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VOLUME 20 ISSUE 4 | 2023



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EDITOR'S LETTER



I remember growing up thinking that Atari was the coolest thing I had ever seen. Does everyone remember Pong and Tank Battle? We all watched the Jetsons and thought to ourselves that this could never be possible in our lifetimes. Boy, were we ever wrong!

It amazes me that we are in the age of virtual reality and artificial intelligence. The speed of advances in technology is mind boggling to me. Last week, the FAA gave clearance to sell an electric car that has the ability to travel 200 miles on the ground and, wait for it, 100 miles in the air.

And just like that, we have become the Jetsons.

We explore this with Architect Christopher Pagliaro in our Ask the Experts department. He explains to us the use of virtual reality his firm utilizes in allowing his clients to actually walk around their new home before it is even built. Many people are visual in nature, hence the reason that scale models have been made for centuries to allow people to see scale and proportion of their new creations. Being able to walk through rooms, up stairs and make changes in this virtual world is a huge leap forward in the working relationship between architect and client, which Chris explains brilliantly.

On a final note, our thoughts and prayers go out to all of those effected by the torrential rains and flash flooding that has recently occurred across the northeast. We hope that everyone is safe.

Best,

Matthew J. Kolk
Editor in chief



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CREATE A SMART OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCE

Bill Charney, president of Advanced Home Audio, explains how you can customize your outdoor living space with his company's ingenious luxury features.

Story by Shehla Lucanera





When imagining your perfect backyard retreat, you may envision a pool area with a welcoming outdoor kitchen space, boasting plenty of room for family and friends to gather. Yet, when maximizing luxury, important details such as ambience and discreet yet remarkable audio are what truly amplify and polish an elite outdoor experience. For more than 20 years, family-owned Advanced Home Audio has provided complete outdoor entertainment solutions, including outdoor theaters, specialized lighting and ingenious audio solutions. We recently spoke with the firm's president, Bill Charney, about what sets Advanced Home Audio apart, and why even clients in South Florida choose the superior service of the Connecticut-based company.

Design + Decor: How important are outdoor TVs when designing your ultimate outdoor entertainment space?

Bill: TVs are involved in a many of our outdoor projects. There are various models with different levels of performance, depending on whether the television is in direct sun or in the shade. Outdoor TVs are built in a variety of sizes; we work on the design of the project to recommend the correct one. They are installed in conjunction with the existing outdoor masonry.

Design + Decor: How are outdoor TVs designed differently from indoor TVs?

Bill: An outdoor TV is specifically designed to withstand the outdoor elements all year long. The television is going to get wet, it's going to get hot, and it has to deal with humidity and a cold environment. It is also designed very differently from an indoor TV: it features high color and brightness to give the user a good experience on a sunny day. A regular TV will not last and doesn't look good; you can't see the screen on a sunny day outside. Our company can design the space, recommend the appropriate TV, and install it.

Design + Decor: Please share your thoughts on customized landscape lighting.



Bill: Many different types of fixtures can create a purposeful design. It all depends on whether you are trying to illuminate a walkway or up-light a tree, or downlighting landscaping, a beautiful specimen tree or a key element in the landscaping.

Design + Decor: What popular outdoor entertainment areas require good lighting?

Bill: The outdoor kitchen and fire pit have become focal points for the family, as there has been more of a focus on the home in recent years. Family and friends constantly gather in these outdoor spaces, and we've seen clients requesting attention in these spaces a lot more. These outdoor entertainment spaces usually include a kitchen and a patio with stonework, a fire pit and a pool. They are great hangout and conversation spaces for friends and family.

Also, for outdoor lighting, we create under-countertop and edge lighting, step lighting, pathways—we even have a tiki torch that has a real downlight with a real torch flame on top. We work to install some interesting products to make the backyard entertainment space really come alive. Great landscape lighting provides depth and dimension. A space without it is just dark and pitch-black. We create shadowing and different textures of light to add character and transform a space. For example, if you have an outdoor patio or table seating area, we have a niche product that we suspend from your outdoor umbrella to illuminate the tabletop. We get really creative with outdoor lighting design.

Design + Decor: How does lighting color come into play with the outdoor space?

Bill: We help select the color temperature of the light based on the space and what we are trying to accentuate. Sometimes we introduce



jwh
design & cabinetry





color for more of a party motif.

Design + Decor: How can a better network improve outdoor entertainment?

Bill: We help introduce all the needed technology in the space, including network and Wi-Fi—your outdoor television, lighting, audio and control. Having great Wi-Fi service in your outdoor space is critical. It allows you to surf the web and get reliable cell phone calls, especially in areas where there is a very low cell signal. More importantly, it allows you to connect your smart phone app to be able to control your outdoor space. With proper connections you can control the lights, music and what's on TV. Wi-Fi is the backbone of that outdoor space.

Design + Decor: What do you consider when creating intelligent audio for an outdoor space?

Bill: Some really special sound systems and technologies have been developed specifically for the outdoor environment. Music outdoors is particularly difficult with low frequency. Outdoor audio poses





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real challenges; it's hard to get a good bass sound outdoors because of physics. We have systems designed with aesthetics in mind that literally blend into the landscaping. Then we add subwoofers that are buried in the landscaping; they just vanish and disappear.

The other challenge that happens outside is that, simply placing a pair of speakers outside your home is not ideal for outdoor music because, for example, it forces you to turn up the sound to reach the other side of the pool. A real landscape sound system uses multiple speakers placed around the entire area, but set back so you wind up with a very evenly distributed sound. No matter where you walk, you can still have a conversation with great background music. Outdoor audio is very laser focused on the space where you want it, and the sound carries to all the places you want audio: around the hot tub, patio, outdoor dining area, outdoor firepit. You can also easily stream anything, including your favorite playlist. Speakers are even integrated into lighting or a large planter that sits on the patio. We have very

creative systems that blend in; you can't even tell where the sound is coming from.

Learn more about all the clever yet easy-to-use luxury audio, specialty lighting and advanced outdoor network systems offered by Advanced Home Audio, which provides exceptional concierge customer service and unmatched attention to detail. For more information, go to the company's website, advancedhomeaudio.com.

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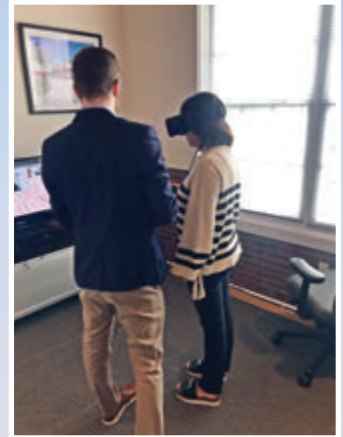
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STROLL INSIDE YOUR NEW HOME— BEFORE IT'S EVEN BUILT

Architect Christopher Pagliaro explains how 3D virtual reality technology brings traditional blueprints to life.

