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**D**iving through suburban New Jersey, it's common to glimpse old, gracious homes through the trees. At first sight, this shingled dwelling appears similar to its 19<sup>th</sup>-century neighbors, but the crisp black-and-white exterior hints that this home offers something a bit different. An architect Douglas Wright says, "This is a Shingle-style with swagger."

The home is really two decades younger than many of the nearby buildings, and the originality that is foreshadowed on the exterior becomes a full-blown artistic expression inside, which was the goal of the owners, a creative couple with a taste for the unconventional.

When they purchased the land, it contained a 1950s-era house that had been built after a larger lot was divided. "The former house had many quirks, and there was no way to update it to the clients' taste," says Wright. So, they decided to raze the existing building and start anew. "They wanted the exterior to have a seaside, Hamptons feel," says Wright, "but they also wanted to do something appropriate to this area."

The architect, along with interior designer Fawn Galli and general contractor Brimon Brossus, created an interior that indulges in modernity with nods to the past. "The detailing inside is tradition in the abstract," Wright says. "For example, the molding suggests the delicate, curving trim of the more senior homes in the area, but it is more clean-lined and angular." According to Brossus, that molding is a prime example of the bespoke elements that define the house. "None of these details are anything you can just go to a store and buy," Brossus says. "It was all made by us for this home."

The idea of handcrafted, personality-driven design was picked up by Galli for the interiors. "My inspiration was the owners and their sensibilities," she says. "Like them, the decor is unselfconsciously hip." That translates into spaces like the dining room, located near the entry, whose statement piece is a table that's literally crawling with character. "It's white and covered with black images of ants, beetles, millipedes and moths—absolutely the last things you'd want to see where you eat," the interior



**Opposite:** Architect Douglas Wright made the traditional lines of this New Jersey home more modern by employing a crisp black-and-white exterior color scheme.

**Below:** For the dining room, interior designer Fawn Galli selected a table covered in a graphic pattern of insects by Studio Job from The Secret Garden. It's surrounded by two chairs from Lynn Hill sponsored in Mahwah, N.J.; above hangs a whimsical light fixture by Studio Aesth. A tall cactus is featured from Aniques on Old Rose Road in Chicago thanks to the style mix.



In the living room, Benjamin Moore's Fudge is the backdrop for a custom sofa framed by a 1950s-era Vitsoe Danish chair complemented on a fluffy Hongkong wool rug and a vintage lamp by West Elm. A Rani Sabaris charcoal vase echoes a Pacific Place Islands coffee table and a Fermor Record stool and table by Jan Kuryl.

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DOUGLAS WRIGHT



designer says. "The piece makes a gesture of surrealism and fantasy that keeps things interesting." The insect-adorned item is juxtaposed with a heavily ornamented 18th-century commode and more clean-lined elements such as midcentury-influenced chairs and the linear, bulb-encrusted light fixture.

A similar exuberance exists in the lounge, a room lined with a black-and-gold wallcovering and accented with silk draperies dyed for a bright pink and purple ombre effect. Comfortable seating is the name of the game here, and the space is furnished with a roomy round chaise, a pair of modern chairs upholstered with African mud cloth and generous floor cushions. "It's for kicking back and relaxing," Gail says. "It's a place for gathering after dinner."

That's not to say every aspect of the home is high-spirited. "The way you make it work is to allow the punchy elements to exist between resful, neutral moments," Gail says. "By balancing them, you create an interior that's engaging and interesting, but also quiet and comfortable." The living room, though marked by exclamation points like bright-pink ottomans with brass bases and a rose-colored glass lamp, falls into the resful category. The soft gray walls are the backdrop for a custom, L-shaped sofa upholstered with a plush fabric. Equality cushions are a pair of overstuffed leather chairs and a vintage Viggo Boesen chair covered with a fluffy, off-white lambskin.

Another room with quiet notes is the master bedroom, done in soothing shades of purple and gray. Pale lac-

A sliding Nanette system allows the breakfast room to open up to the garden. A Decore dining table by Arne Jacobsen has a striking nickel base and is surrounded by blue chairs crafted from recycled aluminum and purchased at From the Source. The vintage enamered metal pedestal is from Perini.

The blue-gray shade of the upper cabinets contrasts with white lines of the sides of lower cabinets in the kitchen. The unfurnished brass Waterbury faucets, and gleamy white Classic countertop and backsplash add other touches to the mix.



**Opposite:** A tufted bench holds center stage in the master bedroom. Curvata Pottery from Atlanta, Trellis tile, the shower, and blue and white Dorian in a repeating pattern covers the floor. The shower fixture is Easton from Waterworks. The custom chandelier by Michele James is made with recycled-usage light globes.

**Below:** In the master bedroom, the custom bed fabricated by UJ Upholstery is covered in a purple Dexter fabric, a hue favored by the clients. A signature armchair and footstool by George Smith sit in front of pieces of art from Tony Duvert, with Gothic Surfboard pattern for Jim Thompson Fabrics. The purple bed skirt is by Serlesian Hecker & Son Classic.



we'll establish an air of calm, as does a custom bed in a sumptuous deep-purple velvet. Silver tones found in the sunburst print on the drapes called from Jim Thompson fabric and in the abstract pattern of the wood-and-silk rug from Chused & Co add both texture and soft color.

Because outside living is very important to the family, landscape architect Cheryl Brown and landscape designer James Doyle created grounds that, similar to the interior, play with classicism and present-day cool. "We have a very traditional, symmetrical design that's mixed with contemporary elements," Brown says. "There are boxwoods alongside wider-looking native plants; a

lawn sized for tossing a football with the kids and areas for grilling." A pool house with massive glass doors provides an oasis for those enjoying the outdoors. "The wife wanted to load up a golf cart, drive it down to the pool house and not need to return to the main house for the entire day," Wright says. "Everything they need is here."

The same might be said for the entire project. "When we met, they were spending many summer weekends away," says Wright. "But after the house was completed, that's tapered off significantly. In a place like this, being at home is like a vacation." ■



**Above:** In addition to a changing area and showers, the pool house features a full kitchen, a dining area and a seating area. The mango-wood table was purchased at Iron Horse, and the chairs and stools were purchased at Iron Horse. The large indoor umbrellas are from West Elm, and the surfboard is vintage. Eskayell wallpaper lines the kitchen.

**Right:** The pool house was designed, so the family would have all they needed while they're out. Aery's horseshoe-shaped single and double chaises, two lounge chairs and patio umbrellas from Floragaze. The surrounding landscape is a mix of classicism as inspired by landscape architect Cheryl Brown and landscape designer James Dwyer.

