



JACOB SNAVELY

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## A Dated Center Hall Colonial Gets a Fun, Family-Friendly Refresh

You won't believe what Curated Nest Interiors did to this basement!



BY JESSICA CHERNER | PUBLISHED: SEP 7, 2023

A center hall colonial is meant to be classic—the architectural style was made popular by European settlers back when the United States was just scattered colonies. But while the aesthetic verges on timeless, interiors can often feel stuck in the era when the home was built. That's why the owners of a circa 1990's four-bedroom center hall colonial in Upstate New York turned to New York- and Connecticut-based Curated Nest Interiors for a much-needed refresh. "The house was in good condition but very dated," says the firm's cofounder and design principal, Lina Galvão. "There were lots of elements from the 1990s."

To fulfill the homeowner's vision of a more livable, modern space that still honored the original architectural style, Galvão eliminated some stuck-in-the-past elements including cool-toned wall-to-wall carpeting, heavy wooden accents, mineral-fiber ceiling tiles and classroom-like recessed lighting. But while many spaces got what amounted to a full-gut reno, others weren't broke and didn't need fixing. "The beautiful home had great bones, nice light, high ceilings, and lots of potential," Galvão explains.

To fulfill that, she renovated and decorated just those rooms that needed it: the mudroom, foyer, eat-in kitchen, and basement. The latter is often overlooked by both the homeowners and the designer, but not in this case. "The basement is 1,400 square feet, and it deserved a full re-thinking of function and zoning," she points out.

After swapping the unsightly acoustic tiled ceiling for a more contemporary, stylish sheetrock alternative and putting up walls, Galvão turned the sweeping below-ground "afterthought" into a vital space that makes much more sense for this family—especially for the three little ones who will use it most. "There's an arts and crafts area, a secret playhouse under the stairs, a reading corner with a teepee, a dance room, a climbing wall area, a dress-up corner, and a lounge area for movie nights," she explains. She even carved out a sizable space for a new laundry room, which, in addition to the mudroom and foyer, was gutted "down to the studs."

Now a stunning showplace, the entryway was one of the spaces that reeked most of the past. "The floors were vinyl, and the light fixture looked like it came from a medieval castle," Galvão notes. Despite the double-height ceilings, she felt the massive space didn't boast very much visual interest. So she and her team replaced the original vinyl flooring with gray and white checkerboard porcelain tiles, refinished the center hall stairs, and incorporated double-height batten boards to the walls. "A new chandelier made the space feel more inviting and modern," she adds.

Now the foyer—and the entire home—is warm and welcoming, which was both the designer and the homeowners's goal when revamping some of the rooms. As Galvão says, "A soothing color palette, clean-lined architecture, and elevated farmhouse decor bring the space together with livable luxury."

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# Foyer



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"This was a dated, monochrome, and awkward space, which turned into the crown jewel of the home," Galvão says. "The flooring makes a huge statement and immediately sets the tone for the rest of the home."

**Table:** Dovetail. **Shelves:** Serena and Lily. **Runner:** installed by Carpet Trends.



# Basement



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"This nook is the lounge area in the basement," says the designer. "The floating stairs are encased in sheetrock and shiplap, which creates an additional zoning mechanism for a large open concept space."

**Sofa:** Rowe. **Chair:** Essentials for Living. **Sconces:** Lucent Lightshop.



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When outfitting the basement, Galvão either repurposed furniture that was already there, or purchased new pieces that fit in with the aesthetic.

**Lighting:** Lucent Lightshop. **Bench:** HomeGoods. **Side Table:** Emissary. **Faux Plant:** Pottery Barn.





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"This basement is totally for the kiddos (younger twin girls and an older daughter)," she notes. "The kids are very active and wanted a space for friends to enjoy, so we created this custom climbing wall with a hand-painted mural."

**Custom Climbing Mural:** [Sabrina's Murals](#). **Faux Sheepskin Rug:** [nuLOOM](#).  
**Baskets:** [Serena and Lily](#).



# Dining Nook

"The chairs are ideal for this family-forward nook with vegan leather cushions," the designer explains.



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The bench, which looks like a built-in, is actually two storage banquettes covered with a custom 10-foot cushion to create the illusion of one super-long seating area. "The cushion had to be hand-delivered by the workroom since it could not be folded for shipping," Galvão adds.

**Chairs:** Four Hands. **Storage bench:** Ballard. **Pendants:** Hinkley Lighting.  
**Custom bench cushion:** Stichroom. **Acacia Extension Dining Table:**  
Essentials for Living. **Art:** Four Hands.

# Laundry Room



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The basement encompasses laundry room, which is now bright and airy, courtesy of new recessed and decorative lights and plenty of pale-painted custom millwork.

**Light Fixture:** Lucent Lightshop. **Faucet:** Brizo. **Bench:** Four Hands. **Mirror:** 1800 Lighting. **Rug:** Loloi. **Custom Cabinets:** DTF Rosemount. **Brass Cabinet Hardware:** Forge Hardware Studio. **Floating Shelves:** Minted. **Pillows:** Tonic Living.



# Mudroom



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"The family now has a place to store everything and stay organized," says the designer. "The standalone bench provides a convenient spot to put on shoes." Though there are darker moments, the space stays within the pale and quiet shades.

**Rug:** Momeni. **Bench:** Four Hands. **Millwork:** DTF Rosemount. **Lighting:** Visual Comfort.



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"The end result was five lockers for each member of the family, as well as a custom shoe storage cabinet and uppers for packages and sundries," Galvão says of the finished space.



# Q&A

**House Beautiful:** What was the reason/inspiration for the new design? What are a few ways you achieved your vision?

**Curated Nest Interiors:** The goal for this home was to modernize and increase functionality for a busy family. This family appreciates nice things but wanted them to be durable and thoughtful. We achieved our vision with a mix of custom solutions (custom millwork) and creative zoning of space. The client loves modern farmhouse style, so we incorporated elements of that in each space.

**HB:** Did you encounter any memorable hiccups, challenges, or surprises during the project? How did you pivot?

**CNI:** It was a challenge to convince the homeowner to so drastically renovate their basement, but in the end, they love it and utilize it heavily with their three young girls.

**HB:** Where did the majority of the budget go?

**CNI:** The majority went to renovations, and we kept the furniture reasonably priced to keep the budget in check. However, we still splurged on family-friendly aspects of the furniture and décor, such as using higher-performance finishes.

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