Story by Shehla Lucanera





Admire your new basinless stone sink in your freshly remodeled powder room—before it's even built. The magic of virtual reality (VR) rendering allows clients to personally walk through and see colors, finishes and accurately detailed spaces before construction even starts. Award-winning architect Christopher Pagliaro of Christopher Pagliaro Architects, a graduate of Catholic University in Washington, D.C., and a member of its Board of Architecture, has been utilizing the VR experience for clients for

years to help bring their visions and dreams to life.

Christopher says that the quality of 3D walk-throughs has recently improved by leaps and bounds, with stunningly real, full-color interactive experiences. VR technology helps clients who struggle to visualize flat blueprints before they invest thousands or millions. Clients can “walk” into their new addition, renovation or new build, open cabinets and get a feel for how large their walk-in closet will be. They



can experience how the sunlight will illuminate their new reading nook, and how the evening glow will light up the family room.

Seeing a design in real space also benefits all members of the building team, including contractors, landscape designers and interior designers. The VR technology Pagliaro Architects uses can input furniture choices, among other colorful details, so an interior designer can measure how a modular, six-seater corner sofa actually fits into a space. Serving Connecticut and beyond, Pagliaro Architects delights clients by providing an unforgettable encounter with their luxury home project before it is built.

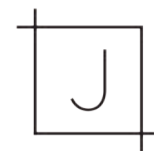
Christopher recently spoke with Design + Decor about the power of harnessing 3D visual imagery for his clients.

Design + Decor: Please walk us through the experience of VR architecture.

Chris: It is ironic that you phrased the question, “walk us through the experience of VR Architecture,” as that is exactly what we use VR for in our practice: walking the clients through the design. When clients walk in, they all try to turn on the sink and put their cell phone on the counter—that’s how real it looks. Clients fear they might walk off a ledge; it’s a very real experience.

Design + Decor: How has VR improved project analysis?

Chris: VR has become a valuable resource throughout the design process. For many years I hesitated to use it—or any computer animation—because I didn’t think the quality of the computer imagery was on a parallel with the quality of the actual design. The



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materials looked cheap and amateurish, and I felt the imagery was a poor representation of the actual work. With that said, I believe the quality of the systems has improved tremendously, and our office has mastered it.

Design + Decor: Do you think VR architecture has optimized communication? If so, how?

Chris: For decades, it was my job to teach a client how to read a two-dimensional drawing—in addition to explaining a design. The VR and 3D walk-throughs of completely (and accurately) rendered designs have freed us of that task, thus allowing a client to fully experience a design. I am grateful for that!

Design + Decor: In your current projects utilizing VR technology, have you seen cost reductions?

Chris: VR technology is a valuable design source for me, as it



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provides a high level of accuracy for the more complex spaces—the ones with complicated roof and ceiling forms—therefore enabling us to revise and edit, and understand the lighting. That said, I have made only one minor revision based on the experience—the reduction of column diameters—as I’ve always seen the designs in my head three-dimensionally.

Design + Decor: How does VR technology assist collaboration among the architect, builder and designer?

Chris: An unexpected surprise is how much we use the renderings and VR to walk the builders through the design. I’ve always believed that the best builders “see” the final product and work their way toward execution. By taking them through the VR, we can explain certain things in depth before they put a shovel in the ground.

Design + Decor: What is the client’s reaction when they get to virtually explore their new home, renovation or addition?

Chris: My favorite thing about clients using VR is how they are afraid to stand near an elevated edge, or “place” their phone on the (nonexis-

tent) countertop, only to watch it fall to the floor of the office. They love experiencing the design—especially the realistic and accurate way we can demonstrate how the sun interacts with the interiors on any given date and time of day.

For more information on 3D designs and a virtual reality rendering of your upcoming project, go to Christopher’s website, ChristopherPagliaroArchitects.com, or call 203.838.5517.

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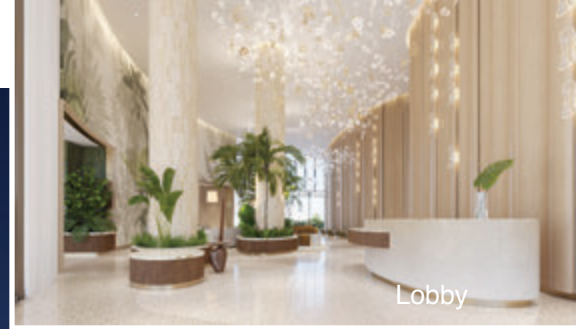




A ONE-OF-A-KIND RESIDENTIAL VILLAGE PUTS A NEW SPIN ON LUXURY

The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Estero Bay, Redefine Upscale Living

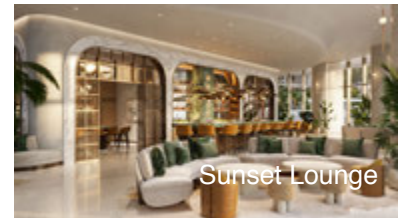
Story by Meryl Siegman



Lobby



Sunset Lounge



Sunset Lounge

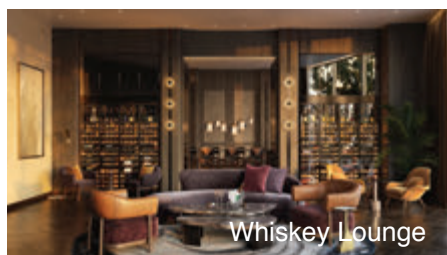
When London Bay Development Group, the acclaimed real estate developer, partnered with The Ritz-Carlton Residences to develop a unique and extraordinary property in Southwest Florida, it hired the best talent there is to help it achieve its vision: the world-renowned architecture firm Arquitectonica and highly esteemed interior design firm Meyer Davis Studio.

With an opening date set for 2025, the Ritz-Carlton Residences at Estero Bay in Bonita Springs is in a class by itself. Sited on 30 acres of pristine upland and gorgeous coastline, the project will consist of two elegant towers housing 224 homes, a private lagoon and a dizzying array of amenities—all within the new coastal village of Saltleaf, which will offer an 18-hole championship golf course, nine-hole short course, 72-slip marina, and five-star restaurant. The Ritz-Carlton's concierge team will be on hand 24/7 to cater to residents' every need.

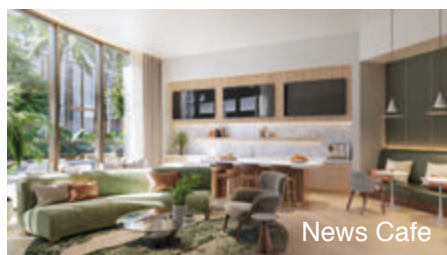
The development is located adjacent to Estero Bay Preserve State Park, which consists of nearly 12,000 acres of undeveloped conservation land, and offers 10 miles of coastal access and 12 miles of hiking trails in an untouched natural habitat.



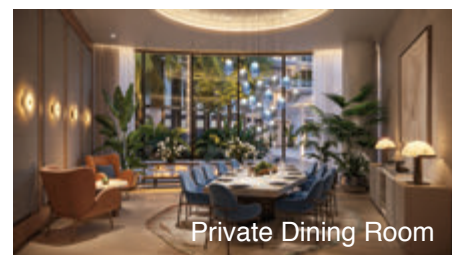
Pool Bar Oasis



Whiskey Lounge



News Cafe



Private Dining Room

Design + Decor was fortunate to sit down with the developer, architect and interior designers of this one-of-a-kind project. Here's what we discovered.

