors. "The higher band draws your eyes up; the lower band was dividing the room," she says.





what they were looking for stylistically,” Stone says. “It felt very formal, and they are a young family who wanted to use every room of their house.”

Stone retained most of the traditional elements, such as millwork, inlaid detailing on the entry floor, and arched doorways, windows, and built-ins. Splashes of bold color—something Heather adores—updates some of the classic features and also offsets rooms swathed in neutrals. “We wanted the home to be calm and restful, then have some areas where there was a little bit of a surprise,” Stone says.

The transformation began in the foyer, where curved double staircases in keeping with the symmetry of Georgian architecture led to a circular landing on the upper level. Stone had one of the staircases removed to minimize the formality and to extend the upstairs landing toward the front door—a move that eliminated a circuitous route to the balcony through bedrooms. “It was a really elegant solution to a strange layout problem,” Heather says. “It completely changed the flow of the second floor. The balcony is now our favorite place to entertain.”

The arched doorway in the foyer frames a view into the great-room and its exterior French doors topped with soaring windows. Wood trusses and beams visually warm and help

scale down the tall ceiling. Neutral fabrics and furnishings, including an oversize tufted leather ottoman with kick-up-your-feet ease, relax the room. “It’s a very large room, and we wanted it to feel cozy since it’s our main living space,” Heather says.

The dining room is one of Stone’s surprises. The space is moody and dramatic with deep charcoal paint on the fireplace millwork and a painterly emerald green silk wallcovering on upper walls. “It’s dramatic, but cozy and intimate,” Stone says. “The couple calls it their adult space because they can close it off to their kids with the pocket doors.”

Bold color continues in the kitchen, which received a total remodel. Slate blue cabinetry contrasts creamy white Giotto quartzite countertops with gray veining and a white tile backsplash. The combination creates high-contrast energy that’s light and bright. Light fixtures, as in other rooms, read more as sculptural art pieces and introduce contemporary flair.

Entry Heather and Joe Kachinske, pictured with their kids, festoon the banister with a magnolia-leaf garland. **Powder room** Gold highlights on the wallcovering, a brass sink console from Stone Forest, and a brass pendant transform the powder room into a jewel box. **Kitchen** Slate blue cabinetry punctuates the remodeled kitchen. Making gingerbread houses is part of the holiday fun in the breakfast area, where a Viper Chandelier by Regina Andrew adds verve.





I LOVE MIXING MODERN WITH TRADITIONAL. THERE'S AN ART TO DOING IT SUCCESSFULLY." —designer Glenna Stone



Dining room “It’s dramatic, but still cozy and intimate,” Stone says of the generously sized dining room. For modern flavor—and moodiness—she painted the fireplace’s traditional millwork dark charcoal and covered walls with Phillip Jeffries’ “Broad Strokes” silk wallcovering. The glass chandelier from Arteriors Home brings graceful curves to the center of the room, where modern chairs (“Andes” from The MT Company) sidle up to a custom table.







Office Stone ran with a jaunty peacock hue in the multitasking space designed for work, play, and relaxation, coating walls, trim, and beams on the coffered ceiling with it. The light finishes of the desk from Vanguard Furniture, game table, and chairs contrast the bold color. Stone designed the game table to give the couple an out-of-the-way place to work on jigsaw puzzles. "It's nice to be able to start a puzzle where toddler fingers can't get to it," Heather says. Well-loved leather chairs from Joe's first apartment inspired the cowhide ottoman.



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—designer Glenna Stone

Upstairs, Heather and Joe enjoy quiet time in their primary suite in a comfy sitting area near the fireplace. And there’s another surprise: A pass-through between the bedroom and bathroom was redesigned as a coffee bar that houses a sink, refrigerator, and dishwasher. “I love the functionality,” Heather says. “A lot of times as soon as I walk out my bedroom door, my kids need me, so I would never make it down to the kitchen.”

Heading into their fourth Christmas in the house, the couple savor the traditional-modern mix, much like their blend of old and new holiday traditions. Sausage balls and cake with Heather’s grandmother’s caramel icing are a given. But most of the season is about the kids—making cookies and adorning the tree that’s three times as tall as the one from that first year.

“I’m focused on making the holidays magical,” Heather says. “I know you only get that sweet spot for a few years.”

Interior design Glenna Stone

Primary suite The upholstered “Kelsey” bed from Vanguard Furniture and shapely accent chairs in the sitting area provide comfy relaxation. Heather’s first stop in the morning is the coffee bar in a pass-through between the bedroom and bath. In the bath, a linen cabinet Stone designed and custom vanity with espresso stain and metallic accents make artful and elegant statements. The freestanding tub (Signature Hardware’s “Ocala”) allows for soothing soaks to cap off busy days.

