

TRADITIONAL TWIST

By Tanya Zager Chisholm





Surrounded by mature trees on a quiet cul-de-sac in Bloomfield, this stunning French country-style home replaces a 1960s modified bi-level.
Photograph by James Haefner.

A sampling of the firm's previous work highlights their contemporary sensibility and broad design range. Photos by James Haefner.

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Interior design embodies a broad spectrum of styles, ranging from traditional—with its classic silhouettes, heavy ornamentation, and enclosed, segmented rooms—to contemporary style, defined by fluid, open floor plans and curated minimalism.

So, when Michelle LaVictor and Megan Runsat, of Bloomfield Hills-based *Young & Young Interiors*, a firm known for leaning more towards the contemporary side of the design spectrum, were approached by new clients to build and design a traditional, French country-style home, one might expect a bit of trepidation.

On the contrary, “We were thrilled,” Runsat enthuses. “We love a traditional aesthetic and were excited to have the opportunity to work on this project.”



Back-to-back sofas are a central design feature in this open, airy great room, helping to distinguish several zones. Photograph by James Haefner.

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ONE ROOM, MANY ROLES

“I would say that the great room was the hardest space to floorplan,” Runsat says. “It has numerous points of entry—dining room, foyer, and kitchen—and it serves many functions, such as a sitting room in front of the fireplace, a family room, and a bar.” In their previous home, the clients had low ceilings and several rooms closed off from one another. The challenge laid with zoning the great room. “We had to figure out how to make it feel like a big, open great room that serves many purposes and didn’t feel awkward.” Runsat elaborates.

Large windows help keep the room open and airy, while drapery helps maintain a traditional influence. “Customarily, window treatments are hidden in a modern home, whereas in this space the drapery is celebrated and on full display,” LaVictor says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils accessories and accent chair fabric; **Lighting Resource Studio** accessories; **CAI Design** accessories, accent chairs, and swivel chairs; **The Ghiordes Knot** area rugs; **Schumacher** sofa and pillow fabric; **Tennant & Associates** pillow fabric, ottoman and lounge chair upholstery; **Designer Furniture Services** lounge chair and ottoman reupholstery.



The firm often brings exterior features into its interior design. One example is a dual-sided, carved limestone fireplace. Photograph by James Haefner.

STONE, FABRIC, & FLAME

One Young & Young interior design trademark is incorporating exterior materials inside the home. The two-story limestone fireplace is one such example. “The look and feel of the house don’t stop at your front door,” Runsat says. “Our whole philosophy centers on how you live in your home and doesn’t separate exterior versus interior. It’s a whole study of how a client is going to feel physically and mentally no matter where they are. You shouldn’t feel as though you’re just walking through another doorway.”

Selecting art to adorn the two-story hearth took a bit of time, and was the last item sourced for this space. “We had a conversation with the client trying to decide what we should put on the fireplace,” LaVictor explains. “Should it be a mirror? Artwork? What should it be? The client mentioned that she likes tapestries, so when Megan saw work by A. Lusk Studios, her eyes lit up.” The designers commissioned the artist to customize the hand-painted, block-printed fabric with frayed edges to complement the space. “We wanted the piece to feel authentic with the rest of the house,” Runsat says. “So we worked with the artisan to customize the linen color and silver leaf. There were around three or four renditions before we settled on this one.”



Display cabinets and bookshelves house the client's accessory collection, family pictures, and television, seamlessly integrating within the overall design of the great room. Photograph by Way Up Media.

DISCERNING TASTE

To understand their client's aesthetic, the designers toured the homeowner's previous home in Birmingham. "It was a great way to understand what they like and the direction they wanted to go," LaVictor explains. It was also an opportunity for the designers to catalog the furniture to be incorporated into the new house. An ottoman was one of those items. "We reupholstered a number of things, but this blue ottoman aligned perfectly with the drapery, which was the starting point of the design for this room," LaVictor says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Tennant & Associates ottoman upholstery; **Designer Furniture Services** ottoman reupholstery.