The Players

The Ritz-Carlton Residences

Ritz-Carlton is the celebrated international hotel brand with the apt tag line "luxury without limits." The Ritz-Carlton Residences offer whole-ownership, luxury living defined by sophisticated style and unparalleled amenities delivered with legendary service. Its locations include some of the most stunning resort destinations in the world.

"Private Label Living"

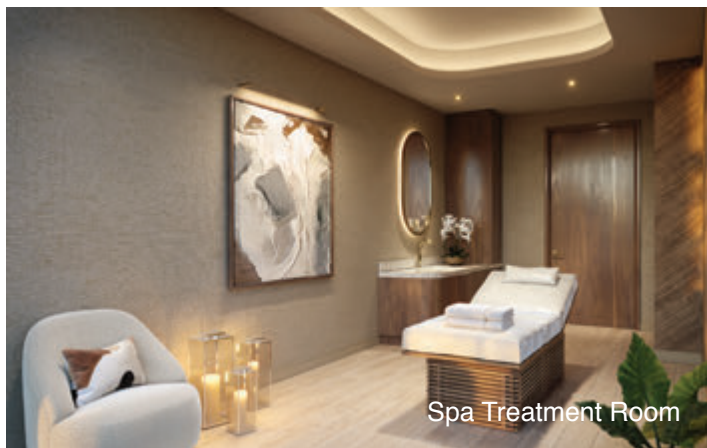
London Bay, the award-winning real estate developer in the Southwest Florida home market that coined the term "private label living," offers a spectrum of home building, development and design services. Founded in 1990, London Bay is credited with building world-class homes and residential communities in some of the area's most exclusive neighborhoods. It was named "America's Best Builder" by Builder magazine, and has earned more than 450 industry awards.

"The Residences at Estero Bay is an exceptional property," says London Bay CEO Mark Wilson. "In addition to being sited on 30 acres, which is unusually large, it will offer virtually everything you need in a self-contained village. From you moment you arrive, there's nothing but peace and quiet—no sound of urban noise. You're totally surrounded by nature: the spectacular estuary leading out to the Gulf of Mexico, and Florida's very first aqua preserve. It's the crown jewel that sits on Estero Bay."

Besides its extraordinary location, says Mark, the development's exquisite architecture proves why London Bay is a leader in the real estate marketplace. "Whether it's a single-family home or a senior living facility, we try to make a mark on design and distinguish ourselves from the overall market," he says. "Miami is one of the most exciting cities, with fabulous buildings. But when you look at the architecture of Southwest Florida, all you see is mock-Mediterranean, without anything iconic or truly distinctive. We're trying to change all that with a property that has a real 'wow' factor and will draw people from all over the country. We understand Southwest Florida."

Awe-Inspiring Architecture

Arquitectonica is a known presence on the international stage, its distinctive



Spa Treatment Room



Spa Lounge



Pet Grooming Room



Beauty Salon

portfolio filled with projects in 59 countries across the globe. With offices in several major cities, the firm is known for pushing the limits of design with its innovative use of materials, geometry, pattern and color to introduce a new brand of modern design to the world.

Bernardo Fort-Brescia, a native of Lima, Peru, who holds a Master of Architecture degree from Harvard University, founded Arquitectonica in 1977 with a group of young architects. Since then, he has led the firm's expansion across the U.S. and abroad. He has earned it a reputation for being one of the pioneers of globalization in the profession of architecture, accumulating hundreds of awards along the way. He couldn't be more thrilled about being on the team of this unique project. "The sheer size of the property enabled us to create something of this grandeur and significance," says Bernardo. "Most projects of this type don't have that kind of acreage. It allows us to create an entire village complete with marina in a totally natural environment."

Inspiring Interiors

Meyer Davis Studio is a globally recognized design boutique specializing in residential and hospitality interior design. The award-winning firm has established itself at the forefront of high-end residential design projects throughout the U.S. and abroad.

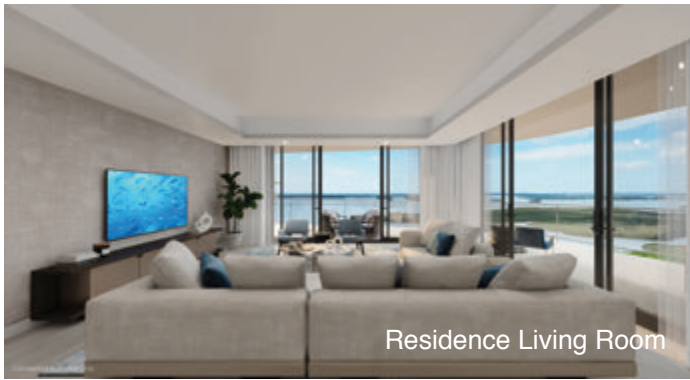
One of Meyer Davis' two founders, Will Meyer explains that the firm designs "experiences" rather than simply spaces, combining principles of great design with a clear vision of what its clients wish to create. He believes that great design weaves together bold concepts and striking details to ensure that each project makes an immediate and lasting impression. "One of the most appealing aspects of the southwest coast of Florida is its amazing sunsets; they make the area special and unusual," says Will. "With Estero Bay, we took advantage of the best sunsets in the state. The buildings are oriented to capture the sunsets and the coastline. The building reflects how the water, land and greenery are intertwined—they are such a big part of the iconography of the area."

A Harmonic Convergence

The breathtaking scope of this extraordinary development in a natural habitat of pristine coastline was made possible by the team of developer, architect, interior designer and brand that was assembled—a constellation of talent, ambition and vision.

"The Ritz-Carlton has been involved throughout the entire design process," Mark from London Bay explains. "They review every aspect of what we do, from landscaping and architecture to interior design and amenities, to ensure that everything is in line with their brand standards. The marvelous thing for our residents is that once we complete the building, they'll have a team from the Ritz-Carlton managing the building. When they move in, not only will it be beautiful, but they'll have Ritz-Carlton service people looking after their every need."

"We looked at multiple architects and interior designers for this project," Mark continues. "Arquitectonica stood out because of its fabulous portfolio. We felt that Bernardo and his team would create something that would help us truly stand apart, not only because of their talent but because they understand luxury and the Ritz-Carlton brand. We felt very much the same with Meyer Davis. They've done many projects with all the top luxury hospitality brands—you name the brand, they've worked with them. They understand the balance of creating something high-end and luxurious, but making sure it's still warm, comfortable and inviting."



