



This family gathering place has room
for *H*, with space leftover
for farmhouse style

Full House

BY PATRICIA TERRY
PHOTOS BY TONY BERARDI
& SALLY GOOD / PHOTOFIELDS

THERE'S NEVER A DULL MOMENT AT LORETTA AND TOM VOLINI'S RAMBLING FARMHOUSE IN OAK BROOK. A FAMILY OF 14 GUARANTEES A CERTAIN LEVEL OF HUSTLE AND BUSTLE, AND THIS PLACE IS A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY. THOUGH MOST OF THE 12 CHILDREN ARE NOW GROWN—TWO HAVE KIDS OF THEIR OWN—YOU NEVER KNOW WHO MIGHT BE HOME. UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS GRAD NORA AND HER SISTER, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR MARCELLA, FREQUENTLY GET TOGETHER TO PLOT STRATEGY FOR THEIR FASHION BUSINESS. TONY, A PATENT ATTORNEY, AND DOMINIC, A DePAUL LAW STUDENT, STOP BY AND CHAT IN THE KITCHEN. SEVERAL OF THE GIRLS, NOW COLLEGE STUDENTS, LIVE AT HOME DURING THE SUMMER, WHILE OTHER ADULT KIDS COME AND GO.



PREVIOUS PAGE The Volinis' breakfast room, open to the solarium, is a serene space with soft colors and diffused light. The antique hutch is filled with Loretta's majolica collection. **THIS PAGE, ABOVE** The solarium brims with more antique finds, including a vintage stove now reborn as a plant stand. **OPPOSITE PAGE** With ceiling beams of reclaimed wood from Wisconsin, southern hard pine floors, and distressed, bottle-green custom cabinetry, the open kitchen was designed for cooking and hanging out. "We eat at home most of the time, and everyone cooks," Loretta says.

Once a week, the family comes for supper even if only to "eat-and-run," says Loretta. "There are always birthday celebrations and parties. I just love having a place where we can all get together and be comfortable."

All is exactly as Loretta imagined it would be when she and Tom built this sophisticated farmhouse-style home in 2003. "There isn't anything I would change," says Loretta. "Maybe it's because I'm older, and we've lived in several houses, so I knew what I wanted."

Finding it was the trick. The Volinis were house hunting when their real-estate agent pointed to this property—which then consisted of a nondescript 1950s house on a narrow, three-quarter-acre lot surrounded by a forest preserve that gave it a sense of seclusion despite its proximity to a busy thoroughfare. "I loved the area, but the house was basically a teardown," Loretta says.

So they began. Down came the '50s house and up went the 8,000-square-foot home, built by David Dressler, Inc. of Clarendon Hills, designed to accommodate the 14 Volinis, as well as ample space for entertaining their large extended large family (Tom is one of 10 siblings). The finished home includes eight bedrooms, a main-floor owners' suite, eight baths, space for nine or more cars, a screened porch, and a greenhouse room. All that, and a huge dining room that can comfortably seat the entire crew.

Loretta wanted the house to have a warm and cozy feel, says designer Nancy Hayden, principal of NRH Creative Designs in Chicago, who had worked with the Volinis on previous projects. "Tom grew up in the city with a big screened porch, and he said, 'Let's build a farm-style house.'"

Painted a creamy yellow with white trim and pale apple green shutters, the house has an ageless, comfortable appeal. Multiple dormers and a wrap-around porch reinforce the aesthetic. Handshaved, beveled, and stained southern hard pine floors run throughout. Carpenter Bill Hedges, who worked on the Volinis' Lake Geneva home, installed the ceiling beams, configured differently for each room.



LEFT Surrounded by a forest preserve and tall arborvitae, the 8,000-square-foot home enjoys a sense of seclusion. Plush furnishings sheltered by a pergola above provide cozy outdoor seating. BELOW An antique dinner bell outside the back door adds a touch of homey appeal to the rear gardens and hardscape of old Chicago pavers and limestone.



Loretta and Hayden scoured the Chicago Merchandise Mart and architectural salvage shops for antiques and unusual pieces to furnish the house. Hayden transformed antique cabinets into unique bathroom vanities and picked up distinctive items, such as a stunning multicolored quilt displayed in the front foyer, while visiting Virginia. The two also visited Atlanta to shop for antiques and scored the one-of-a-kind majolica tiles that were later inset behind the stove. They also found the zinc-topped oak bar, now housed in the butler's pantry. A truckload of additional furniture and accessories followed them home.

Inside, the two-story foyer boasts a grand oak staircase. An adjacent book-filled study is a cozy space that showcases a unique pewter-look mantel and pine paneling. The comfortable living room, with camel-back sofa, needlepoint wing chairs, and reclaimed wood beams embodies the spirit of Americana.



ABOVE The living room's palette echoes the soft shades of the rear of the house, favoring golds, greens, and terra cottas. BELOW One-of-a-kind majolica tiles add a colorful flair to the butler's pantry.



Beyond the living room, Loretta's dream dining room stars a cherry table that seats 16 (an additional table for 16 can be added). Hayden spotted the handsome alder hutch at Design Atelier in the Mart and customized it to double as a buffet server. A vintage French wrought iron balcony table with a beveled glass top reflects Loretta's passion for French antiques.

The heart of the Volini home comprises the living spaces in back: the open kitchen, family room, solarium, and entertainment/bar area flow out like the spokes of a wheel. This flexible floorplan creates the ideal setting for gatherings ranging from casual family dinners to more elegant events, such as daughter Amy's wedding. On that occasion, guests sipped cocktails beneath the pergola before dining under chandeliers on the tented lawn.

In the kitchen, the pale green, built-in, glass-front cabinets, white farmhouse-style sink, and antique corner table, and reinforce the home's traditional style. Expansive preparation and storage space, large SubZero freezer and refrigerator, and Thermidor commercial stove, give hostess extraordinaire, Loretta, the elbowroom she needs. "We eat at home most of the time, and everyone cooks," she says. "With 14 people, it was always easier to eat at home."

The showstopper is the breakfast room/solarium, with soft greens, a long dining table, and massive antique hutch showcasing Loretta's majolica collection. A rounded wood-and-glass solarium by Amdega, imported from England and assembled on site, finishes the space, which opens onto the vine-covered patio with pergola. Beyond, a lush back lawn gives the grandchildren a safe place to roam.

But of all the home's amenities and accessories, Loretta's true treasures are family photographs and the children's artwork. She says: "If a tornado blew the house away, that's what I'd miss the most." **MH**

PATRICIA TERRY IS A CHICAGO FREELANCE WRITER.

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