Finished with the appeal of a built-in cabinet, this bar houses hidden appliances and is an ideal partition between the great room and the adjacent kitchen. Photograph by James Haefner.

SIP & SEPARATE

Another layer to the great room is a clever bar that also acts as a wall separating the kitchen. “The client didn’t want to have a bar in their family room all the time, so we designed it with pocket doors,” Runsat says. “This way it’s appealing when they’re entertaining and seamlessly blends into the background when its closed.”

The piece, which is visible on both sides, needed to blend with the adjacent kitchen. Lighting in the upper cabinets was planned to not only illuminate the onyx accessories, but to offer another layer of lighting from the great room into the kitchen. “This is such a tall, massive piece, and the windowless kitchen is in the middle of the house, so we were trying to bring in as much light as possible,” LaVictor says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Schumacher and Tennant & Associates pillow fabric.



Crafted with a baker in mind, the designers created this kitchen with double islands so that the client has the ease and access to whip up dozens of cookies. Photograph by James Haefner.

PREPARED TO PERFECTION

Impeccable design rarely shouts in a space. Rather, it's the result of careful planning and preparation—ingredients essential to a successful space. The kitchen design began with a homeowner request that took the team by surprise. “The first thing that the client said was that she wanted a navy-blue kitchen and gave us a page she tore from a magazine,” LaVictor says. “That was a first for me.” While navy blue may not be a customary request in contemporary design, the team created a beautiful, balanced space that includes mixed metal finishes, fine architectural details, and most importantly, function.

The ceiling design required several meetings with the architect to get just right. “The ceiling is lower here because there are bedrooms above, so we don't have a big, lofty space as we do in the adjacent great room,” LaVictor explains. “So, we wanted to get the beam details in without sacrificing the feeling of the space.” This additional planning included beam placement in line with wall panels and cabinetry, as well as alignment with the island pendant lighting. “And we made sure the beams line up with the windows across the room, along with the multiple doorways coming in—all those things factor into how you incorporate all those details,” LaVictor explains.



Located off the kitchen, the pantry has a desk for the homeowner to write recipes and file them away. Photograph by Way Up Media.

ORGANIZATION STATION

LaVictor explains that hidden pocket doors were installed in the pantry for those occasions the homeowner wants to “just stash things in there, or when daily life gets a little messy at her workstation.” Other design features include lots of storage and lovely silver and brass woven metal cabinet doors.



The drapery fabric served as design inspiration for this formal dining room with subtle hints of sparkle and shine helping to distribute light throughout the space. Photograph by James Haefner.

LIVED-IN LUXURY

One of the guiding principles for the house was to have a sense of lived-in luxury. “The client didn’t want to live in a pristine, perfect environment,” LaVictor says. “She didn’t want everything to look brand new.” The solution was to select pieces with a softer finish like the brass chandelier and hand-scraped wood floors. “The space has a little bit of glam and shine, while still being casual and feels like it has some age to it, which is what our client wanted,” Runsat says.

Herringbone-patterned flooring blends with the rest of the home but offers visual interest to make the space feel special. Another feature is the coved ceiling. “Traditionally, one might wallpaper the ceiling in a space like this,” LaVictor says. “But we’ve tweaked that direction and added crown molding which plays with light and shadows in the room.”

AVAILABLE AT MDC: CAI Designs dining chairs and accessories; TRA Art Group artwork; Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils host and side chair upholstery; Designer Furniture Services host and dining chair upholstery.



This elegant hallway, with its geometric millwork, sets the tone and pattern for the first floor. Photograph by James Haefner.

ELEGANT EQUATION

“This hallway is at the heart of the home,” Runsat says. Because the space acts as a hub to several different areas on the first floor, the designers, along with Chris Harrington, senior associate at *Young & Young Architects*, took great care to map out a gridline for the paneling. “Notice where the crown molding meets the ceiling; there’s a dark shadow line—that’s where all of the HVAC connects through the house,” Runsat explains. This discreet detail keeps air flowing throughout the home without the distraction of large air registers.