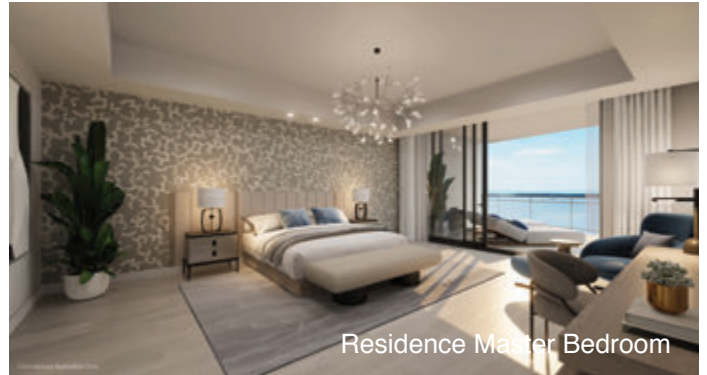
Residence Living Room



Residence Kitchen



Residence Master Bath



Residence Master Bedroom

The landscape architecture design firm, EDSA, with a long history of working with Arquitectonica and Meyer Davis on successful projects, completed the package.

“We’ve worked on other Ritz-Carlton projects, so it’s a brand we know very well,” says Bernardo. “We’ve also collaborated on other properties with Meyer Davis. We work well together—we do the architecture and they do the interiors.” But London Bay is a new client for the architectural firm. “They called us because of other luxury branded condominiums we’ve completed,” he says. “We understand each other. The project has worked out really smoothly; we’re happy with how things have evolved.”

Adds Will of Meyer Davis, “Over the years, we’ve developed a strong relationship with Arquitectonica based on mutual admiration. We are inspired by their work, and their sense of design matches our own sensibility. We complement their vision and complete the story they tell about their approach to the building with our interiors. That’s why we enjoy working together so much.”

Nancy Santorelli, an associate principal at Meyer Davis, adds that EDSA played a large role in setting the foundation for the property by integrating the lushness of the outdoor space, including the marina and lagoon, with the interiors. “There is a serene landscape on one side, with the private cabanas on the other. The landscape blended well with the architecture and helped us as we shaped the interiors.”

“It’s a magnificent project,” Will concludes. “When you put together the right team and combine it with this pristine location, you get something spectacular. That combination elevates the project to the degree that it’s very special.”

The Architectural Details

No one describes the sheer heart-stopping beauty of the space better than Bernardo, who explains that the arrival experience is otherworldly. “As you approach,” he says, “you see the two towers in symmetrical profile with a big

gap between them that reveals the sky. The façade of the buildings looks like there’s a water wall in front of you, cascading down to right and left, creating an undulation. You’re on a high point of the property—actually, a plateau—as you look towards the waterfront.”

The awe-inspiring experience continues as you enter the lobby. “From this perspective,” Bernardo continues, “you can see the geography of the lagoon and the bay, as the undulation reappears on the water side. The circular clubhouse in front of the lagoon is elevated, so everything—the water, the exotic pod-like floating cabanas in the middle of the water—seems to cascade towards the marina.” He adds, “We think it will be very special. We had a lot of room to create the effect. The clubhouse and other buildings are built at angles to embrace the lagoon, so along with the pools, it’s an extension of natural waterfront into the site.”

The glass building is transparent, connecting it with the horizon and the views. “Everything flows from the inside out!” Bernardo exclaims. “Your ‘backyard’ is the view. You’ve elevated—it’s like being on an observation deck, with the feeling that you’re floating over water.” He explains, “Each of the two buildings was constructed from four contiguous towers of varying heights. The way the sun hits them makes them look like seashells, with the glass changing color throughout the day.”

Interiors Defined by the Sea and Landscape

Estero Bay itself serves as a muse for the interiors, whose natural materials and warm tones give the residences a sense of barefoot luxury. Nancy tells us, “The inspiration of environment—the flora and fauna, and the topography of mangroves—and the mimicry of its shapes by the organic forms, created by Arquitectonica, create a warm ambience.”

Most of the architecture, including the towers, is constructed from glass and wood. “The glass has a crystalline aspect to it, making the buildings feel transparent and soft. The wood brings real warmth to the property,” explains Will.



“It’s a classic nautical material, appearing throughout the property and giving a yachtlike quality to the design.”

“The lobby is all-inspiring from the moment of arrival,” Will continues. “The curved walls that open up to double-height spaces are spectacular, and the large oak panels that angulate upon each other create a rippling illusion as the wood starts to emulate natural forms that you would see in the bay.” The lobby is curated with natural, “honest” materials, including stone, metal and wood. “These materials in their natural state support the overall narrative of the property being tied to nature,” he says. “The organized and graceful forms create a calming effect while reflecting the surrounding environment.”

The magnificent round building in the middle of the property houses the stunning Sunset Lounge. Enclosed by glass, it faces west to capture the spectacular sunsets. “It was inspired by the notion of sitting on the porch of a house on the water—there’s really nothing more relaxing than that,” says Will. Yet this is a contemporary reimagining in which the designers interpreted those sensations through a modern lens. The great room is graced by soaring floor-to-ceiling windows that wrap around it, and designed with comfortable and spacious seating groups with unobstructed views of the marina and the bay.

The property includes an array of amenities that are beyond compare, including a state-of-the-art fitness center, full-service spa and pet salon. “You don’t have to leave the property to get it all,” Nancy says. There is a space for private dining, a wine and whiskey lounge that can be converted into an event space, and a news café. “There are different areas with different lighting for different moods. You can pick and choose where you want to spend your day, whether it’s the pool bar, private cabanas or lagoon.

Also under construction is a five-star restaurant at the marina, located in a separate structure. It’s part of the plan for the entire village to be community-centric, with its marina, restaurant and golf course open to the public, designed to engage people from the neighborhood.

We can hardly wait until 2025, when the distinctive Ritz-Carlton Residences, Estero Bay, come to life and welcome their first homeowners. It’s certain to change the vibe and coastline of southern Florida in magical ways.

Resources:

Developer

London Bay Development Group
2210 Vanderbilt Beach Road, Suite 1300
Naples, FL 34109
239.592.1400
londonbay.com

Architect

Arquitectonica
2900 Oak Avenue
Miami, FL 33133
305.372.1812
arquitectonica.com

Interior Designer

Meyer Davis Studio
180 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014
212.627.5574
meyerdavis.com

Landscape Design

EDSA
1512 East Broward Boulevard, Suite 110
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
954.524.3330
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DESIGN + DECOR



WAGNER POOLS
JOHN C GEDNEYIII

2023 AMAZING TRANSFORMATIONS

Stories by Danielle Porter



Wanting to create a backyard experience they could enjoy during their retirement years, and where their children and grandchildren could come visit and play, the clients at the Scarsdale Project sought out Wagner Pools bring their vision to life. John C. Gedney III and his team were thrilled to have the opportunity to create a backyard oasis with an in-ground pool, spa and curated lawn for the homeowners.

