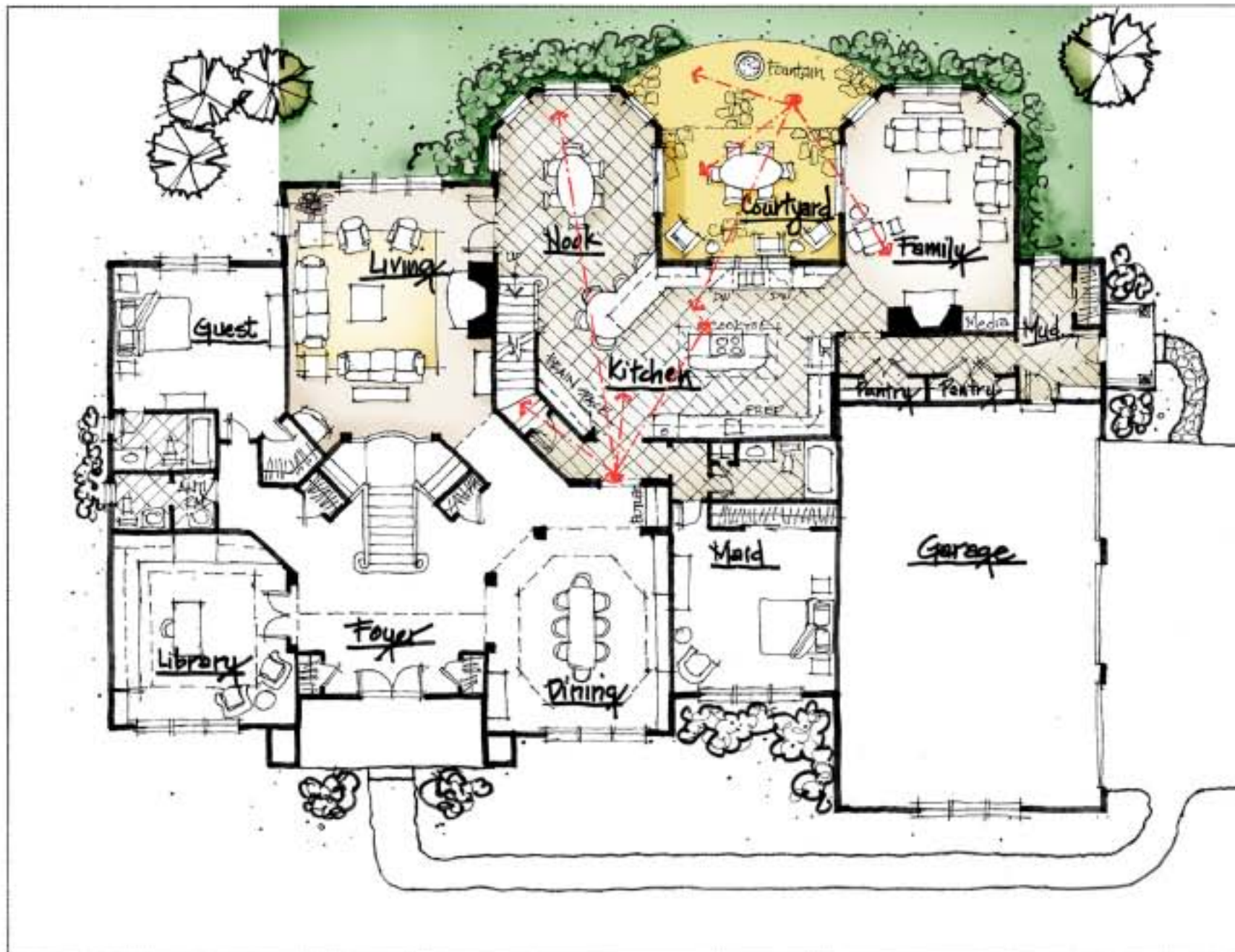


## TRANSLATING TRENDS Conservative Creativity



One can't help but notice that most articles that boast the latest housing trends are filled with photographs and stories about California and Florida projects, with a sprinkling of fabulous homes from other areas of the country. Lately, we read about outdoor living spaces, four-sided architecture, and bold exterior colors, among the many trends. Often, it is a huge leap for builders in conservative East Coast and Midwest markets to see how to translate these trends into their reality.

Of course, not only do the trendy markets have year-round sunshine; they also allow for year-round family time in courtyards and

lanais. In the meantime, those of us who just survived a winter are finally getting to relax on the patio or deck for the first time in months. Something is wrong with this picture!

