THE NEW AMERICAN HOME

MODERNIZES TUSCAN STYLE FOR TODAY’S HOMEBUYER

BY KAREN LEBLANC

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BUILDER: LEGACY CUSTOM BUILT HOMES

DESIGN: KATE CLARKE, HOMES REIMAGINED

A floating, glass-paneled staircase by Heartland Stairways provides a niche for a wine tasting room next to the foyer.
The dining room features a live edge table by Porters.

The staircase was photographed before the glass safety rail was installed.
From the dining room, a pass-through opens up views into the kitchen framed by credenza-style cabinetry facing the dining room and shaker-style white cabinetry on the kitchen side, all by Executive Cabinetry. The great room features herringbone and chevron patterns that play off the custom-designed front doors by Simpson Door Company.
Central Florida's geographic trade-off — year-round outdoor-worthy weather in lieu of topography — has a few anomalies, including the homesite of The New American Home 2018 (TNAH). Located in Bella Collina, the 6,662-square-foot home sits on a ridge overlooking Lake Apopka with sweeping vistas of rolling terrain that melt into the horizon.

“Bella Collina is one of the only communities in Central Florida where you have that kind of topography,” says John Kolb, executive vice president of Legacy Custom Built Homes. John and his team designed the show home for the National Association of Homebuilders’ International Builders’ Show to take advantage of dramatic views from all vantage points. “It’s a very emotional experience from the moment you enter the home,” he adds.

In the quiet town of Monteverde, about 20 minutes from downtown Orlando, Bella Collina’s Tuscan architecture and vineyard-esque landscape emulate an Italian hillside village. The hip $3.975 million newcomer introduces an updated, streamlined interpretation of Tuscan architecture to this country club community. “We updated the Tuscan look by cleaning up the lines to create today’s transitional style, mixing in modern elements while preserving the community’s architectural integrity,” John says.

Chiseled face stone and flat monument stone clad the façade with square openings and large expanses of glass accented with natural wood soffits. Double garages, connected by chiseled stone pavers, bookend the home, each with its own refrigerator, sink, work area and air-conditioned storage room that doubles as a safe room. The left-hand garage has a dog wash and opens to both sides to pass through. Hidden garage tracks encased in drywall keep mechanics out of sight, a recurring detail throughout the living spaces.

Interior designer Kate Clarke skillfully carries exterior materials inside to create a signature style expressed in colors, furnishings and architectural details. “I believe that this transitional feel is the next 10 years in the building market. The style is warm with an edge so it feels very comfortable, like home without being intimidating,” says Kate, president of Homes Reimagined.

(Above): The wine room is tucked under the staircase and features Thermador wine refrigerators. “In the original plan, the space was open to the foyer but I added a wall to create the bar area as a practical alternative to a wine cellar,” Kate notes.

(Opposite): The upstairs loft features a lighting installation resembling floating stars, two homework areas and a large screen TV.
In the great room, Kate echoes the exterior stone on the fireplace surround with LED backlit floating shelves of walnut wood. A grid of rectangular panels form an expanse of dropped tray ceiling that extends to the dining room. Herringbone and chevron patterns on the rugs and furnishings play off the front doors Kate designed working with Simpson Door Company. “The front doors bring in the herringbone design,” says Kate, who amplifies the pattern on the foyer floor with a herringbone inlay in an X design across 8-inch by 6-foot wood plank floor tiles by Emser Tile. A cluster of nine pendant lights from Progress Lighting, which provided all the home’s lighting, coalesce on a single plate as the foyer chandelier, one of the latest looks in lighting. Art trends also reveal themselves in glittering paintings by Left Bank Art throughout the living spaces, including one at the entrance, framed by frosted backlit glass. “I didn’t want to do the typical framed piece of art, so the frame ties in with frosted glass elements throughout the home,” Kate notes.

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A wine bar resides just off the entry, tucked under the floating, glass-paneled staircase by Heartland Stairways, with a tasting table, Thermador wine refrigerators and refrigerator and freezer drawers. “In the original plan, the space was open to the foyer, but I added a wall to create the bar area as a practical alternative to a wine cellar,” she explains. Floating, backlit steps lead upstairs, crowned by a cluster of seven pendant lights.

From the dining room, a pass-through opens up to view into the kitchen, framed by credenza-style cabinetry facing the dining room and shaker-style white cabinetry on the kitchen side, all by Executive Cabinetry. “It’s an open kitchen, yet separate, with a cut-out wall overlooking the dining and family room. If you are hosting a dinner party, this is your service area,” Kate says.

Panels that match the cabinets conceal a refrigerator, freezer and pantry. “The practical pantry doubles as food storage and a work space with outlets for charging smart devices,” she adds. Frosted glass detailing reveals itself in the kitchen’s backlit ceiling panel anchoring four pendant lights and in upper-cabinet fronts. The backsplash and range hood crafted of 10-inch by 30-inch porcelain tile weave in stainless steel inserts in a linear design. “The design pulls together colors from the cabinets to make a statement,” Kate explains.

(Left): The kitchen backsplash and range hood crafted of 10-inch by 30-inch porcelain tile weave in stainless steel inserts in a linear design.

(Above): In the kitchen, quartz surfaces by Dupont Corian clad the counters. Kate designed a kitchen island with a section that “drops down rather than a bumps up” to better accommodate all household members. Shaker-style white cabinetry by Executive Cabinetry also clads the refrigerator and freezer for a seamless, clean aesthetic.
A Thermador range cooktop with LED-lit knobs, double ovens, a warming drawer, microwave drawer and coffee maker outfit the kitchen’s gourmet capabilities. Quartz surfaces by DuPont Corian clad the counters and a kitchen island Kate designed with a section that “drops down rather than bumps up” to better accommodate children and older people. Cabinet handles crafted of carbon fiber inlays complement new Kohler carbon fiber faucets and a pot filler. Cabinet interiors illuminate with Hafele LED lighting and toe-kick lighting. A barn door with modern hardware by Hafele leads to the laundry room. “I wanted to show builders alternatives to pocket doors. This a sleek, clean barn door track without the wheels,” she says. The kitchen also features an elevator by Garaventa Lift finished in walnut.