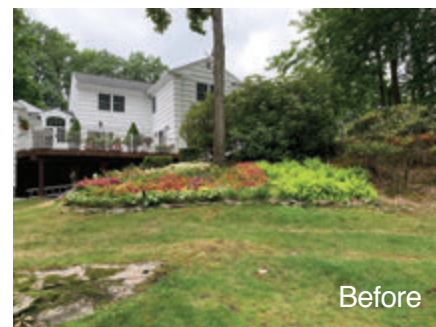
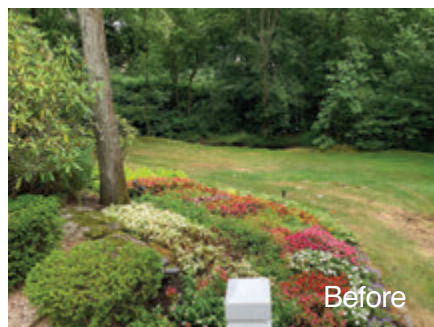
In Wagner's early discussions with the clients, the challenge that quickly presented itself was the terrain throughout the property. To ensure the project would go as smoothly as possible, John assembled a dream team composed of Wagner's in-house landscape designer, a lawyer specializing in real estate and code, a consultant architect familiar with the local town requirements, a drainage engineer and a civil engineer. Collectively, this team tackled every challenge and obstacle that was presented to them, which included obtaining a variance for setbacks that would reduce the need to chip away at ledge, redoing the drainage system, and installing a landscaped screen along the stream and wetlands at the back of the property.

Set into a landscape of hills, varying slopes and drastic grade changes, the pool itself has multiple retaining walls, which allowed it to be placed within easy access of the home. The retaining walls themselves are cleverly designed to mask functionality behind the form. From the vanishing edge that turns into a cascading waterfall retaining wall, to the five-









foot-wide planting bed along the length of the pool, the team made every part of this installation an intentional solution.

New York bluestone pavers adorn the details around the 15- by 35-foot pool edge and surrounding lounge deck, while a river-worn pebble finish, dyed the perfect Tahoe blue color, provides a soft-to-the-touch texture that offers serious longevity and durability in the pool. The integral spa is flanked by a sun shelf and steps on one side, and a swim-out bench on the other, overlooking the landscape across the vanishing-edge pool.

This pool offers all the modern touches. An in-floor cleaning and heating system ensures the water is warm and fresh to swim in every day. By heating the water from below, the system provides an efficient process and even temperatures throughout the pool. The automatic

safety cover keeps little ones safe when it's not time to swim.

The clients sought a special space that would provide functional beauty, add value to their property and support their lifestyle during their retirement years. Wagner Pools, along with their dream team, certainly delivered.

Resource:

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John C. Gedney III
101 Noroton Avenue
Darien, CT 06820
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wagnerpools.com*

CROWN POINT CABINETRY JOSHUA DOONAN



Before

Showing the beauty of duality in design, the Fletcher Road kitchen is a thoughtfully planned and articulately designed space. The kitchen is a fantastic representation of the idea that two oppositional concepts, materials or aesthetics need not just coexist, but can actually highlight one another in a way that brings a space to life.

When Joshua Doonan and his team at Crown Point Cabinetry were brought in for this project, they explored this duality in a unique way, through the







custom millwork design. The hardy, hewn, reclaimed oak cabinets helped determine the materiality and the basis for which everything would be compared. Bringing in this darker finish meant the designers needed to keep the rest of the cozy kitchen light and bright.

The design team replaced a painted finish on the wall where the range is located with a reflective backsplash, allowing light to come in and carry much deeper into the space. The team members also installed an open shelf on this wall to match the lower cabinetry, which provides extra storage space while creating a line across the kitchen, accentuating the size. They gave the ceiling a fresh coat of white paint along with modernized beams, whose linear edges work with the shelf detail to draw the eye across the kitchen toward the expansive, landscape-filled window.

Despite contrasting elements, the overall space comes together holistically, but it is the duality within the millwork layout, design and details that really brings the room to life. The reclaimed oak material is traditional in nature, but received some modern touches. Balance was the name of the game, as evidenced by the combination of period-appropriate, hand-carved hand pulls on the upper drawers throughout—a nod to an older style—and the cleaner transitional pulls on the lower cabinets and drawers.

Even the countertops are a balance of form and function. While the cabinets adjacent to the range have a modernized stainless-steel counter—a perfect, cleanable prep space—the eight- by five-foot island has a stylish soapstone counter, an eye-catching statement moment in the kitchen. The island is also home to a sleek





kitchen bar sink with a modern faucet—a direct contrast to the traditional farmhouse sinks and fixtures at the window.

The cabinets look traditional, but modernized storage is set up within. The subtle balance of functional storage, including doors, drawers, roll-out appliance drawers and integral dividers, gives these homeowners everything they need, right at their fingertips.

Resource:

*Crown Point Cabinetry
Joshua Doonan, Sales Designer
462 River Road
Claremont, NH 03743
800.999.4994
crown-point.com*

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LAUREN VALLARIO DESIGNS LAUREN VALLARIO

Photography by Tracy Wind





Before

Having purchased their home about five years earlier, the family at the Dubois Street project was ready for a full home makeover. Lauren Vallario of Lauren Vallario Designs was thrilled when these clients sought her out to develop a full home renovation plan that they could implement in smaller phases. The homeowners knew that approaching the design this way would ensure that the residence would have a cohesive aesthetic from top to bottom.

Originally from Belgium, the family loved their home, but the traditional Colonial style didn't suit their personal design preferences, which aligned more with Scandinavian light and bright. To design this aesthetic without creating space that would feel harsh against the inherent style of the home was a challenge, and Lauren rose to the occasion.

The living, kitchen and dining area made up the bulk of the first phase of upgrades in the home. It is truly an open concept space. The area presented a unique opportunity for Lauren to create feature walls at either end to make the space feel more cohesive. She provided a straightforward approach to the kitchen, designing the range at the end wall with a beautiful white backsplash and floating shelves adjacent to the hood—a picture-perfect feature wall.

In the living space, it was a bit more difficult to create such a feature, as the door to the mudroom took up a prominent space on the wall. Lauren's clever design incorporates a built-in cabinet where the family can quickly tuck away children's toys, and another cabinet door that leads to the mudroom. The solution is seamless and clean, offering the family accessibility and functionality without distraction.

The family wanted to rid their home of the beige and dark tones that felt so heavy. Lauren's team bleached and sealed the dark, red oak floors to create a base tone for the palette; used bright, white paint throughout the home; and updated all the light fixtures. Lauren's secret to ensuring that this new light and bright aesthetic won't become washed out was to add contrast and texture.

In the living room, Lauren added thin, stacked layers at the ceiling to furnish texture and movement and





simultaneously to define the space. In the kitchen, the white oak cabinets and shiplap in a slightly darker tone than the floor add warmth to the space, while the brass and black hardware on the cabinets and the new wine storage space provide contrast.

The integration of contrast and texture creates a sense of depth and movement that offers an overall aesthetic that is clean, crisp, warm, inviting—and certainly a home where this family will make many happy memories.

Resource:

*Lauren Vallario Designs
Lauren Vallario, Owner
652 Glenbrook Road
Building 4 Suite 3-312
Stamford, CT 06906
914.522.4527
laurenvallariodesigns.com*



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DOMUS CONSTRUCTORS CHRIS SHEA



Before



Before



Brought in to execute the expansive renovation of this existing Home in Darien, CT, DOMUS Constructors had quite the task ahead of them. The home was set to receive an almost complete interior gut and build, including heating and cooling systems, lighting, windows, and doors, in addition to small home additions and a full exterior upgrade. While the work was immense, Chris Shea and his team at DOMUS were thrilled to take on the opportunity for the homeowners, who'd spent many years living in the home and loved the neighborhood.