The hallway lighting also required special attention. “In a contemporary home, the hall ceilings are higher, so with this traditional design, we needed the right scale, and the lanterns couldn’t hang lower than 8 feet,” LaVictor explains.



Storing everything from coats to cookies, this mudroom is built to conceal life's little extras. Photograph by James Haefner.

MULTI-FUNCTION MUDROOM

Located off the garage and adjacent to the pantry, this mudroom packs a lot of functionality into a small space. Flanking either side of a quartzite bench, an integrated refrigerator/freezer stores cookies and a tall cabinet on the other side holds outerwear. The porcelain mudroom floor with its pitted and tumbled finish looks like traditional travertine and “is absolutely one of my favorite things in the house,” LaVictor says.



With verdant garden views and soft tones, this primary suite offers a tranquil sanctuary. Photograph by Way Up Media.

TIMELESS & TRANQUIL

The primary bedroom, situated on the main level, draws design influences from other areas of the home. Walnut bedside tables mirror the finish of the flooring and other woodwork, while hints of blue seen in the drapery and bedding are a nod to the kitchen and mudroom. The designers took a traditional approach with the fabric by applying it to the drapery, accent pillows, and bedding. To add a bit of detail to the ceiling, LaVictor used cozy tongue-and-groove paneling. “We like that it casts an extra shadow line—a finishing touch, if you will,” she says. “It adds texture and sheen that drywall lacks. It also enhances the way light moves around the space.”

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils bedding and window treatments; **The Ghiordes Knot** carpeting; **CAI Designs** chair; **Tennant & Associates** ottoman fabric.



The mosaic tile in the primary shower is easy to care for and sets the design tone for this space. Photograph by James Haefner.



This primary bathroom has all the glamour of high-maintenance materials without the upkeep. Photograph by James Haefner.

HIGH STYLE, LOW MAINTENANCE

The stone and tile dictated the design direction in the primary bathroom. “The client wanted a shower that was zero maintenance,” Runsat says. “The challenge was to find a creative way to bring in the natural, traditional feel of marble without putting it in locations where it would require maintenance.” This principle also applied to other elements, including the counter, the backsplash stone that wraps around the base of the vanity towers, and the diamond-patterned mosaic flooring with radiant heating.

The designers selected a refined, traditional vanity with dual towers for storage. “Outlets are placed inside the towers, so they have room for their toothbrushes and other things to be plugged in,” LaVictor explains. “We also hid some switches in there, adding function without distracting from the overall design.” The team also sneaked in a nontraditional item. “A lighted mirror is typically a contemporary item, but Michelle did it in a way that fits perfectly in this traditional home,” Runsat says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: City Lights Detroit sconces.



A handsome antique chest was converted into a powder room vanity and hand-painted walls give the space a luxurious feel.
Photograph by James Haefner.

ANTIQUE ADDITION

During construction, the homeowner approached the designers with a request to incorporate a large antique chest she had fallen in love with. The team found the perfect place for it in the powder room, repurposing it into a handsome vanity with a shell-pattern sink and faucet. “This piece has some of the most traditional elements that we brought into the house,” LaVictor says.

The designers say that finding the right wallcovering to blend with the onyx vanity countertop and backsplash was another challenge. Instead of using wallpaper, they hired an artist to hand-paint the walls. This allowed the artist to custom stencil a pearlescent, metallic finish over a complementary base, creating a sophisticated backdrop.



With an executive aesthetic, this masculine home office makes remote work easy and comfortable. Photograph by James Haefner.

