

DESIGN

# Making it Personal: Interior Designer Valerie Grant Re-Imagines Her Own Home

JULY 22, 2024 BY GWEN DONOVAN

Valerie Grant, owner of Summit, New Jersey-based [Valerie Grant Interiors](#), took on a design project for her own home, where she and her husband are focusing on their new chapter as empty nesters. Refreshing interiors reflect the shift from a children-centered home to one serving the needs of a couple. While still family-focused, a mix of personal and public spaces emphasize comfortable, stylish living. A special focus on entertainment-oriented areas makes the home equally inviting for intimate or grand occasions. The chic design embraces a mixture of textures, colors and layers to reflect the couples' personalities as they enter this exciting new phase in their life.



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**Gwen Donovan:** What were your intentions for the family room, especially its connection to the backyard amenities?

*Valerie Grant:* We aimed to create a living space that seamlessly connects indoors and outdoors. By incorporating an expansive Nano door, the family room opens up to the exterior covered porch. The porch features retractable screens, transforming it into a spacious three-season room that can be enjoyed year-round. With an outdoor fireplace and built-in heat lamps, it even made last year's Christmas party a delightful experience!



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**GD:** The backyard looks like an ideal spot for entertaining, how does it enhance your lifestyle?

**VG:** The backyard initially drew us to the property with its lush plantings creating a private sanctuary. We designed the exterior to offer multiple areas for enjoyment. The bluestone patio connects various spaces, including the pool area with a tranquil waterfall and hot tub, a pergola with a comfortable seating area and gas fire pit, a dining area with an outdoor kitchen, and the covered porch with another seating area and wood-burning fireplace. The layout comfortably hosts parties of four or forty. People can gather together or split up in small groups. We enjoy spending family time there and have hosted large events, like our daughter's graduation. Each space offers something unique, making it perfect for entertaining.

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GD: Your kitchen is yet another welcoming area, which design elements were important for you to include?

VG: The kitchen was designed for both cooking and entertaining, with an open layout that connects to the outdoor area. We love to cook and we love to host friends, so I wanted the kitchen to feel warm and inviting. I chose off-white paint for the cabinetry, combined with warm light oak wood tones, burnished metal accents, and light quartzite countertops. The Lacanche range and custom metal range hood serve as focal points. To maintain an open feel, I included a custom metal cabinet with glass doors and light oak open shelving. Key features also include a galley sink in the kitchen island, a pot filler, a secondary wall oven and an adjacent desk area.

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**GD:** Your primary suite is a dream, what are some of your favorite amenities there?

**VG:** The primary bedroom was designed as a tranquil retreat, featuring a large window overlooking the backyard, a light oak plank ceiling and a cozy seating area. The primary bath is infused with natural elements, showcasing Calacatta Bluette marble tile and countertops, with wood tones carrying over from the bedroom. Custom vanities and a dressing table with burnished brass inlay add to the luxury. The soaking tub in front of the large window is perfect for unwinding. However, my closet is my favorite feature. Coming from a fashion background, I wanted it to feel like my favorite boutique, with luxurious finishes, ample storage, and an adjacent seating area. In the past, I've always designed my closets with closed cabinetry; this time I wanted to have fun and put everything on display! I absolutely love it. It really makes getting ready in the morning both easier and so much more fun.

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**GD:** Is there anything else about your home design you'd like to mention?

**VG:** The basement is another key area, equipped with amenities for all its inhabitants and guests, both human and canine. For my avid golfer husband, I created a golf simulator room. There's a laundry room, mudroom, and a dog shower for our two dogs. Given that our children are college athletes, we included a fully-equipped gym with a sauna for their use during school breaks. This house was designed to be used to its full capacity!

*Photography by Andrew Frasz.*

*Architecture by John James Architect, AIA.*

*Styling by Anna Molvik.*

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