The design, collaboratively created by Michael Smith Architects and Christine McGovern Designs, provides a thoughtful and dramatic shift in aesthetics and functionality through the interior and exterior of the home. The architectural enhancements were accompanied by an

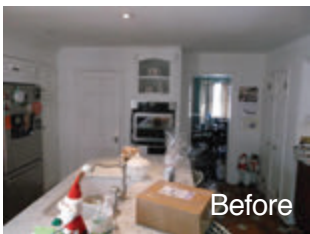


Before

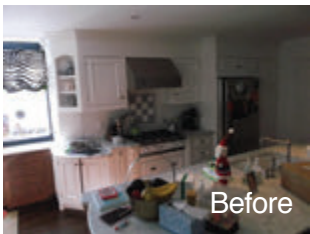
extensive upgrade to the landscaping around the home, designed by Neil Brunetti and largely carried out by the owners. Together, the team delivered superb results, with a renovation that is nothing short of amazing.

At the exterior, the design team completely replaced the original windows and doors with new custom units from western Canada. New siding was installed using cedar wood shakes. The beauty of this installation truly lies in the details, where along the roof line, the team installed the cedar shakes on an angle to create a unique transition in materiality and form. The original exterior finish colors were faded, subtle in contrast and washed out against the landscape—as they tend to be after several years. The new finishes consist of a saturated gray-blue siding color, a crisp white trim color to create contrast, and a beautiful wood tone that brings warmth to the home.

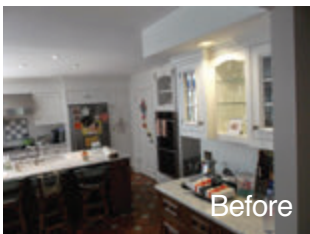
This wood tone is artfully carried to the underside of the portico roof and into details throughout the residence, including the ceiling of the new covered porch. Here, a ceiling fan and outdoor heaters keep the family and their guests comfortable in three seasons. Above this covered porch is an expansive balcony off the primary suite, which has the feel of a treehouse overlooking the property. Adjacent is a new outdoor kitchen that provides ample entertainment space and mirrors the adjacent interior kitchen, also newly renovated.



Before

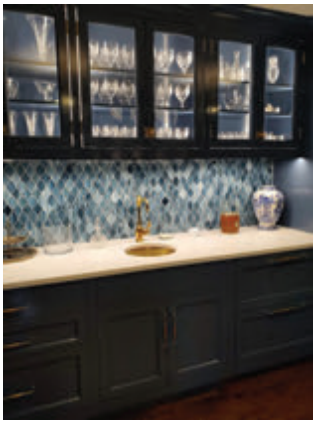


Before



Before





The interior kitchen is something of an art piece, particularly when compared to the former kitchen. Between the La Cornue range imported from France, and the custom designed and installed mosaic tile backsplash, every inch of this space feels articulately curated. This expansive, modernized kitchen leaves nothing behind: The panelized appliances, fireplace, marble countertops and beautifully contrasting wood tones offer a wonderful balance of modern luxury and transitional details.

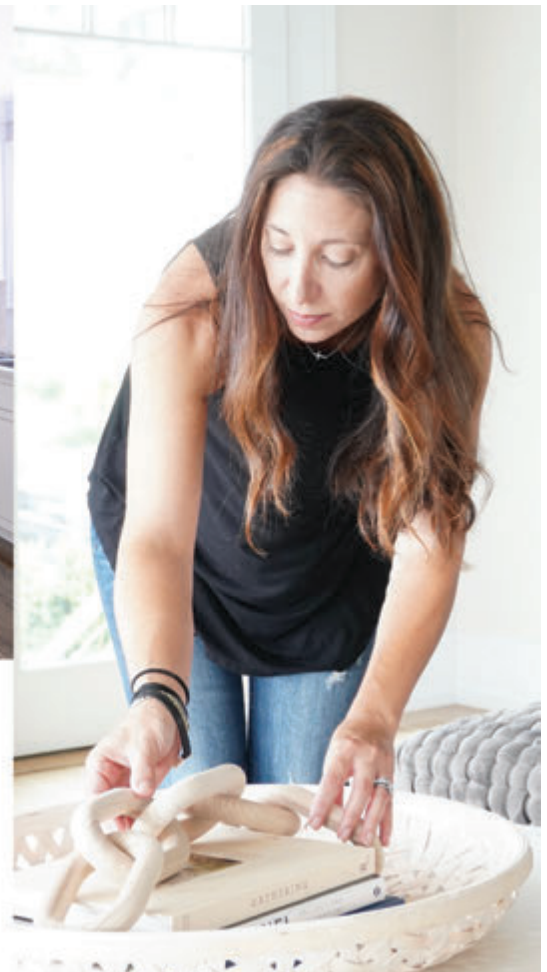
This level of detail and quality is carried throughout the home, in the bedrooms, bathrooms and even the reimagined mudroom space. What was once a simple hallway with a coat closet is now a bright and airy space with custom-built lockers, a bench and shoe storage, giving personal space to everyone in the family.

DOMUS and the entire design team did an outstanding job in transforming this home so that this family can live in it and love it in for many years to come.



Resource:

DOMUS Constructors
Chris Shea, Founder and Owner
P.O. Box 181
Greens Farms, CT 06838
203.852.6789
domusllc.com



LAUREN VALLARIO DESIGNS



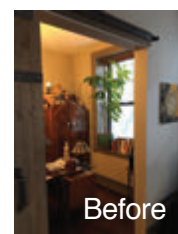
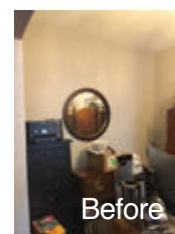
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CALIFORNIA CLOSETS

NINA LEESE





Small spaces - while challenging due to their inherent limitations often make for some of the most dramatic transformations. This dual-function guest room/office in Harlem, New York City, certainly demonstrates that concept. Having worked with California Closets on their master bedroom millwork, the homeowners reached out for help to take this space from cramped to cozy, and designer Nina Leese rose to the occasion—big time.

The design-savvy, enthusiastic couple who own this walk-up apartment were looking to take a dining room space, approximately eight feet wide by 12 feet long, and turn it into a combination office/guest room to maximize their usable footprint in the home.

The remainder of the home is thoughtfully designed. The apartment itself is traditional in nature, as many Manhattan walk-ups are. The couple had layered an eclectic style into the home, pulling from a





variety of design styles, which provided flexibility for the design of this space.

While Nina always strives to make clients' dreams come true, she also notes that—particularly with small spaces—homeowners have to be willing to compromise to make a space function well. There is always the opportunity to layer in the pretty details, but the design must function to be successful. This couple was lucky to get it all, and then some.

After laying out the space to fit a queen-sized, Murphy-style bed opposite the window, Nina was able to integrate a full-depth desk. This was an important goal for the couple, whose positions in the theater and entertainment industry necessitate a focused work-from-home space. Even more, the homeowners were able to integrate a lot of behind-the-scenes elements, like printers and storage, behind closed doors in the millwork.

