

# PORTFOLIO



No detail left unconsidered, Michele Plachter dressed classic drapery panels with a fun hula fringe from Schumacher.

Photo: Andrea Cipriani Mecchi



# EXPECT THE Unexpected

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A NEW SUBURBAN HOME IS FULL OF SURPRISES

When guests walk into this Haddonfield, N.J. home, they're caught a little off guard. "It looks like a Colonial from outside," says designer Michele Plachter of Philadelphia-based Michele Plachter Design. "Inside, though, we pushed the interior elements to the next level. It's really unexpected."

The unique aspects of this home become apparent in the entry, where traditional Colonial floor plans usually involve a

living room on one side and dining room on the other. Instead, the rooms off this foyer are offices for husband and wife. "We had the golden opportunity to build from the ground up and made thoughtful decisions along the way." One of those deft decisions was the placement of the offices, which can be converted to living and dining spaces for resale.

The husband, a young tech executive, wanted his office to be



“All the materials were built for an active family. Nothing is too precious and yet the home is incredibly elegant and comfortable.” — Michele Plachter

different, but still wanted it to feel masculine. Michele created that atmosphere with black walls and armchairs upholstered in plum fabric for a rich pop of color. The showstopper, though, is the Lindsay Cowles wallpaper overhead, a bold black-and-white graphic that plays off the gravitas of the solid tones in the space.

The wife’s office also features Lindsay Cowles textiles: the

(Opposite page then clockwise) Yves pendants from The Urban Electric Co. are positioned for maximum impact but minimal sight obstruction. The classic exterior blends with others in the neighborhood; Armchairs and benches surround the custom, six-foot-square dining table; A Lucite desk from Interlude Home floats in the room; The art over the fireplace is actually a smart TV that displays artwork when not in use. A Lindsey Adelman light fixture adds drama to the front hall which features wainscoting designed by Plachter.



(Top) Green throw pillows “are a way to bring the outdoors in.” Michele used Crypton fabrics in this home for durability.

(Above) The master bedroom and the sitting area share a double-sided fireplace. The art (including on the smart TV over the fireplace) was curated to complement the space.

(Center) Elegant pendants from Hammerton Lighting hang in the master bedroom. Above side tables that have a modern rustic feel.

wallpaper in an alcove behind the desk and the sofa fabric feature the same abstract expressionist pattern. “I’m not usually matchy-matchy,” Michele explains, “but in this case we thought it was fun.”

At the back of the residence, an open floor plan encompasses a family room, dining area and kitchen. It’s an expansive space, but warm tones and clearly delineated areas ensure coziness. The palette in the family room and eating area consists primarily of taupe and gray, for a refined look with no pretense. “We wanted bright, sophisticated spaces without formality,” notes Michele.

The kitchen strikes a deeper tone, furnished with soft black cabinetry. The custom range hood – stainless steel with black accents – is a focal point. The wet bar, with its black backsplash tile, takes the theme a step further. “I loved the idea of layering blacks and different textures,” says Michele.



The designer went lighter in the master suite. “We really wanted a place of retreat,” she says. The room is a soothing haven, its pure white bed resting on a foundation of white carpet. Throw pillows in soft tones break up the expanse of white. The adjoining sitting room also features a calm palette, with one exception. “The sectional with the tie-dye fabric is the statement in the room,” says Michele, its colors nod to, but don’t imitate, the throw pillows. “We strive to connect one room to another in some way,” adds the designer. “The colors and textures are connected, but not matching.”

Connection without imitation is a hallmark of this home and this two-kid, two-dog family. “They are a very casual, relaxed type of family,” explains Plachter. “They’re stylish but not stuffy. They wanted a place where kids could come and feel they could relax with no sense of formality.”

(Top) The master bathroom’s custom floating vanities help to show off the tile.

(Above) The gray tones of the Janus et Cie sectional sofa on the backyard patio mimic those found in the great room. An assortment of throw pillows featuring bold patterns, interesting textures and bright colors tops off the neutral palette.