

# New England Home

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MARCH/APRIL 2009

## RELAXED HIGH STYLE

SMALL SPACE, BIG IMPACT  
INDOOR-OUTDOOR BOSTON LUXURY  
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GRACIOUS SUBURBAN RETREAT



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# PRETTY AND PRACTICAL

*A family home in suburban Boston proves that a house designed to accommodate a brood of growing children can also possess the gracious style the grownups crave.*

TEXT BY JESSICA KEENER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAM GRAY  
ARCHITECTURE: JOHN S. MACDONALD, MOREHOUSE MACDONALD & ASSOCIATES  
INTERIOR DESIGN: MOLLIE JOHNSON | CONTRACTOR: OLD GROVE PARTNERS  
PRODUCED BY STACY KUNSTEL



CLASSIC FINISHES ARE RECONCEIVED IN A MORE CONTEMPORARY WAY, SUCH AS THE FOYER'S SQUARE COLUMNS THAT BOW SLIGHTLY IN THE MIDDLE. FACING PAGE: AN INSET FRAMES A GOTHIC BREAKFRONT IN THE LIVING ROOM.

STEPS FROM THE DINING ROOM TO THE SUNKEN LIVING ROOM “CREATE A SENSE OF HIERARCHY IN THE FORMAL LIVING ROOM AND GIVE ADDITIONAL IMPORTANCE TO THE SPACE,” SAYS ARCHITECT JOHN S. MACDONALD. FACING PAGE: A HIERARCHY EXISTS OUTSIDE, TOO, IN THE MULTI-TIERED LANDSCAPE THAT EMBRACES THE HOUSE.



The couple had a short but **demanding wish list** when they set out to find a piece of land for their new house.

“We were looking for a change and a place to raise our three young children,” says the homeowner. He and his wife found everything they wanted, and more, on a seven-acre parcel of gently sloping land in the suburbs south of Boston. Their new house, a 14,000-square-foot beauty of shingles and stone that blends vintage and contemporary

design, settles into inspiring views that include mature forest and a private pond. “We fell in love with the pond, the views, the privacy and the proximity to our children’s school,” the homeowner says.

The pair wanted a home that would meet the needs of a young family while satisfying their own grown-up desires

for a gracious place to live. They envisioned a house filled with light and easy elegance. They also wanted unimpeded access to the outdoors. Architect John S. MacDonald, of the Lexington, Massachusetts-based Morehouse MacDonald & Associates, gave them just that with his design for a six-bedroom, nine-bath house that features a multitude of French doors and windows to take advantage of the views. Outdoor details such as covered and uncovered decks, a turret and stone terraces make the most of the property, while indoors, embellishments like mahogany-paneled walls, ten-foot ceilings and columns provide the classic elegance the couple likes.

“The kidney-shaped pond and knoll provided a great palette for the house,” says Greg Graham, lead designer and project manager at Morehouse MacDonald. “We took

*Outdoor details make the most of the property, while indoor embellishments provide classical elegance.*

advantage of the undulation in the land, which allowed for walk-out rooms in the basement, including a spa, exercise room, bar and billiard room.”

A winding driveway opens up to a grand, circular arrival court in front of the house. Inside, a spacious welcoming vestibule provides a transition space into the formal living room. Next to the foyer a dramatic, three-level walnut stairway carves a breathtaking spiral inside the turret. “The staircase is very ceremonial,” says MacDonald. “Not only is it



CARMELLA COBBLED LIMESTONE FLOORING IN THE KITCHEN IS DURABLE, LOOKS OLD AND MAKES FOR EASY CLEAN-UP IN A KID-FRIENDLY HOME. FACING PAGE: THE DINING ROOM'S CHOCOLATE-BROWN WALL COLOR ADDS WARMTH AND DEPTH TO A ROOM FLOODED WITH LIGHT FROM SURROUNDING WINDOWS.



*Repeating architectural details unify the look and create flow from one room to the next.*

a statement but an experience.”

Two wings extend north and south from the stairway, stretching like open arms, one to the public spaces, the other to the dad’s office and a guest suite. A second stairway leads from a side entrance to the children’s playroom on the second floor.

At the far end of the north wing, an expansive combined kitchen and family room offers multiple seating areas, including window seats and a banquette for informal family dining. “We always wanted an open kitchen,” says the homeowner. “When you have get-togethers, people always gather in one room. You can do that in this kitchen.”

