



The crown jewel of this Nashville-area dining room is the handsome coffered ceiling with hardy white oak beams placed in a grid over white-painted nickel-gap paneling. The mix of materials and styles in this space is continued throughout the home.

IS THERE ANYTHING OAK CAN'T DO?

IN A TENNESSEE NEW BUILD, A HEALTHY DOSE OF WHITE OAK GROUNDS A BLEND OF LIMESTONE, LINEN, BRASS, AND IRON.

WRITER MARGARET ZAINY ROUX PHOTOGRAPHER CAROLINE SHARPBACK

THE CONTALDO FAMILY HAD JUST FINISHED DECORATING THEIR CHICAGO HOME WHEN A FRESH START IN NASHVILLE CAME CALLING . So their house-hunt wish list included not just a place that had the laid-back Southern appeal of their new locale, but one that felt familiar and would work with some of the furniture they'd just picked out. A 10,000-square-foot Dutch Colonial-inspired structure still under construction gave them the flexibility to blend their belongings into the plans while embracing the green tree-studded hills and farmland in a quiet enclave just south of Music City.

"I vividly remember my first meeting with the Contaldos," says interior designer Connie Vernich. "Because the house was already under construction, the family had the opportunity to make tweaks and changes, but they were thrilled with the direction we were taking and confident in the selections we had already made. In fact, they said that everything we presented was exactly what they'd dreamed of."

On the outside, thick, mortar-slathered brickwork, steeply pitched rooflines, a boxed bay window, and a clipped-corner privacy wall support the classic style the family was drawn to. But contemporary-leaning details like the steel doors and black-painted accents hint at the modern blend inside.

"Much like the exterior, the interior is all about mix," Vernich says. "For example, we used a lot of white oak, but we incorporated it in different ways to give each space and feature its own unique personality. Because of its lighter hue and smoother grain, it works beautifully in a variety of applications."



LEFT "We created the opposite of the 'grand entry' and went with a simpler, more streamlined design," says interior designer Connie Vernich. "This way, you can really take in the elements and appreciate them as they unfold in the rooms to come." **ABOVE** In the great-room, white oak bookcases flank the custom mantel designed to mimic authentic French limestone (the team used a limestone coating product called Arcus Stonecoat). On the shelves and throughout the space, Vernich used circular shapes and curvy forms to juxtapose the many straight lines and sharp angles. **OPPOSITE** Mortar-slathered brick gives the facade a "been there forever" look that is consistent with the mature landscape.





WHITE DOVE OC-17
BENJAMIN MOORE



From the floors to the ceilings—and including a healthy dose of paneling and cabinetry—white oak frames each room, warming the palette of white, charcoal, and black that appears again and again. Natural materials like limestone, linen, marble, jute, and seagrass further soften the potentially stark palette, and hints of polished brass and bronze add some shimmer.

“Creating rooms that are layered and livable can be tricky when you are working with limited colors and patterns, but we rose the challenge,” Vernich says. “For impact, we focused on the various textures and tones of the materials so that rooms feel full and finished but not cluttered or overdone.”

Designer Connie Vernich Architect Andrew King
Builder Justin Davis, Davis Properties of Tennessee

ABOVE Vernich created a focal point by painting a wood range hood in Sherwin-Williams Iron Ore and trimming it in polished brass to mimic a more expensive steel version. White lacquered cone pendants lined in brass play off the straps and add luster to the space. **OPPOSITE TOP** To avoid the look of a big, white wall, the custom paneled refrigerator and freezer are separated by a built-in white oak niche. The multipurpose unit has open shelving at the top for storage, drawers for utensils and serveware, and countertop space for serving. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** “In an open concept, it’s important to consider both the backs and fronts of your furniture,” Vernich says. The stools’ basketweave backs tie in with the living area’s millwork and jute rug.





