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BRICK BEAUTY

IN GILBERT, AN INTERIOR DESIGNER'S ECLECTIC STYLE IS CAPTIVATINGLY ON DISPLAY IN HER OWN HOME.

WRITTEN BY PENELOPE ROWLANDS / PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER SEGARRA

Building one's own home is a challenge that tempts just about every designer at some point. For interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare, it had been a lifelong dream. So after establishing a successful business of her own and buying a 2.5-acre plot in Gilbert with her husband, Darin, she decided it was time to act.

From the outset, DeCesare knew she wanted to incorporate into the residence elements from her childhood home in Mesa, a brick structure with a shake-shingle roof. "I've always liked that kind of architecture," she says. To bring the vision to life, she turned to architect Jim Blochberger, with whom she'd collaborated before. What resulted, he says, is a more current version of her past abode with plenty of room. "It's a modern farmhouse with ample living spaces for the family," he says.



Opposite: For her family home in Gilbert, interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare commissioned architect Jim Blochberger to build a modern farmhouse with plenty of living spaces—like the great room, with its steep-pitched roofline. Amid a white linen Hickory Chair sofa and gray linen Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams armchairs, DeCesare added a pop of red through the leather seats of the Ralph Lauren Home spindle armchairs.

Below: Set off the great room, a games area features a cozy Lee Industries settee accessorized with Injiri pillows. DeCesare sourced the table and chairs from the Marburger Farm Antique Show in Round Top, Texas, and the swing-arm sconces are Ralph Lauren for Visual Comfort.



“THERE’S A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN.”

—CAROLINE TYLER DECESARE

Opposite: "The kitchen has traditional bones with modern and industrial elements," says DeCesare, who added interest to the space with Bobo Intriguing Objects swing-arm lights and reflective-nickel pendants. The island's Carrara marble countertop is from Bel Stone Granite.

Below: Featuring a steel top on a base crafted from a reclaimed fragment of a bridge, the kitchen table from Big Daddy's Antiques in Los Angeles is cornered by metal-clad wood-casement windows by Sierra Pacific Windows. The stools are Bespoke Furniture, and the drum light is from Robert Abbey Fine Lighting through DeCesare Design Group.



That sense of space is one reason DeCesare called upon Blochberger, who worked with general contractor Ron Barney. "What I love about Jim is he gets the volumes right," she says. "It's kind of magical." For instance, entering the great room, with its dramatically pitched ceiling, is a bracing experience. The desert light floods the space through sliding doors at ground level and dormer windows above, intensified by the white planking of the walls and ceiling—an exhilarating effect.

DeCesare enhanced the home's architecture with a palette of black and white—her "love language" she teasingly calls it. In the great room, which includes both living and dining areas, she counterbalanced the bright white walls with dabs of dark color, such as a black

granite fireplace surround and a glossy black antique Chinese console. Because the couple has three children, ranging from ages 5 to 13, carpets "must be forgiving," DeCesare notes. She defined the room's seating area with a charcoal-and-white-striped rug placed atop a woven hemp carpet, a durable strategy that adds depth and warmth. For a pop of color, "I lean toward red," she says, adding that she considers it to be a neutral hue. Even so, it leaps to attention from the leather seats on a pair of spindle armchairs in the room.

Throughout the house, "there's a dialogue between traditional and modern," DeCesare says. For instance, the interior designer updated the classic dining room table—an orange relic from her childhood—by painting



Left: An antique French clock-tower face—7 feet in diameter—looks over the dining room. Oval-backed chairs by RH, upholstered in white patent leather through DeCesare Design Group, are flanked by a pair of white linen Hickory Chair wing chairs.

Opposite: An eclectic mixture of textures and patterns makes the kitchen's black-and-white palette come alive. Industrial elements, from the custom Modern-Aire polished-nickel range hood to the Williams-Sonoma Home stools, are a recurring motif.

A hallway with a checkerboard carpet from Azadi Fine Rugs bursts with family photographs by Allison Tyler Jones—DeCesare's sister—and memorabilia, including portraits, antique signs and posters, many of them in frames from Matáge Custom Framing.



it black. Nearby, she reincarnated a vintage steel factory window into a wall mirror by replacing its glass panels. And taking up space high on a wall by the table, she sourced a 7-foot antique French clock tower face from an antique store in Philadelphia.

DeCesare also harbors a taste for industrial hardware—a trait she credits to her father, who built horse trailers for a living. “Growing up, I was always around metalworkers,” she notes. This comes elegantly to the fore in the kitchen, where the stools are inspired by those found in diners and the pendant lights are nickel. And by having bold stripes—black and white ones, of course—painted across the backsplash, the interior designer made beautifully hand-hewn tiles seem both time-honored and new.

By contrast, patterning is subdued in the master bedroom. “I deal with color and pattern all day,” DeCesare says. “I wanted a white, calm retreat.” Adding to the feel, the ceiling soars to 15 feet, and the black-and-white carpet and large pillows add contrast. But for the inevitable dash of color, “I went a little eclectic,” she says, referring to the lumbar pillow made of an antique suzani-embroidered panel with a red circle at its center. It may be tiny, but it pops.

The project was a learning experience for DeCesare, who worked through the challenge of being both client and interior designer. “It was really hard to be in my own head about it all the time,” she admits. Yet the final look, which reflects her aesthetic through and through, was worth it. “I love my house,” she says. “It makes me want to stay home.”

“I love books,” DeCesare says. “They have pride of place in the house.” Her bibliophilia is beautifully apparent in the library, where custom RH shelving surrounds a Verellen ottoman atop a Pottery Barn rug.



Above: A Circa Lighting pendant lamp sourced through DeCesare Design Group echoes the swirling shape of the master BainUltra tub, which has Kohler faucets. Crisp half curtains, in DeCesare's signature black-and-white palette, assure privacy and light.

Opposite: The master bedroom is an oasis of calm, with little pattern or distraction. Tall nickel RH lamps, set on EJ Victor side tables, add the industrial touch the interior designer favors. Four Hands armchairs offer seating by a window.