



ITALIAN JOB

A COMPLETE RENOVATION OF A SUPERSIZE HOME IN UPSTATE NEW YORK CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF LA DOLCE VITA FOR ITS TRAVEL-LOVING OWNERS.

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ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR DESIGN Neal Beckstedt, Neal Beckstedt Studio

HOME BUILDER Mary Larkin, M.J. Larkin & Co., Inc.

BEDROOMS 6 | BATHROOMS 8 | SQUARE FEET 15,000



Self-proclaimed Italophiles Chris and Pam Tuzzo have spent many of their family vacations trolling the art galleries of Florence and exploring the quieter parts of Sicily. So, when they bought their new home, they wanted to bring everything they loved about the historically rich European country to their upstate Armonk dream pad.

To fully capture the aesthetic they craved, the Tuzzos hired Manhattan-based architectural and interior designer Neal Beckstedt with the utmost confidence that he would deliver the kind of home they'd want to spend the rest of their lives in.

Modern and vintage Italian furnishings fill a room defined by an ornate fireplace and framed by fluted moldings original to the home. *Left:* A peek to the foyer from the grand staircase. The custom bronze balustrade and mahogany handrail were custom by interior designer Neal Beckstedt.



Dinner guests are likely to feel they've landed in a tony apartment in Milan. The vintage Venetian glass chandelier from Craig Van Den Brulle was once housed in an Italian bank. The sideboard and table are both from Armani/Casa, and the grass cloth on the walls is from Phillip Jeffries.



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"To suit their high taste level, everything had to be super-designed but also blingy," says Beckstedt. "The challenge was marrying the two because we wanted it to be casual and not too stuffy and to have a sense of ease and timelessness." That meant balancing their love of heavy, intricate moldings and travertine mosaics with refined furniture, such as a sofa from Christian Liaigre in the living room and a pair of suede Ralph Pucci club chairs in the den. "We wanted something current and not dated in any way," he says. "It needed to show Roman and Italian influences because they love Italy so much."

Built-ins set the tone for a pair of dark chocolate Milo Baughman chairs. The floor lamp and sofa are both by Christian Liaigre, and the violet-hued work above the fireplace is by George Chaplin.



A custom hammered oak combination pantry and desk with twig-like hardware by Beckstedt defines the breakfast nook. A cerused oak table is paired with chairs from Holly Hunt.

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First, though, Beckstedt had to convince the Tuzzos that things were looking up—literally. To set the mood for and provide a focal point in each space, the designer brought in tricked-out and overstated chandeliers, pendants and sconces for each room. Their favorite—not surprisingly—is situated over the dining table: It’s a vintage glass biomorphic showstopper that once hung in the lobby of an Italian bank. Another masterpiece in its own right, a twig-like chandelier with a milky-white plaster finish that now hangs in the double-height foyer, however, took a little more convincing. Without the bling factor, Pam did not think the contemporary



Oversize hammered bronze pulls, which required more than one trip to the foundry, accent custom rosewood cabinetry. The Calacatta marble bar features a slim bronze base, tapered legs and Bernhardt stools covered in Keleen leather. The pendants are vintage Murano glass from John Salibello.

When the master suite was expanded to renovate the dressing rooms and baths, the conservatory was born. Enclosed in windows, its job is to shine, which it does thanks to a custom silk and wool rug by Tai Ping and a vintage sphere light from John Salibello.



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piece would be a fit in her new home. But Beckstedt pressed on, and when the project was complete, she was smitten.

In the kitchen, Beckstedt reveled in those finer details by using as many different finishes and materials as the Tuzzos would allow him. "Instead of treating all of the cabinetry the same, I delineated areas by using different materials and styles based on their function," he says. "The wall of rosewood cabinets houses the china; the hammered oak armoire is the pantry; and the island is transformed to look like a long table with its turned oak legs."

A frequent location for cocktail hour, the sunny conservatory offers plenty of art to ogle. The Ralph Pucci club chairs are covered in suede from Edelman Leather, and the tufted leather daybed is custom by Beckstedt for Doreen Interiors. The coffee table is by D. W. Woods.



In the study, Beckstedt employed his clients' favorite colors, pairing chocolate paneling and cabinetry with lacquered blue shelving and a reflective blue ceiling. The rosewood and nickel desk is by John Rosselli. *Opposite:* Beckstedt rummaged through cartons of family photos in the attic in order to create a statement-making memory wall in the hallway.

The owners' daughters share a feminine bathroom with a polished-nickel pendant from Lamps Plus and custom white-lacquer cabinetry by Nolan Woodworking.



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The Tuzzos' zest for design and demand for meticulous work impressed general contractor Mary Larkin. "We walked the stone yard so we could hand-pick each slab," says Larkin, describing the trips she took with her clients when they were looking for the perfect marble to use in the dramatic foyer. "I also took Chris to the foundry to meet the guy who hand-molded the bronze pulls in the kitchen. He wanted to be sure the patina was just right. That was the level of the Tuzzos' dedication."

In the owners' daughter's bedroom, the white pedestal table is by Christian Liaigre, and the banquette is upholstered in a pink velvet from Eldridge. The plush carpeting is by Aronson, and the custom-designed nightstands are from New Day Woodwork.



Just off the master bedroom is a private sitting room. A mix of vintage pieces, like a 1960s white-lacquer screen from Visiona and a pair of 1970s Italian floor lamps from Modern One, bring dimension to the space. The coffee table is by Modern Living.



Above: The master bedroom features a two-way fireplace. The bed is by Christian Liaigre. *Right:* In the master bathroom, the sconces are from Circa Lighting, and the pair of mirrors were found at Orange in Los Angeles.

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After a three-year-long renovation, Beckstedt and the Tuzzos have a bond that goes well beyond the de facto client-decorator relationship. “For me, it was all about figuring them out and reflecting their personalities in the home,” says Beckstedt. “Relationships like this one are so much a part of my life as a whole, and I am lucky they love what I’ve done for them.” For their part, the Tuzzos are quick to give credit to the designer who made it possible for them to live out their la dolce vita in their dream upstate estate. “Neal built our vision,” says Chris. “He didn’t build a generic house. The difference is in the details.” **L**



The master bath is one of the home’s most indulgent rooms and includes a fireplace, a freestanding tub from Urban Archaeology, marble floors, and a chaise covered in a cognac leather from Moore & Giles.