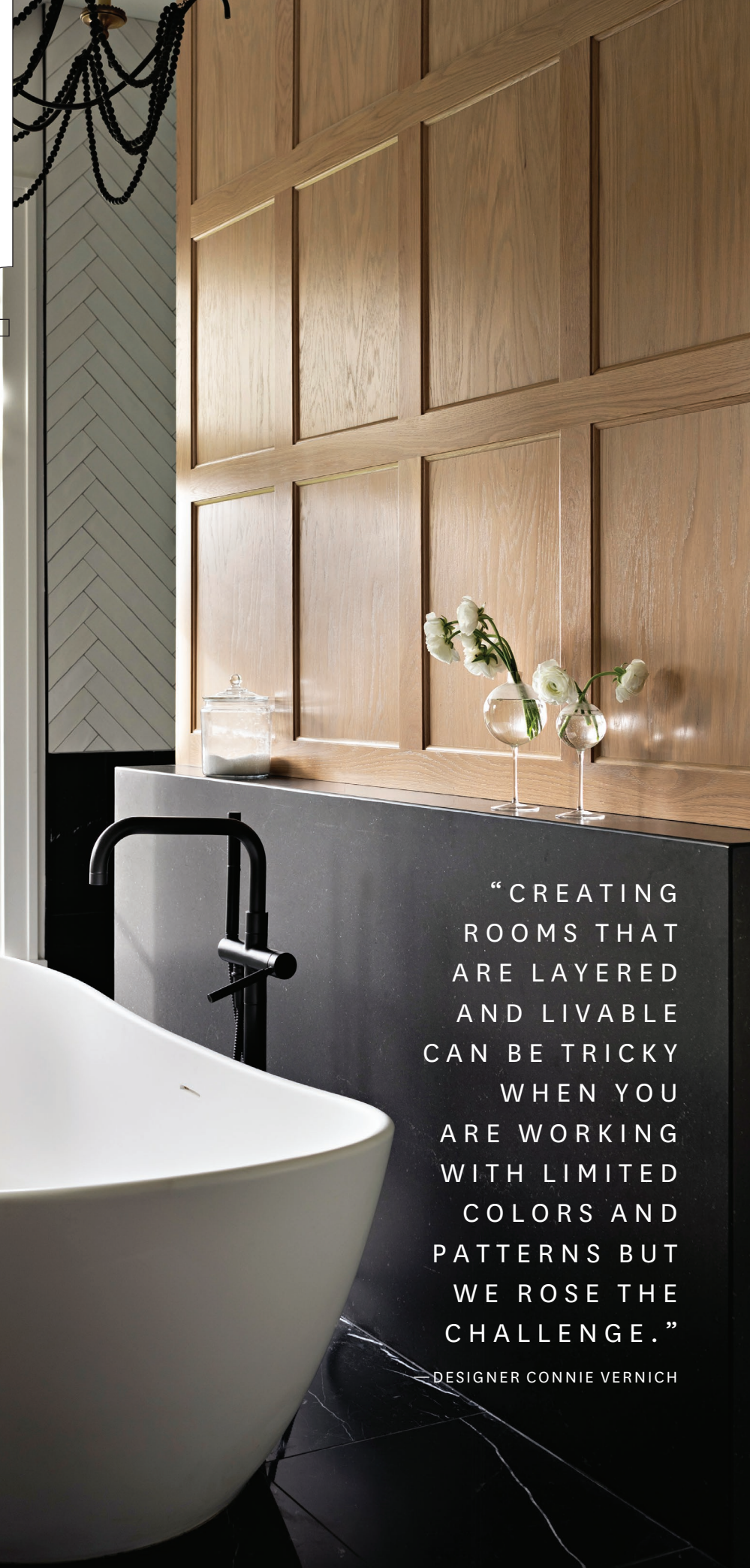
defining the style
WHITE OAK

This workhorse wood is used over and over because of its good looks and durability. It is dense and heavy, standing up well to water and wear. Long, pretty grains make it an excellent candidate to leave unpainted.



PRIMARY BEDROOM The soaring vaulted ceiling in the main part of the room comes down to a more intimate scale in the sunroom, *left*, set off by oak trim. **PRIMARY BATHROOM** A white oak accent wall and vanity drawers are designed with flat panels to showcase the smooth grain of the wood, *above left*. “We didn’t want the inherent beauty of the grain to get lost, and it would have with raised panels or any kind of bevel or beading,” Vernich says. Similarly, she chose oversize black marble tiles with white veining to highlight the stone’s natural striations. Near the soaking tub, *opposite*, a partition wall clad in white oak square panels separates the walk-in shower.

EXTERIOR To complement the brown roof shingles, the trim, gutters, and bay windows are painted Sherwin Williams Black Fox, a deep shade of black-brown with slightly red undertones. Limestone pavers in a cool gray line the patio and pool deck.



“CREATING ROOMS THAT ARE LAYERED AND LIVABLE CAN BE TRICKY WHEN YOU ARE WORKING WITH LIMITED COLORS AND PATTERNS BUT WE ROSE THE CHALLENGE.”

—DESIGNER CONNIE VERNICH