

TRENDS



For a modern look, the exterior of this Elmhurst house features stucco and vertical cedar plank.

HOME, P. 28 >>



HOME

MODERN FAMILY

This new build in Elmhurst makes contemporary comfy

BY LISA ARNETT

When Elena and Ryan Gayan happened upon a lot in Elmhurst that would be the perfect location for the modern home they envisioned, they immediately knew who to call next: Steve Buonsante, owner of Elmhurst-based Mondo Builders. “He has built some of the most beautiful homes and he has such a great reputation,” Elena says.

The 4,500-square-foot house features stucco and vertical cedar plank siding on the outside and plenty of space on the inside for this family with three kids—ages 9, 10, and 13—and their Goldendoodle. “What we wanted was to have a modern feel, but it had to be warm, which it’s sort-of hard to have modern finishes and still feel cozy, but I feel like we did achieve that,” she says.

Buonsante recommended bringing in Kristin Petro of Elmhurst-based Kristin Petro Interiors, which specializes in space planning as well as kitchen and bathroom design. “The team is me, the builder, the architect, and the client, and my role is to make sure the space plan accommodates what the client wants and how they live,” Petro says.

One of her aims was preserving a modern look by closely editing design choices. “Your house has to accommodate your day-to-day life—what’s it going to look like with cereal boxes and homework on the counter?” Petro notes. “If I overdesign the space, it’s going to feel chaotic and uncomfortable when your life actually starts to happen. My philosophy is to make spaces interest-



ing and also make them a good palette for the furniture, the decor, and life.”

Petro says her clients often also hire a designer to furnish and decorate the space, but the homeowner took on the task herself. “I love design,” Elena says. “You don’t have to spend a ton of money on all your decor. You can put things together and mix high and low and make it your own.”

Case in point: She shopped at HomeGoods and Target for most of her decorative tchotchkes, vases, and pillows. Elmhurst home boutique Bread & Butter is another favorite for decor. “I have two decorative bowls, candles, small vases, and kitchen hand towels from there,” Gayan says. “They’re a wonderful little local shop here.” ●



1. In the family room, all eyes are on the dramatic slat wall and fireplace with a dark soapstone surround. The original architectural plans featured exposed beams in the family room, which were later eliminated. “Beams can work with a more earthy palette, but this is a modern house and I think it would take your eye away from the focal point in the room,” says designer Kristin Petro. Lining the room’s cased openings in oak provides some more subtle contrast. Homeowner Elena Gayan sourced the furniture and lamps from Crate & Barrel, the art from CB2, and the rug from Lulu & Georgia. **2.** Gayan’s kitchen vision included a hearth, which Petro brought to life with a curved surround and tiled backsplash. Off one side of the island, there’s a clean-up zone with a second sink to stash dirty dishes out of sight while entertaining; on the other side, there’s a breakfast nook. The freezer and fridge are concealed behind gray cabinet doors, which coordinate with the coffee and wine bar on the same wall. “We are big coffee people, and these are the most-used cabinets in our home,” Gayan says. “On one side we have a Keurig and easy-peasy quick stuff and mugs, and on the other side, a nicer espresso maker.” For lighting, Petro selected Visual Comfort pendants for above the island and a striking chandelier by Regina Andrews for the dining room. **3.** The Gayans love green, and the mudroom was just the right space to showcase it in this deep shade, Dark Olive from Benjamin Moore. Storage lockers keep coats, backpacks, and sports gear for the whole family behind closed doors. “We also have electrical outlets in there so the kids can charge their iPads,” Gayan says.

TRENDS



DETAILS



Feel the Heat

These days, screened-in porches are an in-demand feature to achieve that indoor-outdoor-living vibe. “Really, almost every home [we are building] gets that 90 percent of the time,” says Steve Buonsante, owner of Elmhurst-based Mondo Builders.

Three-season rooms have quite a following. “Clients love these, and they want to run it across the entire back of the house,” says designer Kristin Petro. “But the only negative about these porches is you are cutting natural light out of the house, so we have to be strategic about the location. [In the Gayan home], we situated it off the kitchen table area, where we felt like the light wasn’t needed as much.”

A hybrid track system with retractable screens and FlexiGlaze vinyl film windows gives the option for the space to be open air, screened, or fully enclosed. “In the summer, we lay out here all the time, and it’s just beautiful,” says homeowner Elena Gayan. “You feel like it’s outside, but there’s no bugs.”

With added elements such as ceiling heaters and a fireplace, the space is actually a bit more than a three-season room. “We can extend the use into December so it turns into a 10-month room—January and February you’re probably not going to use it,” Buonsante says. “Some of these screened-in porches end up being warmer than the actual home; you’d be surprised.”

4. For the powder room, Gayan requested a curved vanity, so Petro designed this custom piece for Mondo Builder’s cabinet vendor, European Woodworkers in Carol Stream, to fabricate. The vertical fluting conceals cabinet doors for plumbing access that open with hidden push-latch hardware. “We have the light vertical tile and the brass plumbing fixtures in here, and because we have the dark floor, I did dark light fixtures,” Petro says. “When designing a space, especially a bathroom, good design is a sum of its parts.” **5.** The basement features vinyl plank flooring and an island with seating on both sides. “If my client doesn’t need a ton of storage in their basement, this is how I like to design the island,” Petro says. “That way it can also serve as a table, so you can dine down there; you can play cards. It’s a great craft space because the vinyl floors are very durable.” The couches and media console are from Macy’s, the chairs from Way-fair, the rug from Rugs USA, and the ottoman from Room & Board.