

Cozy contemporary Middletown home offers elements of surprise

Contributed by Nancy Miller
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HINT OF THINGS TO COME "Expect the unexpected" could be the theme of this contemporary house. The property's unique details begin with the hot-dipped galvanized picket gate that opens onto the driveway leading to the house. A two-color brick exterior with limestone accents and horizontal banding is enhanced by green and red shingles. Architect and builder Jim Peterson's use of Indian slate-filled steel channels and dormers with copper siding hints at the design surprises just inside the front door where the structural steel channels are repeated in the entry. "I kept the house narrow and incorporated as many windows as possible to maximize the light coming into the house. And I planned the windows on the rear wall to overlook the lake. To add an element of surprise, I designed the house so that the rear walls are not parallel with the front wall," says Peterson. He set the white maple floors with Brazilian cherry inlays on an angle to accentuate the angle of the house.

WARMING IT UPInterior designer Gail Ciliberti says the challenge of a contemporary house is to create an environment that's warm and welcoming. She and Peterson used combinations of natural materials to achieve that warmth and included various features, such as the fireplace, that are independent components to enhance one another. The hearth and curved face of the great-room fireplace are sandstone, which complements the maple floors, with Red Dragon granite inserts. The hearth transitions into a platform that anchors a flat-screen television. In front of the fireplace, a sunrise yellow leather sectional and cherry-base glass-top table sit on a geometric rug of muted gold, green, gray, brown and red. The rug is from Frances Lee Jasper. A rift-sawn vertical-grain maple bookcase built by carpenter Ned Fitzgerald is the focal point of a reading nook off the great room. The bookcase holds a portion of an extensive book collection, a daughter's paintings and an assortment of decorative accessories. An ecru leather loveseat and ottoman provide comfortable seating. The dining area, overlooking the lake, features a square table with a black terrazzo base, cherry cabinet and Rosewood granite countertop. The chairs are an unexpected combination of bamboo, leather and stainless steel. A sculptural paper lamp hangs above the table. **DESIGN SURPRISES**The kitchen opens onto the great room and dining area. Ciliberti designed the kitchen to include a circular-form island. The contour and shape of the island are reflected in the details of the soffit. The cherry cabinets, designed by Ciliberti and fabricated by Tom Burkhart of The Burkhart Co., are accented by Blue Eyes granite and Flamed Black Absolute granite countertops. The backsplash is Ganges Kund slate. Appliances include a GE Profile oven, refrigerator and dishwasher; a GE Monogram cooktop, European hood and wine cooler; and an Advantium oven. Peterson continued his design surprises by bringing down the scale of the opening to the master suite to be mysterious. An alcove off the living room leads to the master suite, which has a small vaulted ceiling and a 7-foot bed wall. Ciliberti created the bed wall with maple flat-panel cabinetry on the opposite side. Ciliberti designed the master bath with attention to luxurious details. Wood and an Indian slate floor introduce a natural element. Backlit mirrors are positioned over his-and-her horizontal-grain maple vanities with Marone Cohiba granite countertops and stainless-steel hardware. Ganges Kund slate is used on the floor and in the shower, which has an unusual tiled faucet tower. Iridescent black glass mosaic and a sandblasted glass door provide striking individuality to the space. **STEP DOWN**Open-riser stairs and a single piece of undulated rail lead downstairs to the walkout recreation room, bar, office and exercise room. A 16-foot tower of windows at the corner of the stairs extends from the basement to the second floor. The carpet downstairs is placed on a diagonal that replicates the diagonal placement of the wood floors upstairs. A bar is highlighted by a manufactured stainless-steel panel base, Uba Tuba granite countertops and stainless-steel rod bar stools with suede seats. The fireplace has a long hearth with Green Ice slate and incorporates a flat-screen television and audio-visual components. A billiards table and piano offer additional entertainment.