

A photograph of a modern colonial interior, showing a room with patterned wallpaper, a white ceiling with crown molding, and a doorway leading to another room.

## Architect Steve Vanze and Interior Designer Tracy Morris Team Up on Modern Colonial

*Architect Steve Vanze and interior designer Tracy Morris marry traditional elegance and modern luxury to create spaces where their clients' blended family of eight can connect in comfort and style.*

Text: Margaret Zainey Roux

Photos: Anice Hoachlander

By definition, “transitional style” is a singular design style that comprises a variety of elements—both traditional and contemporary—in a way that is both timeless and cohesive. Or, in a nutshell, you could simply say that it’s a beautiful blend. So when interior designer [Tracy Morris](#) first began working with her clients, a blended family of eight with children ranging in age from 3 to 23, the style seemed quite apropos.

“One of our greatest challenges with this project was creating a design that appealed to everyone both in the way it looked and in the way it lived,” Morris says. “My clients have very refined tastes, but they are also warm and authentic, so I thought it was important for their home to feel fresh and approachable to reflect who they truly are as a family.”

Built atop a steep hill and nestled among acres of forest land, the stately structure is composed of locally quarried stone, clapboard, and slate, retaining a “been-there-forever” appeal despite the major renovation. Inside, architect Steve Vanze, FAIA, took cues from classic Colonial design elements but reinterpreted them to feel current for today. Coffered and cathedral ceilings, generous crown molding, paneling, and shiplap are all reminiscent of the centuries-old style but are modified with cleaner, pared-down profiles that keep them from reading too heavy.

“The nods to the past may be subtle, but they are definitely present,” says Vanze, who worked alongside project principal Melanie Giordano, AIA, and project manager Sydney Katz, AIA. “On the outside, a crisp Adams door and window surrounds suggest the permanency of a traditional home yet convey a feeling of newness, while inside the living room’s mantel and overmantel are simplified versions of those trimmed in gesso in the 19th-century. Even the kitchen cabinets are tethered to the past with their flush inset doors and furniture-like detailing.”

Morris highlighted these impressive architectural moments by painting the millwork and built-ins to match the walls—soft white in the entry and living room, satiny slate in the study, and high-gloss peacock blue in the scullery. According to the designer, this trick of the trade is not only used to showcase the exquisite embellishments but also to keep the eye roving around the room to absorb every inch of splendor. Washed Oushak rugs, luxe upholstery, and tone-on-tone wallcoverings enrich the predominantly neutral palette by heightening tactile interest while pops of brilliant blue from the grand Lacanche range, custom painted sideboard, and breakfast room chairs impart an exciting visual contrast. Unlacquered brass hardware, gold leaf accents, and lighting radiate warmth amid the otherwise chilly color scheme and glisten in the natural light that floods through expansive banks of windows and the glass conservatory.

"The simple complexity of the house is best felt in its framed views," Vanze says.

"Composed images of framed hallways and views through windows and doors centered on the landscape or a piece of art bring a sense of order and peace to the home."