C-SUITE & BEYOND

The criteria for this home office were threefold: functional longevity, plentiful light, and supportive comfort. “It was important that the space be functional now and into the homeowner’s retirement years,” Runsat explains. “We met all his storage and filing needs, which will remain useful for everyday life.” Plentiful light was also crucial, so the office sits at the front of the house, offering a large window and several layers of artificial lighting. Finally, a comfortable desk chair was a must. “We reupholstered a chair from the client’s previous office in a classic, updated chevron velvet and added a new, state-of-the-art office chair with cappuccino upholstery and a graphite base,” Runsat says.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: CAI Designs side table and ottoman; **Kravet/Lee Jofa/Brunschwig & Fils** desk chair upholstery; **Tennant & Associates** chair upholstery; **Designer Furniture Services** chair reupholstery; **The Ghiordes Knot** rug.



The ideal setting for a morning swim, this stunning lap pool was at the top of the must-have list for the homeowner. It's a huge hit with the grandkids too! Photograph by James Haefner.

THE PERFECT LAP

“The pool was a must for this project,” Runsat reveals. The homeowner is an avid swimmer, pushing an indoor pool to the top of the priority list. The designers carried several key elements throughout the home to create a cohesive feel. This includes stucco walls that are similar to the exterior finish, while the mudroom’s travertine-style porcelain extends to the pool floor. Additionally, the wood beams in the great room stretch into the design of the indoor pool area. “Because of the humidity, the beams are not as detailed as those in the great room, but they’re equally gorgeous,” Runsat explains.

The designers joke that if anyone were to visit on any given day, the pristine pool pictured would be a collection of kids’ toys and massive floating duckies. “The grandkids love it,” LaVictor says. “There have been times when we’ve called and heard the kids splashing in the pool, only for our client to say she’s swimming and will call us back in half an hour.”



Filled with visual and tactile texture, the three-story staircase is a balance of traditional and contemporary design. Photograph by James Haefner.

ARCHITECTURAL ASCENT

When planning this staircase, the designers say the original idea skewed a bit too far to the contemporary side of the spectrum. “The first model was an open-riser stairway, which wouldn’t fit this house,” Runsat says. To bring the design back in line with a traditional aesthetic, they softened hard angles and brought in more curves. “I found an excellent inspiration image that had spindles with a big loop pattern, so together with Michelle and Chris, we searched through catalogs and websites looking for a spindle or a picket that pleased all three of us,” Runsat explains. “Something that didn’t feel too contemporary or traditional, that had some fun to it.”

A bouclé stair runner has raised knots that the designers say reference the baluster knuckles, tying together the design elements. “We try to find similarities between the materials and designs, creating little ‘easter eggs’ that you may not notice at first glance, but you appreciate the texture and overall design,” Runsat says.



Part office, part sanctuary, the upstairs library offers a private space for the lady of the house. Photograph by Way Up Media.

MANAGEMENT FROM THE TOP DOWN

Perched at the top of the stairs is a lovely feminine library for the lady of the house. “She needed a space where she could sit and read or watch television,” LaVictor explains. “She also manages the home primarily from this space.” The designers decorated the room in soft blues—the client’s favorite color—and filled it with comfortable furniture, including swivel chairs that rotate to face the television. Below the TV is a desk for home management tasks. The team also created a dedicated area to hold all her needlework materials. “In her previous home, she had boxes laying out, so she wanted a place to put everything to avoid clutter,” LaVictor explains. “Now, there’s a nice closet that holds everything she needs in one space.”

AVAILABLE AT MDC: The Ghiordes Knot area rug; CAI Designs ottoman and side table.



Traditional board-and-batten millwork elevates this guest bedroom, while artwork and accessories add visual layers.
Photograph by Way Up Media.

RETURN TO TRADITION

“This room basically started as a drywall box,” Runsat explains. Eager to flex those classic design muscles, LaVictor says, “Megan was super excited because we haven’t done a traditional project in a long time, so she couldn’t wait to do a board-and-batten wall.”

It’s important not to confuse classic, traditional design with maximalism, which is very popular right now. “That’s another principal philosophy with Young & Young,” LaVictor says. “We don’t do trendy. It must be timeless. We’re not designing for the moment. Clients want the house to be beautiful 20, 25, 30 years from now.”

