

Atlanta
MAGAZINE'S

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STYLE
&
SUBSTANCE

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CREATING STYLE
THAT LASTS

PLUS
A DRAMATIC
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Q&A

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CLOSING THE GAP ON OPEN CONCEPT

Tricks for keeping connected spaces cozy and practical **BY CHIP WADE**



Keeping family together is the goal of most open-concept projects.

However, maintaining style and warmth can be an unexpected challenge in cavernous, undefined spaces. Too often the tendency is to combine as many living spaces as possible without considering how they will interact. Here are a few tricks for keeping things cozy:

LOOK UP Localized ceiling treatments like the faux coffered skylights, pictured above, are one of the best ways to define a singular area within a larger open space.

CENTRAL ISLAND An island or work surface full of functional features can help unite separate sections. For example, consider moving the kitchen island closer to the living room. A sofa can be placed directly against it (see above), eliminating an awkward walkway and allowing room for bar seating on the sides.



CHIP WADE, an Emmy-winning television host/producer, Georgia Tech engineer, HGTV designer, and third-generation craftsman, helps people make educated home purchasing or improvement decisions. His firm, Wade Works Creative, offers services in residential and commercial design, architecture, realty, and creative construction.

WORK IT If you are building a new island, incorporate practical features that encourage daily use and create a hub of activity. The granite top above contains a motorized computer work station beneath a wooden panel that rises up and out of the counter with the press of a button.

STYLISH DETAILS Also in the renovation above, natural ash wood beams conceal necessary structural elements, while black cabinetry and brushed brass accents add sophistication. With darker cabinetry colors, it's best to select lighter flooring to create a tailored, high-contrast sight line.



REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS **A Mutual Fund for Luxury Homes**

WHAT IF YOU could earn money while vacationing at multimillion-dollar mansions around the world? That's the concept behind Atlanta-based Equity Estates, which this year marks its 10th anniversary. The firm sponsors a kind of mutual fund for luxury residences. Investors buy memberships in portfolios of upscale properties in popular worldwide destinations. Unlike timeshare deals, these partnerships offer equity stakes. The fund holds the assets for about 10 years, then sells them, pays back investors, and—provided the homes have appreciated—divvies up profits. Of course, the real attraction is that membership (offered at three different levels) comes with killer vacations. The funds allow access to more than 60 homes in more than 30 countries, including primo locations like Paris, Beaver Creek, and Turks and Caicos. Equity Estates provides management, concierge, and housekeeping services, which do come at an additional annual cost of at least \$9,915—a relative bargain for comparable rentals, according to the fund. Levels begin with a capital contribution of \$227,500 for 15 nights.

—B.R.

KITCHEN: WADE WORKS CREATIVE; WADE: MARC MAUDLIN; ILLUSTRATION: MARYLOU FAURE