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# STUDY *in* SIMPLICITY

A CLASSIC COLOR  
PALETTE AND JUDICIOUS  
USE OF MATERIALS EVOKE  
A TIMELESS FEELING  
IN A GLENCOE HOME.

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This was an amazing architectural challenge,” says architect Kevin Toukoumidis of the stately European-inspired abode he designed for a Glencoe couple with two young children. The clients had lived in a 1950s-era house on the same property for about a year before they decided to build anew, bringing on Toukoumidis to crystallize their collective vision. The husband envisaged a modern, perhaps even minimalist, dwelling while the wife was leaning toward something more classic. A challenge, to be sure, but one that Toukoumidis has faced often enough over the years to know how to overcome it. Working his magic alongside interior designer Elizabeth Pasquinelli and builder Jon Kogan, Toukoumidis created a home that simultaneously achieved both of their goals. “It’s timeless,” the wife muses.

The stunning white-brick façade sets the tone upon arrival, although achieving the desired shade of white was not as simple as it might seem. Many whites contain hints of pink or blue. Others aren’t uniform enough. Toukoumidis and the clients pored over a dozen samples before discovering one with a pure white hue. It turned out to be perfect, especially against the limestone banding that accents it.

But the drama upon entry is just the beginning. Inside, a story of sophisticated contrast unfolds through sculptural elements and a black-and-white palette. Natural daylight floods through large windows into the center entry portal, where a serpentine stairway with minimalist black steel balustrades and an elegant ebony-stained wood railing connects all three levels. “It feels tailored and clean, but there are sculptural forms and rich textures,” Pasquinelli says. “The staircase they designed is grand, but it’s also minimal and striking.”

The same can be said of the living room. A wall of dark, built-in cabinetry juxtaposes the white walls and ceiling,

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—KEVIN TOUKOUMIDIS

which are adorned with crisp, streamlined moldings. Pasquinelli brought in a sleek black chaise longue, black marble side tables and overlapping painted stucco cocktail tables to contrast with the plush white furnishings in front of the white marble fireplace. “There’s this idea of playing with texture, light and shadow,” she explains. “All of that creates dynamic exchange in the space.” The room opens to a classic white kitchen, where, because there are no windows, Toukoumidis incorporated a solar tube above the island. A tall bank of dark cabinetry and a steel range hood punctuate the white subway wall tile and Calacatta slab porcelain countertops. “You can feel the thought and energy that was put into all the details,” Toukoumidis says, pointing to the charcoal Italian porcelain tile inlaid into the hardwood flooring beneath the breakfast table.

To create a sense of calm and cohesiveness, Toukoumidis carried several materials throughout the home. The Calacatta porcelain in the kitchen is also found in the powder room, topping the vanity and encasing the wall behind it, and again in the master bathroom, where it complements a navy tile floor laid in a chevron pattern and is set off by natural light streaming in through floor-to-ceiling windows. Once again, juxtaposition unfolds, with the bright bathroom opening to a moody master bedroom with black walls and a handsome fireplace bracketed by a pair of French doors. They open to a balcony overlooking the lush backyard by landscape designer David Migdal, who took a modern, minimalist approach, incorporating grid concrete pavers and gravel walks to play off of the architecture.

The patio looks out toward the tennis court, which is what sold the property to the clients in the first place. While new ones are no longer allowed in Glencoe, this one was grandfathered in—but there was a price to pay for keeping it. “The house can only cover so much of the ground,” Toukoumidis notes, “but the tennis court counts as ground coverage.” To give them the space they required, Toukoumidis improvised, incorporating a subterranean TV lounge, gym and sport court that gives the family more than enough recreation space. “Constraints are an opportunity,” Toukoumidis says. “It became a really great puzzle to solve.”

After living in a rental for 18 months, the owners were excited to finally move into their new home. When the weather cooperates (it is Chicago, after all), they can often be found on their covered back porch, where phantom screens disappear into the wall when not in use, or out by the fire pit, where they enjoy entertaining friends. It’s a house that is well lived in, as emphasized by the wife. And she’s confident it will maintain its elegance for years to come. “I love how classic it is,” she says. “I never tire of the timelessness of black-and-white.” ■



The series of verdant, structural boxwoods in modern black metal planters played a key part in the landscape design by David Migdal, nodding to the dwelling’s elegant symmetrical architecture by Kevin Toukoumidis.



**Opposite:** Benjamin Moore's Green Bay adds a dynamic splash of color to the formal dining room, where a sculptural chandelier from Arteriors illuminates the owners' table and chairs atop an Oscar Isberian rug.

**Below:** A sleek Molteni&C glass-topped table complements the serpentine spiral staircase in the light-filled, two-story entry hall. The cement bowl centerpiece is from Material Possessions.





Cabinets coated in Farrow & Ball's Hague Blue juxtapose the white walls and Montauk Sofa modular sectional in the formal living room. The MOS Design handmade nesting tables play upon the soft gray and white tones.



**Opposite:** Beneath the owners' kitchen table and chairs, the team inlaid Mutina tile from Stone Source in a chevron pattern. A wall niche outfitted with wooden shelving and a polished Calacatta Statuario countertop from TransCeramica offers plenty of storage.

**Below:** Contemporary pendants from Circa Lighting coordinate perfectly with the custom blackened-steel hood in the open and airy kitchen, where brass-and-wood stools from Jayson Home create a spot for casual dining at the walnut butcher block-topped island.



“THERE’S THIS IDEA OF PLAYING WITH TEXTURE, LIGHT AND SHADOW. ALL OF THAT CREATES DYNAMIC EXCHANGE IN THE SPACE.”

-ELIZABETH PASQUINELLI



**Above:** A faux fur throw by Donna Salyers and linens by Sferra, both from Chicago Luxury Beds, foster a sense of comfort and luxury in the moody master bedroom suite, which is painted Benjamin Moore's Graphite. A piece by local artist Francine Turk hangs above the fireplace.

**Opposite:** Centered in front of the window, a bathtub by MTI from Hydrology offers a spot for rest and relaxation in the spa-like master bathroom, which is outfitted with chevron floor tile by Mutina from Stone Source and polished Calacatta Statuario countertops from TransCeramica.

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