AVAILABLE AT MDC: CAI Designs nightstands.



An impeccable complement to the guest bedroom, this bathroom blends classic elements with a clean, updated feel. Photograph by Way Up Media.

THREE GENERATIONS AGREE

The en suite guest bathroom blends traditional features, such as the floral-print wallcovering and mirror, with contemporary lighting fixtures, a new vanity, and octagonal tile flooring. When asked how the designers determine whether something is timeless, Runsat explains, “There were several different generations involved with the planning of this design, including the client. So when we settled upon something that we all liked, we were assured that we were on the right path.” LaVictor agrees: “If we can find commonality and we all agree that it looks timeless, that’s a true testament that we’re doing the right thing for this house and the client.”



Soft French blue tones, calming neutrals, and magnolia blossom wallcovering make for a lovely guest bedroom. Photograph by Way Up Media.

WALL-TO-WALL WALLCOVERING

According to the designers, the client really loves wallcoverings. “She was so excited about this wallpaper, and it’s a space with a crib for her grandbaby,” LaVictor says. Light fixtures and table lamps add a hint of sparkle, and nightstands with a weathered French-wax finish parallel similar elements in the upstairs library. “It’s a very timeless, functional space,” Runsat observes.



Perfect for sleepovers at Grandma and Grandpa's house, this cozy bunkroom features dedicated lighting ideal for bedtime reading.
Photograph by James Haefner.

BUNKROOM BEDLEM

This space proved to be a bit arduous for the designers. “We redesigned these bunk beds at least 50 times to try to fit them in,” Runsat says. One obstructing factor was the window. “The original request included a queen bed, but there just wasn’t enough room without blocking the window,” LaVictor explains. A central staircase with a small platform at the top is safer and easier to climb than a standard ladder. “I wanted a slide, but everyone shot me down,” Runsat jokes. Domed sconces (no sharp edges to bump little heads) illuminate each of the beds and neutral shiplap adds visual texture to the space.

AVAILABLE AT MDC: Pindler and **Tennant & Associates** Roman shade fabric; **Alexandra June** accent pillows.



Delightful dragonflies and low-maintenance features define this children's bathroom. Photograph by James Haefner.

LITTLE DETAILS

As with many spaces in this home, the design began with the wallcovering. “Before the bunkbeds were even designed, we found this dragonfly wallcovering,” LaVictor says. Designed with children in mind, the bathroom features thoughtful details like chair-rail molding for safe gripping and faucets tailored for little hands. They also prioritized maintenance. “It’s a kid’s bath, so it needed to be easy to clean and maintain, so we ran the tile around the bathroom,” Runsat explains. “It actually extends into the shower and tub area and acts as a niche for shampoo bottles.”



A view of the indoor pool and the back of the house, along with an immaculate tiered terrace garden. Photograph by James Haefner.

THE VERDICT

The homeowners said they wanted a comfortable, relaxed environment to accommodate visiting family, as well as a place to enjoy swimming, fitness, golf in their simulation room, and entertaining. When asked about their favorite space, they said: “We love the great room. It’s bright, airy, and relaxing. No matter the season, it’s a wonderful place to gather. We look out the window at our beautiful back yard in the summer, and in the winter, it’s cozy around the fireplace.”

The homeowners’ final verdict: “We can do everything we love in this home.” From relaxing, exercising, and entertaining to swimming with the grandkids, this home has it all. The team at *Young & Young Interiors* remained true to its heritage, creating a stunning home with large windows, layers of light, a cohesive color palette, and fine architectural details—with a traditional twist.

*“The seamless flow of a building’s character
from the exterior to the interior is a true testament
to the collaboration between the architect and designers.
Our ‘One Thought Philosophy’ creates a level of harmony
that can be achieved only when the architects’ and
designers’ visions are united to become
one and the same.”*

*— Todd Young,
Principal Architect at Young & Young Architects*