

minority leader

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IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, ONE HOMEBUILDER SHOWS THAT WHEN IT COMES TO CONSTRUCTION SITES, SHE KNOWS HER STUFF





LIKE MOST MOTHERS,

Catherine Miller can wrangle a to-do list like nobody's business. Research summer camp for the twins, check. Schedule college visits for graduating daughter, check. Buy new putter for golfer son, check. Find time for school fundraisers, dental appointments, and building a house. Check, check, and check.

Yes, you read that right. Catherine builds houses, including the sprawling abode where she lives with her husband, Craig, and their four children. As a licensed general contractor, Catherine, an unusual player in the male-dominated field of construction, is an expert at the nuts and bolts (and floor joists and two-by-fours) of building. She started her business in 1997, and almost two decades later offers a full range of services—finding properties, constructing houses, and then adding the finishing touches of furniture, accessories, and artwork.

“I was the one who loved my Lincoln Logs just as much as my Barbie Dream House,” Catherine reminisces of her early affinity

Loggia A number of outdoor living areas line the house's exterior. Most notable is the loggia, where the Millers frequently entertain. The seating area boasts Lane Venture furniture covered in white fabric and piped in blue. Summer Classics wicker dining chairs surround the dining table. The fireplace warms the dining area on chilly nights, and the striped Sunbrella draperies can be closed for a cozy feel. **Preceding pages** A comfortable sofa and lounge chairs in the family room contrast with shapely spool-back chairs. All are from Hickory Chair. **Entry hall and den** Hickory White's substantial three-drawer chest in the entry hall offers a preview of the warm wood tones of birdseye maple that encase the nearby den.



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for the construction process. “I studied interior design in college but with an emphasis on construction management. After working as a project manager at commercial construction companies, I wanted to be licensed so I could grow my own business.”

When it came time to break ground on the corner lot where her own family’s home would sit in Hidden Hills, a gated equestrian enclave north of Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley, Catherine took the five “clients” whom she wakes up with every morning every bit as seriously as all the other people she serves.

For example, before the “pretty” factor of hardwood floors and dynamic artwork ever came into play, Catherine paid close attention to exactly how the house would sit on its two-acre corner lot. She positioned the entrance so that it faces the corner, which allows the structure to extend in either direction. “I have four active children who love playing sports,” Catherine explains. “It’s important that I can catch a glimpse of them in the backyard from anywhere in the house.”

A classic blue-and-white palette infuses rooms throughout the house so they speak the same language, but with slightly different dialects. Case in point: In the family room, statement paisley fab-

Dining room Painted-white Chippendale chairs from Hickory Chair support the light theme of the house, but make an off-script turn with colorful, old-school linen toile covering the seats. The chandelier is from Circa Lighting. **Hallway** In the rotunda of the hallway that leads to the master bedroom, a seating area with Lillian August chairs overlooks a small private garden.



rics steal the show. But the dining room adopts a quieter approach that complements the blue-and-white scheme via compatible colors. Painted-white dining furniture offers a gentle transition to the grand outdoor drapery panels in oversize stripes that draw attention to the loggia seating area.

When Catherine built her family home, she wanted a place where she and Craig could unwind. Her attention to detail resulted in calm, private spots for the couple as well as places that are meant to erupt with the joyful noise of growing kids and their friends.

“The best part about this house is that it allows us to enjoy life with so many people around us,” says Catherine. “We love to throw gatherings—from holiday celebrations to themed parties such as sushi and casino nights. We once even loaded the swimming pool with 200 inflatable red lobsters for a summer lobster boil. When I see so many people here, I know I’m home.”

Interior designer and general contractor: Catherine Miller

Architect: William Harrison

For more information, see sources on page 137

Family Craig and Catherine Miller with their four children, from left, Cassandra, 18; Cameron, 16; and twins Cade and Canter, 12. **Exterior** Per Catherine’s direction, Atlanta-based architect William Harrison created a Connecticut farmhouse-style plan that would wrap the Hidden Hills, California, corner lot. The house is affectionately dubbed “Inn on the Green” by the Millers, who all golf regularly. **Kitchen** The open kitchen features a stately island topped with Calacatta marble. Bar stools painted white and covered in indigo-blue fabric from Sunbrella are extra roomy and comfortable.