The upper storage is all open, providing display space for a unique art collection, books and even a vintage record player that is of great value to the couple. Through early conversations, Nina knew that sizing the open storage to accommodate these items would be a key component in the success of the project,

and she ensured she would achieve this in the design.

Materially, the aesthetic is transitional: it nods to the traditional tones of the home, but the clean, flat-faced doors; sleek-edge pull hardware; and wood-look, textured, melamine finish are modern and durable selections, ensuring the room will look outstanding for years to come. While the space is on the smaller side, the darker tone works well because of the ample daylight streaming in from the window adjacent to the desk.

At the end of the day, this space has a simple flow and feels cohesive—and the clients are thrilled to have invested in it.

Resource:

California Closets
 Nina Leese, Designer
 16 Saw Mill River Road
 Hawthorne, NY 10532
 914.592.1001
californiaclosets.com

**DESIGN BY THE JONATHANS
LANA NGUYEN**





When Lana Nguyen, senior designer with Designs by the Jonathans, was asked to redesign the family kitchen and dining room at this home in Middletown, CT, she used all her creative talents to bring this exquisite space to life. Aiming to create a light-filled, bright and airy space from a once traditional galley-style, tightly planned kitchen, Lana and the family worked collaboratively to bring their ideas to life.

The family sought an area that would allow for better flow and visibility between spaces, where they could keep an eye on their young children while they cooked, and which would support family gatherings in a meaningful way. To achieve this, the design team had to make a few big changes.





First was to remove the majority of the structural wall between the kitchen and dining space. This was an impactful move all its own, as it gave perfect visibility from the kitchen to the built-in breakfast nook. Then, when the team replaced the existing double window with a single window that mirrored the existing kitchen window, it was as if they'd created an entirely new space.

These two architectural moves not only achieved the goal of openness, but also afforded the family additional counter space along the exterior wall, where they relocated the stove and cooktop. This gave designers the opportunity to create space for a much-desired center island—the heart of the kitchen.

While it wasn't easy, design team members were able to slightly reduce the depth of some cabinets on one side to maximize circulation space, and strategically off-center the counter seating at the island, so that it would not interfere with the millwork or circulation.

Where the architectural moves are meticulous and well executed, the beauty of the space is truly evident in the carefully curated design details. The soft variations of white in the counter, backsplash and cabinetry are thoughtfully complemented by the updated light wood floor and matching island finish. These natural wood tones and warm whites make a clean canvas of space that feels bright and open all on its own, but is enhanced by the reflectivity of the glass and



Before

brass details, and grounded through the texture that is artfully woven through the space.

The most beautiful aspect of the kitchen, as Lana describes, is the behind-the-scenes functionality. The family uses the kitchen frequently, and desired a space that was clean and uncluttered by toasters and mixers on the counter. To achieve this, the design team integrated full-height cabinets on either side of the windows, framing them softly while adding the illusion of height and volume to the space. These two cabinets

serve as appliance cupboards: one a dedicated coffee station, the other a home to appliances that live on the counter without creating visual clutter.

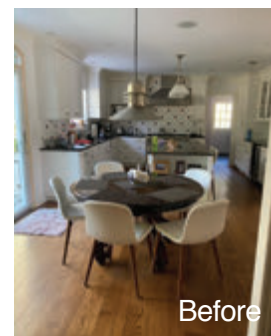
The details woven throughout this space are subtle yet effective in both design and functionality—a transformation in the truest sense.

Resource:

*Design by the Jonathans, LLC
Lana Nguyen, Senior Designer
85 Willow Street
New Haven, CT 06511
203.557.3205
thejonathans.com*

KAREN BERKEMEYER HOME IRIS MICHAELS





Sometimes when renovating a home, simple changes in materiality or aesthetics are all it takes to revive a space. Other times, when clients want to shift the way they use their home, repurposing and rethinking the space in a meaningful way are needed to create a lasting impact.

The latter was the case at the Falzone residence in Rye, NY. Here, designer Iris Michaels and the team at Karen Berkemeyer Home transformed this family's outdated kitchen space into a modern-transitional experience that exceeded all expectations. This active family had a strong vision for their new kitchen: They wanted clean lines, lots of storage and a space that was as suitable for their everyday activities as it was for entertaining friends and family.



To achieve these goals, Iris recommended a bold move: that the family incorporate the footprint of the adjacent laundry room into the renovation, to create an extension of the kitchen with a prep pantry. Though it was initially a surprising recommendation, after some discussion, the clients were on board with the vision and ultimately were thrilled with the results.

Integrating additional space into the overall kitchen allowed for a full prep pantry with a sink. The room also provided out-of-sight counter space, where small appliances that the family used daily could be left out and easily accessible, without cluttering up the main kitchen.

The low cabinets, open shelving, bright colors and natural daylight make this pantry the perfect party prep and storage space for when guests come to visit. Another clever way this added footprint was used was to recess the panelized refrigerator so it is accessible from the main kitchen, but actually sits in the pantry, improving the functional circulation of the cooking space.

With their storage and functional goals achieved, Iris' focus shifted to aesthetics and creating the bright, warm space with clean lines that the family desired. The soft white wall color is subtly contrasted by crisp





white cabinets and modern shiplap that clad the pantry wall and hood over the range, creating a bright backdrop for the space. This bright white tone is continued in the lightly veined quartz countertop, which extends into a timeless backsplash. Light wood tones in the floor and on counter stools add a layer of warmth and texture, while the stunning, custom-color island is a focal piece in the space, adding contrast and depth to the palette.

The traditional touches, modern aesthetics and bright finishes truly make this space one of a kind.

Resource:

*Karen Berkemeyer Home
Iris Michaels, Designer
175 Post Road West
Westport, CT 06880
203.454.0032
karenberkemeyrhome.com*

BREAKWATER RENOVATION & DESIGN LISA HELDWHITE





Before



Before



Looking for a new home is exciting and stressful, but bringing along an expert can make the process much easier. That's why this family invited Breakwater Renovation & Design to come with them for the ride. After seeing multiple houses and factoring in the work that would be needed to update them, the family decided to buy this property in Fairfield, CT.

The initial renovations would involve nearly every room in the home, except for the kitchen. While the space may not have been the homeowners' preferred aesthetic, it functioned as they needed. Moreover, other areas, including the primary suite, bathrooms, entryway and new bedroom in the attic, were in greater need of refurbishment. Lisa Heldwhite, interior designer and project manager at Breakwater Design & Renovation, worked with the family on the initial renovations and was delighted to return a few years later to revamp their kitchen.

Besides not aligning with the updated aesthetic of the home, the kitchen wasn't ideal for the family's everyday routine. After living in the house for a while, the homeowners realized that there wasn't enough room to open the refrigerator door without bumping into the island, and that the double wall oven impeded the work triangle, making for an inefficient layout when preparing meals. In addition, the family loved to entertain, but the overall design of the kitchen and small island did not support that lifestyle.

