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# Beautiful Balance

Decorative millwork drenched in crisp white paint provides a classic backdrop for a couple's easygoing transitional style.

writer Nancy Richman Milligan photographer Werner Straube field editor Hilary Rose

Elegant wood wainscoting echoes the profile of the coffered ceiling in Matt and Tricia Dill's dining room. The contemporary lines of cream leather-clad chairs and a wood-and-steel table are softened by silk draperies and a graphic waterfall-motif rug.



# The marriage of opposite design

elements—rustic and sophisticated, contemporary and traditional, durable and delicate—creates eye-pleasing tension in this custom-built Chicago-area home and successfully blends the different aesthetics of owners Matt and Tricia Dill. “I wanted everything to have an underlying elegance—to be pretty,” Tricia says. “Matt was all about rustic and natural. Both voices were heard.”

Huge picture windows sited to bring in the woody outdoor scene serve as a uniting force. “We pushed for having as many windows as possible,” says Matt, who grew up in the construction business and is now president of a custom home design-build business. “We think of the views—oak trees, a creek, and a stone bridge—as our art.”

Dramatic vaulted and coffered ceilings embellish rooms while fostering an expansive feeling that builds on the airiness established by the windows. At times, crown molding and wainscoting pop up to add distinction, but the overall look is streamlined. “We pulled back from traditional forms with simpler, cleaner lines,” Matt says.

A comfortable open floor plan—one that’s spacious but not cavernous—allows the Dills and their four children to stretch out yet still be together. The kitchen is at the heart of the home, with all the public areas spinning off it, including a breakfast room on one side and a formal dining room on the other. Classic white cabinetry, a mosaic marble backsplash, honed-granite countertops, and an arched black-mullion window strike a traditional note, yet the kitchen’s crisp white-and-gray palette maintains a modern feel. Glass pendant lights and a new product on the island—a solid, durable porcelain countertop material from Spain that looks and feels like marble—add charm. “We decided to break out of the norm and try some things our customers aren’t yet willing to embrace,” Matt says.

Soft, varying shades of gray dress walls throughout the home, supplying a calm backdrop for streamlined furnishings with both modern and traditional silhouettes. “I wanted a peaceful, monochromatic palette, with nothing so precious that I’d worry about it,” says Tricia, who spearheaded the interior design with assistance from designer Donna Hall. Shiny nailheads, crystal knobs, and sculptural light fixtures reflect the touch of pretty that Tricia desired. Matt’s rustic preferences are satisfied with reclaimed-wood tabletops, leather chairs, and a few heavy metal accents.

“The furniture is transitional but takes the home another step toward modern,” Hall says. “We mixed materials and layered in lots of textures and some pops of color to enhance the neutral palette. The juxtapositions make the house interesting and unpredictable. No one element is overdone. Each room has its own personality, but they flow together naturally.”

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 138.



**This photo:** A soaring cathedral ceiling, a crownlike chrome chandelier, and floor-to-ceiling windows in the great-room entertain the eye in a grand yet fuss-free way. **Opposite:** Cedar-shake siding and roofing work with stone accents and peaked rooflines to lend storybook appeal to this new Chicago-area home.





“Mixing different styles makes the décor more authentic.”

—DESIGNER DONNA HALL



**Opposite, clockwise from top left:** High contrast reigns in the wet bar with black lower cabinets capped by white glass-front upper cabinets. Midcentury-style wood-and-leather bar-height chairs lend warmth to the great-room. The kitchen's storage-rich island features gray paneled sides with metal door knockers. **Above:** A sisal rug and a table made from reclaimed wood and an antique iron base deliver casual appeal to the breakfast room.





“We wanted a clean look with less clutter, less decoration. We simplified. There are lots of circles and oval shapes to balance the strong angles.”

—BUILDER AND HOMEOWNER MATT DILL

**Opposite:** Varying shades of gray cocoon the master bedroom in serenity. “We wanted a calm, clean look—nothing too busy,” Tricia says. The four-poster hints at tradition; a plush shag rug and quilted bedding offer comfortable texture. **Above left:** Embroidered linen draperies soften the angular planes of a sleek tub in the master bath. **Above:** A stone-and-cedar fireplace, tweed-upholstered sofa, and wood-and-iron chandelier keep the mood cozy and relaxed in the sunroom.