

FIRST HOME, *forever home*

**CARSONSPEER'S AWARD-
WINNING TRANSITIONAL
DESIGN OFFERS ADAPTABLE
MODERN LUXURY**

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“Once you go through the front door,
everything is contemporary.”

—James Speer

The rise in demand for transitional-style homes in the Upstate coincided with the steady population increase of Greenville and the surrounding areas. Transitional homes are often characterized by their touch of traditional elements blended with newer aesthetics for a livable luxury that remains adaptable over time. The Aurora, CarsonSpeer’s 2022 Bridge Award winner for best overall home in its category, is a fine example of transitional design built to suit a young family buying their first home.

When the Vargas family purchased their lot in Greenville’s Hidden Hills, past the golf course and through a gate in Chanticleer, they were excited to work with a builder who could create a home that would suit their needs today and their needs decades down the road.

“The first thing that stuck out to me was they were super organized,” said owner Jan Vargas, who was impressed by CarsonSpeer’s attention to detail when they discussed how the home would be planned. “They’re both huge perfectionists, which appealed to me a great deal.”

James Speer, partner and custom home builder for CarsonSpeer, was equally excited to work with Jan and Mary Vargas. “Their style is more modern,” Speer said. “Most of the houses in the neighborhood are more traditional, so we made the roofline a more traditional shape, but once you go through the front door, everything is contemporary.”

CarsonSpeer brought in MHK Architecture and ID Studio Interiors to round out the design-build team.

Once construction started in February of 2020, it was easy for the Vargases to visit the site on their own, since they were renting nearby. “Going out to see the house was something to do during the pandemic,” Vargas said. “It was one of the activities we could safely do and social distance.”

The Vargases told Speer they wanted a home flexible enough to accommodate kids in the future, so it was almost fate when Mary Vargas became pregnant during construction. The couple now have two young children.

The Heirloom Companies designed the white oak treads and cable rail staircase to include custom baby gates. The room at the bottom of the stairs is currently used as a kids’ playroom, but plumbing and additional features were placed for it to one day become a downstairs bedroom with an en suite bath. There are four additional bedrooms upstairs.

Off the primary upstairs bedroom suite is an outdoor walkout with a clear view of the northern sky. “The reason we named the house Aurora was because Jan loves space and loves to take photography of the night sky and use his telescope,” Speer said.

Indoor/outdoor living was another prominent theme. A downstairs cocktail bar has both exterior and interior seating and opens to the patio with glass accordion windows. A tongue-and-groove stained cypress ceiling and brick walls continue the exterior elements inside. There’s a butler’s pantry on the other side of the interior bar wall.

ID Studio had the entire house painted in Sherwin-Williams Repose Gray. A neutral palette allows splashes of color to come from a variety of art and furnishings—while maintaining a clean, consistent flow to the open floor plan.

The home has an abundance of natural light, modulated by motorized shades. The direct vent gas fireplace in the living room is brick on the outside and completely surrounded by windows. “Their house is on a slab, so we could run all of the chases and conduits we needed for electrical and gas,” Speer said. A frame television is mounted above the fireplace.

Floor space was maximized and kept flexible by using moveable furniture for most storage areas, such as under the stairs; however, CarsonSpeer designed and installed custom painted maple cabinets in the kitchen.

The exterior is a combination of sanded brick and natural stone, with fiber cement soffits and banding to tie everything together.

With more than 4,000 square feet of refreshing adaptability, this residence fits its established surroundings while providing a modern family with all of the desired contemporary comforts. ☺





The custom fireplace is direct vent gas with an exterior brick wall and an interior composed of long-format linear tiles. A frame television embedded over the flames can display art or any form of network entertainment.



The kitchen is minimal with smooth, clean lines. Carson Speer worked with ID Studio Interiors to design and build the custom maple cabinetry. Special brushes were used on the finish to enhance the look of the rich wood grain.