While the team at Breakwater didn't tear down and rebuild the entire kitchen, it might appear as though they did, based on the before and after photos. The largest appliance, the Sub-Zero 500 series refrigerator, remained in place, but the designers clad it in panels that match the new kitchen cabinets. They also moved the double ovens out of the work triangle. The biggest change was swapping the cooktop and sink locations, bringing a more dynamic cooking experience to the island.

Lisa's team also enlarged the island and moved it slightly away from the refrigerator. This unique configuration maximizes storage and creates a seating area along two sides: a soft and welcoming experience that is perfect for entertaining. Aesthetically, the kitchen design now matches the renovations made in the rest of the home. The warm tones and soft color integration in the backsplash pair perfectly with the quartz countertop and warm wood floors.

Overall, Breakwater's kitchen renovation creates a holistic experience in every part of the residence, and was the perfect way to complete this family's dream home.

Resource:

*Breakwater Renovation & Design LLC
Lisa Heldwhite, Interior Designer and Project Manager
154 New Haven Avenue
Milford, CT 06460
203.405.2203
breakwaterdesignbuild.com*

DARIEN GARAGE DOOR & DESIGNS TIMOTHY NEE





As many designers will tell you, the front door of your house is a statement that sets the tone for the entire experience of your home. But often overlooked is the garage door, which is frequently visible to your guests before they ring the doorbell. This first impression is an important part of your home's design both aesthetically and functionally. Tim Nee and his team at Darien Garage Door & Designs endeavor to help their clients make the best possible first impression for their home, no matter the style, scale or size.

Tim and his team work with homeowners, architects and builders to provide sales and service to clients throughout the counties of Fairfield, CT, and Westchester, NY. Their specialty is custom solutions for both new builds and renovations, and they have even pioneered the use of motorized door mechanisms in new ways to provide their clients with a variety of custom options for modern, timeless and long-lasting solutions.

At the Fallow Field Road project in Fairfield, the owners had a double-wide garage door that they were looking to upgrade. When it was initially installed,





this inexpensive steel door featured a design that was popular at the time. The owners now wanted something that was more modern and long-lasting. Tim and his team were able to keep the bright white finish, which works well on the home, and give the clients a new composite overhead door that would require minimal maintenance in the long term.

Similarly, on Croton Lake Road in Katonah, NY, the homeowners wanted to upgrade an existing garage door and improve its design. By selecting a white garage door, they added contrast and interest to their home. The composite finish, which comes with a 50-year rating, was the perfect solution: the factory-white finish means no maintenance when it comes to paint.

Many clients come to Tim and his team looking to replace their old wood garage doors, which require a lot of upkeep. That was the case with the owners at Musket Lane in Darien, CT, as their wooden door was challenging to maintain, and multiple panes of glass had been broken. The solution here was a new factory-finished wood-composite black finish overhead door, which provides a striking contrast to the gray siding and requires almost no maintenance.

The finishes and materials available today are limitless, and include solid color finishes and stained grade wood-look finishes, with the same composite core that requires no maintenance or restaining in the years to come. With more than 23 years of experience, Tim and his team at Darien Garage Door & Designs have the knowledge, experience and skill to deliver exactly what their clients need.

Resource:

Darien Garage Door & Designs LLC

Tim Nee

110 Post Road

Darien, CT 06820

203.655.6199

dariengarage.com

AUSTIN GANIM LANDSCAPE DESIGN
AUSTIN GANIM
EVA CHIAMULERA





Before



Before

A mature shade tree once dominated the backyard landscape of this residence in Black Rock, CT, until a summer storm toppled the tree, with the garage softening its landing. The homeowners seized the opportunity to completely transform their backyard, seeking out Austin Ganim Landscape Design.

After a number of discussions and design charrettes, the new aesthetic emerged. Gone was the overgrown and lumpy lawn, and in its place was a series of interconnected garden rooms, stepped down through the landscape. From the primary walk between the garage and house, the homeowners can easily transition from a dining area to the firepit patio and lounge space to relax at the end of the day. A hot tub is tucked into plantings near the back door, offering convenient access in all seasons. A combination of concrete slabs in three textures provides a modern twist to the patios and steps; the silvery gray tones are carried through to the fence finish, creating a soothing complement to the dark, modern tones of the newly painted house and garage.

A tapestry hedge integrates portions of the existing perimeter landscape with new materials to afford privacy from the adja-





cent sidewalk and neighbor's yard. The existing hosta beds are incorporated into the new plantings, which are designed to offer color and interest in four seasons and also to attract birds and butterflies. Winter-flowering witch hazels are followed by a variety of spring and summer flowers, which then give way to beautiful fall foliage and the striking appearance of the coral bark maple.

Thanks to the designers at Austin Ganim, the homeowners can enjoy this outdoor living area throughout the year—whether they are sunbathing on chaise lounges in the summer, or making s'mores by the fire on a crisp autumn evening.

Resource:

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320 Kings Highway Cutoff
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A MATTER OF STYLE DOES IT ALL

Story by Sarah Fader





Martha Gargano

A Matter of Style (AMS) is a high-end interior design company located in Cheshire, CT. The firm was created in the mid-1980s by John Ricci of Ricci Construction, who wanted cabinetry for his company's new construction homes, and a designer on staff to work on these projects. AMS grew over the years and became well-loved in the Cheshire area. Martha Gargano came to AMS in 1995 and soon took on the role of interior designer—and that's when the company started becom-



ing custom and high-end.

AMS's kitchens start at \$75,000 and go up from there. In terms of materials, "We seem to be going back to natural stones, a lot of quartzite versus quartz, which everyone was doing," says Martha. "It's man-made, manufactured—yes, it is stone, but there are plastic resins in it, and it's a very contrived look. We're finding that clients are getting a little more sophisticated with their taste in stones. People are willing to spend a lot of money doing a marble countertop or quartzite. We're actually dabbling a little more with granite, but more exotic granites, not those from the 1990s. We're also selling AKDO tile—they have a huge place in Bridgeport."

AMS does everything from new construction to home renovations, and has many repeat clients. "They may have started off with us doing a bathroom, then it turns into a kitchen, then a family room, and it keeps going because we're local and have a great friendship with many of our clients," explains Martha. AMS has expanded its reach from Cheshire to all over Connecticut, she notes. And some of the renovations and new constructions they're working on are second homes for the firm's local clients.

Martha does a wide range of projects. "I'm working on 50% new construction and 50% remodeling," she says. "An addition always

has to get the architect's stamp on it, but I have the ability to create the space and have it built by the construction company. Even when we're doing new construction, I can take the space the architect has done and, as long as I'm not touching anything structurally, I can move walls around. For a job I'm working on right now, the clients' master bath was small for the size of the house, so I was able to move walls around to give them that big master bath."

Above all, Martha's passion is helping clients see how their ideas for a space can come to fruition. It's one thing to see the design on paper, and quite another to own a beautiful new kitchen or sparkling new home. "I have this fabulous job," says Martha. "I go into people's homes and have them trust me to create an unbelievable space for them."

Resource:

A Matter of Style
 Martha Gargano, Lead Designer
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