But take heart. It only takes a little creativity to incorporate the trendiest features into the more conservative markets.

### Courtyards come East

Countless East Coast builders have a tried and true rear center family room model in their portfolio. And it is beyond tired — it is exhausted! However, add a courtyard and you can suddenly translate a national trend

An added courtyard can give you an edge over the competition





The deck off the master suite opens up the relationship between the indoors and outdoors. Traditional buyers can convert the deck into an enclosed sunroom.

into an edge above the competition. The predominant plan elements are maintained in a traditional manner, but the home is revitalized with the new design. And call it a courtyard, not a patio; the two words evoke such different feelings.

In this plan the main family living areas are nestled around the courtyard. The relationship between the indoors and the outdoors comes alive. All the expectations of the family hub are met with the open design, while adding a unique opportunity for outdoor living. An outdoor space is carved into

the hub, allowing abundant light to flow into the spaces and invites all to relax and enjoy. Who says you can't have a courtyard!

Up above, the master bedroom is provided an outdoor retreat for those summer evenings. A luxurious master is wrapped around a rear balcony, creating a unique edge to the design.

Not sure your buyers are going to bite? Traditional options can provide the safety net, and the added opportunity to customize to your buyer's lifestyle. The courtyard easily converts to a traditional enclosed sunroom



and the master maintains the abundance of light and drama without the balcony. Or perhaps a master exercise room could be added by enclosing the second floor space.

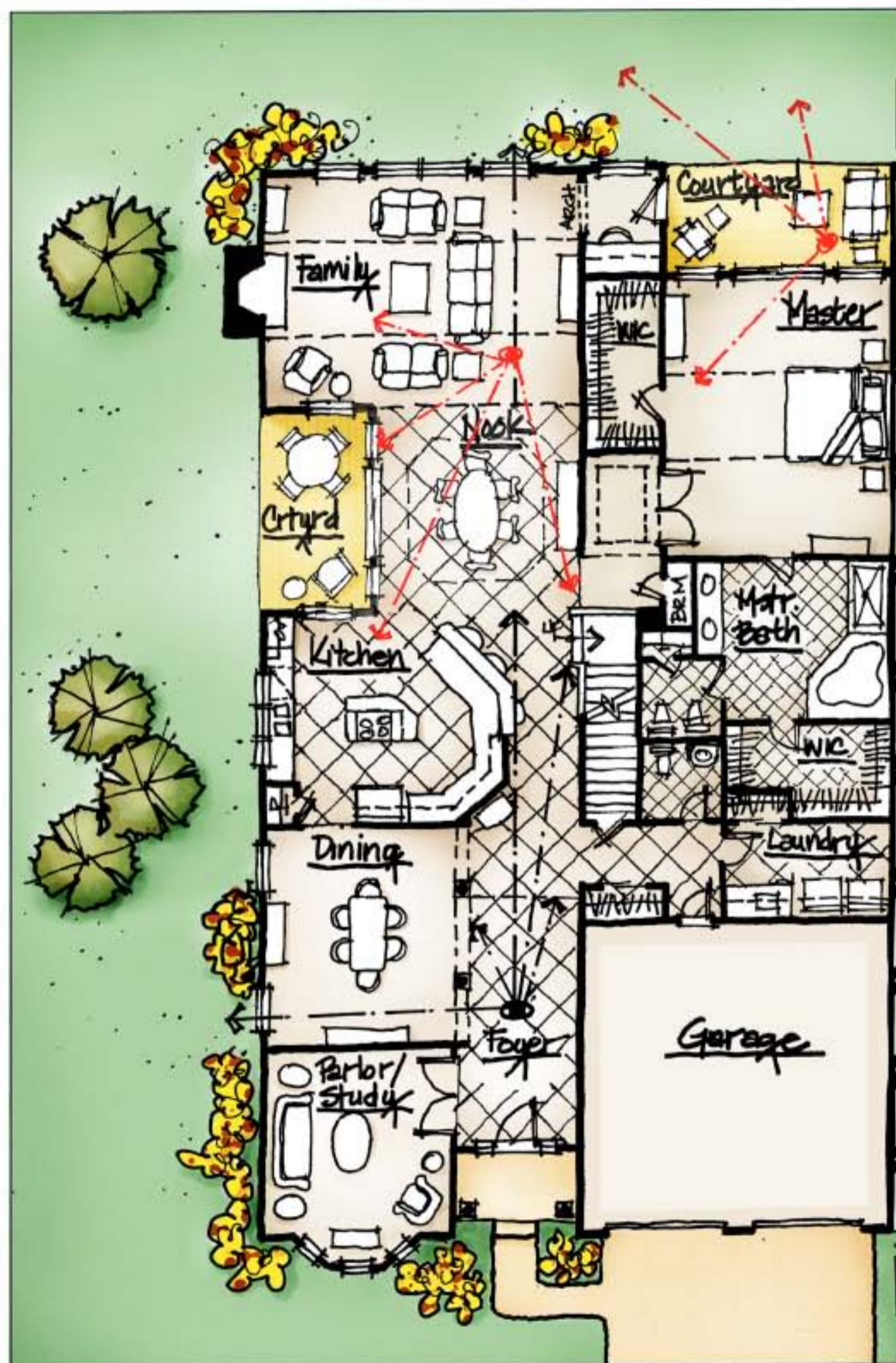
Courtyards added to an empty nester plan can also provide a design edge in the market. In the twin plan pictured here, a small courtyard is carved out of an otherwise long elevation. It creates a covered outdoor living space and allows for additional light into the family room and kitchen. The master enjoys its own little private retreat in often minimal backyard spaces. Merchandise with the latest furniture and you create a welcome new idea for the truly "active" adult.