Repeating architectural details unify the look and create flow from one room to the next. The kitchen, dining and living rooms as well as the office all have coffered ceilings. “This traditional influence is a nice way of detailing the ceiling as well as bringing the high ceilings

down to a more human scale,” says MacDonald.

A further harmonizing element comes from the varying shades of green in the color palette devised by interior designer Mollie Johnson, who furnished all the rooms in the house. “Green is one of the wife’s favorite colors,” says Johnson. “The color also plays to the outdoors, which you get a lot of in this house.”

Johnson also used the hue to pull together the diverse materials at work in each room. In the kitchen, for example, green linen shades add zest and bring a softness that provides a foil for the kitchen’s harder surfaces, such as the stippled granite countertops and limestone flooring. White subway tiles behind the stove give a clean, timeless look and blend with the more relaxed leather-seated cane banquette chairs.

**With family needs ever-present, choice**

of materials was key. A custom hardwood banquette table is durable and family friendly. “The concept of the ban-

THE COMFORTABLE BANQUETTE MAKES THE KITCHEN’S CASUAL DINING AREA A POPULAR SPOT FOR HOMEWORK AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES AFTER SUPPER. FACING PAGE: THE LOUNGE CHAIR, COVERED IN BRUNSCHWIG & FILS FABRIC SWIVELS TO AFFORD VIEWS OF AN EVER-SHIFTING FLOW OF ACTIVITIES IN THIS BUSY AREA OF THE HOUSE.





SMOKE-COLORED WALLS PROVIDE A SUBTLE BACKDROP IN THE MASTER BEDROOM SUITE, WHERE WHITE UPHOLSTERED CHAIRS AND AN OTTOMAN BLEND QUIETLY WITH THE ROOM'S TEXTURED RUG. RIGHT: PALE HUES SET A TONE OF SERENITY IN THE MASTER BATH.



quette works well for kids and doing homework," says MacDonald. Also practical is the ribbed, neutral-toned carpet in the family room, a wool version of sisal that stands up to traffic but feels soft.

"With children, the standard of elegance and beauty needed to incorporate comfort, and the materials needed to be forgiving," says Johnson.

Upstairs, the two wings house the adults' and children's bedroom areas, separated by a central landing. A glassed-in passageway with limestone floors leads to a master suite

*"We moved into our dream home, a place our family never wants to leave."*

with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, his-and-hers walk-in closets and a sitting area with views of the pool and backyard. A French door opens to a long, covered deck made of Brazilian walnut, also known as ironwood because it is so hard.

In the master bath, blue marble counters and insets in the cream limestone floor bring a soothing, elegant touch. Gooseneck and cross-handled faucets in polished nickel are beautifully traditional. Half sheers and Roman shades with glass bead fringe on the windows add a romantic ambience. "A feeling of serenity is mirrored by surrounding trees, broad lawns and natural light seen through windows on three sides of the bedroom," says Johnson.

The children's side holds three bedrooms, a spacious playroom and a large bunkroom that extends out over the garage and allows plenty of space for friends and cousins to

come for sleepovers. "The house is made for family," says MacDonald. "Holidays are not 'hit and run' experiences. Guests can stay for days; everyone has a place to be."

## While the home's classical elements give it

a sense of timelessness beyond the mere two years it's been here, there's no mistaking its modernity. A house-wide digital operating system by Crestron manages light, heat, air conditioning, music and telephones from two central master panels. Installed and serviced by Creative Systems in Natick, Massachusetts, the system allows the homeowner to push one button and direct lighting scenes

and music for the whole house instead of having to walk through many rooms to make individual changes.

Throughout the design and construction of the house, plenty of advance planning and good communication between owners, architect, designer and the general contractor, Old Grove Partners of Needham, Massachusetts, helped bring about success. "It's important for designers to talk to architects for a house this size," says Johnson. "Many items must be ordered nine to twelve months before the house is finished, such as custom carpets."

For the homeowner, the extra effort was worth it. "It's a challenge when it's a process that takes two years," he says. "But after the long process, we moved into our absolute dream home, a place our family never wants to leave." **NEH**

**RESOURCES** For more information about this home, see page 219.