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A vestibule featuring more sparkling artwork by Left Bank Art leads to the master bedroom. “I wanted the master bedroom to have an organic feel,” says Kate, who designed a headboard wall out of plank wood donated by De Chateau that anchors a floating bed, lit from beneath and above. Linen laminate cabinets in the master suite’s morning kitchen conceal a refrigerator drawer and freezer drawer and house a built-in espresso maker. The master bath showcases a tiled rug design that flows from the free-standing tub through the shower with the latest Kohler shower heads, programmable from smart devices. “You can program individual shower experiences, ranging from a rain shower to a thunderstorm, accompanied by music,” she explains.

The bathroom has his and hers separate toilet areas and vanities with faucets in Kohler’s new Vibrant Titanium finish that appear gray or chrome depending on the light. “Instead of wall-mounted sconces, we have hanging pendants in the bathroom and next to the bed, a popular lighting trend,” Kate adds. Dual walk-in closets by Closet Factory feature his and hers customized details such as jewelry drawers with glass tops, Hafele LED lighting, a washer and dryer, and a safe.

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(Above left): The office features 10-foot interior doors by TruStile Doors in a walnut finish. Kate designed a ceiling treatment that drops a grid of beams, backlit for a structural effect.

(Above right): The downstairs powder bath features a stylish dividing wall in a walnut finish with frosted glass panels that echoes the home’s interior door designs.
Throughout the home, 10-foot interior doors by TruStile Doors in a walnut finish lead to most rooms including the office, also finished in walnut wood with a unique ceiling design that drops a grid of beams, backlit for a structural effect. The reverse tray ceilings and beams are another signature feature throughout the home that Kate designed.

The first-floor powder room features floating cabinets, a quartz countertop, and mixes metallics with a silver and gold tiled wall and a rose gold faucet. “Nobody wants to look at toilets, so I’ve hidden them throughout the house,” says Kate, who designed divider walls in the bathrooms to obscure toilets and double as shelving and storage.

The main floor living spaces, including a game room, open up to the outdoors with motorized retractable wall screens by Phantom Screens. “The windows and doors by Panda are lift and slide doors that allow you to seamlessly transition from inside to outside of the house without having to take a step over a big door track,” John says. A linear pool with a fire feature and stand-alone spa overlook the tiered landscaping below by Redmon Design Company.

*(Clockwise, from top left): The divider wall in the powder bath keeps the toilet discreetly hidden from view; the master bedroom features a headboard wall crafted out of plank wood donated by De Chateau that anchors a floating bed lit from beneath and above; a drop zone doubles as a pocket office in the entrance from the garage.*
The patio includes an outdoor dining room and summer kitchen outfitted with appliances by DCS including two grills, two side burners, a kegerator, wine storage, dishwasher and icemaker. “We used a new cabinetry by NatureKast made of resin that looks like wood and withstands humidity,” John notes.

In the game room, signature design elements repeat, including large-format tile in a chevron pattern, frosted glass backlit panels on the bar, and a modern barn door with a few visual surprises such as leather cabinet handles.

The second floor has three en-suite rooms that embrace the latest looks, all with on-trend, free-hanging closets for adjustable shelving. The girls room has walls embellished with padded inserts that match the custom sliding door closet with two bottom drawers. “This closet is a practical alternative to the builder basic bifold closet doors,” Kate says. Meanwhile, the bathroom functions as a wet room with floor-to-ceiling tile and a jetted tub.

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All of the bedroom window blinds are motorized with tracks and mechanics hidden by dropped ceilings. Kate decorated the boys bedroom with pops of cobalt blue and chevron patterns, while the third bedroom with bunk beds has a more exotic theme with bronze and black finishes and bamboo accents. “Bronze and black are coming back in a more modern format,” she adds.

The bedrooms share social space in the upstairs loft with a neighboring mini kitchen outfitted with a coffee maker, microwave, refrigerator and freezer drawers, and a dishwasher. Nearby, a full laundry room stylishly tucks behind TruStile doors with leather inlays. The loft features a lighting installation resembling floating stars, two homework areas, and a large-screen television. “There are no fitted carpets in the home, only rugs and hard surfaces because clients don’t want carpet anymore,” Kate notes.

Built on an aggressive timeline, TNAH 2018 sits on two acres showcasing leading-edge products, materials and appliances supplied by the NAHB’s Leading Suppliers Council. “The New American Home is like the Super Bowl of homebuilding because it’s a tremendous opportunity to showcase your work on a national level and become acquainted with new products in the industry,” says John, whose team built the home in record time despite weather delays resulting from several hurricanes. “We had about six months to build the structure and two and a half months to do the interior work on a home that would typically require a year and a half to build,” he reveals.

The entire home is powered by a Crestron home automation system, one of the energy-saving features that helped it achieve the ICC 700 National Green Building Standard Emerald Status for energy efficiency, the highest rating possible. “Whole-home lighting control is the future. There are no light switches because the house uses sensors to detect motion and turn the lights on and off accordingly,” John explains. Working with Two Trails Sustainable Building Consultants, TNAH 2018 also is certified with the EPA Energy Star program as well as the Indoor airPLUS program; is a Department of Energy Zero Energy Ready Home; and is LEED for Homes certified.

“From a design standpoint, we wanted The New American Home to wow people but also welcome them so that they felt at home,” John says. For more information on this project, visit TNAH.com.