Once again, the opportunity for customizing enhances the design. Some buyers may seek additional square footage, allowing you to create a larger casual dining area or master sitting room. Or some may find that a screened-in porch fits their lifestyle, and the space is there within the footprint. These are easy, profitable opportunities to meet this discriminating buyer's demands.

### A Touch of Bold

Architecture in the round, or the house having a cohesive look around all four sides, is really not a new idea. In fact, it is one of the most traditional qualities of home design. You do not see homes with "Hollywood fronts" in older communities; you see a home that is consistent in the design around the entire exterior. Yet, with the cost effective approach of applying vinyl siding on the sides and rears, we have somehow lost sight of the fact that this not the norm. It is a norm we have made up, and now we call it a "trend" to actually carry the architecture around the home. Conservative markets should recreate the past to attract buyers, not be afraid of a "trend" that is really a tradition.

The twin design pictured here from the Delaware market demonstrates the added value of four-sided architecture. The stone and brick detailing and shutters are carried



Maximize minimal backyard space and attract active adult buyers who will be drawn to a covered outdoor courtyard.





Look to the past when designing the exterior: carry front architectural details around to the back.

around the exterior. In addition, the courtyard area is embellished with round columns like the front porch, and the arch reflects the arched details introduced on the front. It just wouldn't be so appealing with siding.

Fabulous details are a "trend," but also a "tradition" that builders in conservative markets ought to embrace. The building products industry has come a long way in the past decade, and the opportunities for affordable great design are ever growing. Garage doors, front doors, shutters, and even siding are readily available in "trendy"

styles that have "traditional" characteristics. One can actually purchase an affordable "carriage" garage door, complete with historically correct hinge and window options. So, even if you have a front entry design, it does not have to have a plain white paneled door. Although this is not the place to add a dramatic color variation, you can paint the door a color that blends in with the overall exterior. Be thoughtful in selecting a color that adds richness to the design, not creates the garage door as an overpowering element.



But color and drama are welcome in shutters and front doors. The option of only selecting paneled shutters has been replaced with wonderful board and batten shutters in many styles, lengths, and widths to embellish an elevation in a very traditional manner. Now add a bold color to them to deem a home elegant. Front door options are equally abundant, and an opportunity to add a rich, dramatic inviting color. Color is one of the most significant elements to quality design. Rich colors are not new, but an age-old way to create beauty.

Although it may be quite a stretch to imagine a home surrounding an interior courtyard being built on the East Coast or Midwest, the possibilities are endless to incorporate the latest trends into traditional homes. Take your best sellers, translate the trends, and add a new twist. You will set yourself out from the competition. **SMI**

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**Cheryl O'Brien**, AIA, is president, owner and lead designer for C. O'Brien Architects, Inc., an architectural boutique in the Philadelphia area. With over 19 years' experience, her work spans the market from first-time buyers to high-end luxury homes. Her work has been honored in the "Best in American Living" awards and featured in *Builder* and *Professional Builder* magazines. For more information you can check out her Web site at [www.cherylobrien.com](http://www.cherylobrien.com) or e-mail her at [cherylobrien@cherylobrien.com](mailto:cherylobrien@cherylobrien.com).

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