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**GREEN HOME  
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# modern fit

*This luxurious retreat is all about family*



BY JENNIFER MOORE STAHLKRANTZ | PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER KRUPENYE AND PETER MARGONELLI



**W**hen Bedford Village architect Carol Kurth was hired to design a spacious, contemporary home on a nearby street of two-to-three-acre properties, she knew her design would have to embrace the conventional architecture of the neighboring homes, the property's history as farmland, and the clients' modern aesthetic. The client, a developer of hotels and health clubs, and his wife wanted to build a family home that would feel like a wellness retreat where everything is open, luxurious, and communal. But, more importantly, they wanted the house to be all about their children, to make sure that they would have a great experience growing up. The wife completely trusted her husband's instincts and let him take the lead.

"I wanted to create an environment where we could be entertained together with indoor activities," he explains. Accommodating intimate living and large recreational spaces for a family of five would require significant square footage, but both Kurth and the clients sought to avoid a massive, looming design.

After visiting the clients' country home in Kent and getting to know their family's needs, Kurth and her lead project designer John Rapetti proposed a design that would appear to be an assemblage of small interconnected, modern barn-like structures. While the main house would contain the family's living spaces, the architecturally adjoined structures would house the retreat-inspired elements—indoor pool, gymnasium, and guest suite. The overall effect, like that of a well-designed hotel, would be compelling rather than overwhelming.

To work with the local farmland aesthetic, Kurth specified traditional materials, such as cedar shakes, vertical barn siding, and stone to lend individual identities to each structure. The design of the interior was a true collaboration between Kurth's



**INSPIRING IMAGES** This vintage farm photo and the property's farmland origins inspired the forms and assemblage of the new house.



design team and the husband, thanks to his ease with architectural language, innate design sense, and commercial building experience. Marie Aiello, of MADS Studio, joined the team to help with furnishings and decor. Legacy Development, an award-winning construction firm in Armonk, was the building contractor.

Completed in 2007, the main entrance is approached via a stone walkway that runs between a small stone garage and the main house. The foyer, like the other living spaces in the house, is not oversized, but rather scaled down to create opportunities for intimacy. A stone wall that begins outdoors and runs through the center of the house, like a spine, is punctuated by an open doorway that leads from the foyer to the great room.

The centerpiece of the great room is a cantilevered, poured concrete fireplace. Two stories high and open on three sides, it is as much a sculpture as it is a feat of engineering. The warmth of the walnut paneled ceiling and walls creates a perfect



#### LAYERING SPACES

Natural materials and a surprising interplay of textures are repeated throughout the home, including the stone spine, at left and above. The cantilevered, poured concrete fireplace is two storeys high.





**GATHERING PLACE**  
Friends and family come together in the luxurious, lounge-like theater space. Serenity prevails in the master suite's spa-like retreat, thanks to a soothing palate of colors and materials.

balance of color and texture with the cool, concrete fireplace, the gray Lagos limestone floors, and large picture-glass windows.

To the right of the great room is a five-foot-wide gallery that runs alongside the stone spine. No art hangs on this wall, as the craftsmanship and natural elements are art in and of themselves. Small windows, with views of the street, are strategically placed along the way to allow light to filter in.



With a lot of square footage, some homeowners find that rooms can become inconvenient for daily use. Eager to avoid that scenario, the clients told Kurth that the spaces and their flow needed to be inclusive. To that end, Kurth did not tuck the media lounge in the basement, but rather right in the heart of the home. The deep leather banquettes and recessed, textured walls, framed in walnut, create a sophisticated yet comfortable space for entertaining friends and family.

To the left of the great room, just beyond the cascade-coil screening, is the sleek, white kitchen. Anchored by the stone spine and a wall of windows, the space is a bright blend of organic materials and state-of-the-art technology. Designed for family-friendly use, the kitchen features a pantry that doubles as a "snack center," island seating, and table seating. The husband's playfulness is reflected in the fact that the adjacent dining room is dominated by a table of the billiards variety. "I like to take traditional spaces and use them in my own way," he explains.

The floor plan is L-shaped, so while the stone spine pierces straight ahead, through the exterior wall of the house, the gallery takes a 90-degree turn just past the pantry. A floating staircase is on the left, followed by an office, and the indoor, saltwater pool beyond.

The pool is housed in a four-season structure. The glass roof panels retract. The glass doors slide open to provide access to the outdoor terrace. The sports court is housed in a two-story gym. Clerestory windows keep it well-lit while graffiti art, depicting athletes and family members at play, fills it with vibrant color. The adjacent game room features ping-pong and the kids' pool table. In keeping with the finest five-star hotels, there is a stocked wine cellar for the adults.

The second floor is home to the family's bedrooms, an open TV lounge, homework areas, and the fitness center. The master suite is a veritable adult sanctuary reflecting the clients' request for an





#### FITNESS FIRST

Keeping fit takes the forefront year-round in the indoor/outdoor pool environment, where roof panels retract. The hopscotch hallway (below) makes even the most mundane activity full of fun.



open-flowing, tranquil environment and Kurth's innate ability to translate their words into a space. "Carol's team was able to listen to what we wanted, and when they came back with sketches, we could tell they had listened," he recalls as he points out the amenities that include a shower for two, relaxing tub, dressing room, and bespoke white leather bed.

The clients' teenaged daughter's bedroom suite features a purple-accented, spa-like bathroom and architecturally distinct, yet fun accents such as a modular art panel and a suspended circular reading chair. Their two sons have side-by-side bedrooms that share a bathroom. To keep the boys active, even while they're cleaning up, the client had Kurth design a double shower to encourage "soap hockey" one-on-ones.

"It was important to us to stay with the big picture—active family fun and relaxation," says the husband who was pleased that Kurth applied that unifying vision throughout the house. The success of her plan could be measured in the awards and accolades she has received for the design, but Kurth and the client are even more satisfied by the pleasure of the children—and their friends who clamor for play dates at the five-star family retreat. ■