



A cantilevered roof extends behind the house over an attached rectangular garage. Clerestory windows and sliding window and door panels punctuate white and gray exterior walls, ushering ample light into the interior.

architectural remastery

Improving an award-winning house required gazing into the future while respecting the past.

How do you revamp a visually stunning home you previously spent three years remodeling and that won a prestigious design award? For Elena Sterlin and David Harris, the answer was enlisting a young architect to take a fresh look.

Situated on a steep wooded bluff in northern Virginia, the 1970s-era house was an architectural mess when the couple purchased it in 2002. Shortly after moving in, they hired an architect to redesign the interior and exterior spaces to take advantage of the home's natural setting.

Elena and David loved the results, but after living in the house for 12 years they felt the kitchen could be improved to make it brighter and a bit more functional. They asked Washington, D.C., designer Patrick Brian Jones to come up with a new plan.

"The scope of the job quickly grew, and I pretty much did some work in every room of the house," says Patrick. "The project expanded organically, and it was a collaborative effort. We just walked through the house and discussed what they liked and didn't like about each

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Wooden acoustical panels surround the fireplace so sound from the two-story family room doesn't drift into bedrooms. The color and natural grain of the wood add warmth to the soaring space. While on a business trip, David noticed an intriguing metal sculpture in a hotel lobby. He tracked down the artist and commissioned the wire wheel piece that hangs above the fireplace. The washi paper floor lamp is an iconic Noguchi design.

The layout for the kitchen remained largely unchanged, featuring an island cooktop and with the sink, refrigerator and wall oven on one long wall. Bulthaup cabinets in charcoal gray are bridged by a thin stainless steel counter. A marble-like Silestone surface sheathes the sleek island.



Patrick removed the top of a loft wall and replaced it with clear glass, right, to increase the amount of light filtering into the kitchen. A backsplash composed of "function boxes" with frosted glass doors provides hidden storage for small appliances and other items that could clutter the countertop.



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area." While making plans for what would change, Patrick respected the previous architect's vision.

To let more natural light into the kitchen, Patrick cut down a solid wall and added a clerestory panel. A centrally located doorway connecting the dining room to the kitchen was moved closer to the corner to make room for a trio of storage units. The original doorway was used to build a new pass-through cabinet accessible from either room.

Collaborating on how to rearrange the couple's extensive art collection was another task on Patrick's to-do list.

For the tall fireplace wall in the family room, he suggested adding something three-dimensional. The perfect piece was elusive until David saw an installation of wire wheels while traveling in Africa. He tracked down the artist and commissioned a set. With Patrick's help, the wheels created a simple yet dramatic sculpture—and superb finishing touch.

Retaining the best of the old while introducing practical updates pleased both the designer and his clients. Sometimes artful editing is all it takes to bring out the best in an already terrific architectural design.

The dining room, right, was updated with a new entry pocket door, subtly patterned drapes and a half-round light fixture above a circular Scandinavian-style table and curvy Hans Wegner JH-501 chairs.



A fur throw, a sculpted rug and button-tufted seating
transform a boxy white living room
into a textural study in contrasts.

The couple displays framed and three-dimensional figural artworks in the main floor living room. The red leather button-tufted seating by Kaare Klint and a metal and white leather sofa surround a midcentury modern Lucite coffee table.



zen & now

Use pared-down modern geometric shapes and distinguished 20th-century furnishings to create a modern haven of tranquility.

- EMPHASIZE FUNCTIONALITY AND FORM Windows exist to let light into your home, so leave them au naturel unless privacy demands otherwise.

Simple, unobtrusive shades are more serene than fussy fabrics.

- CONCENTRATE COLOR

OR TEXTURE Paint one wall or add an accent motif on two adjacent walls. In addition to paint, fabric-covered panels or three-dimensional focal points add interest and contrast with flat wall expanses.

- SHOWCASE MODERN MATERIALS Polished chrome and tubular steel furniture frames hint at industrial modernism, while transparent Lucite sets a subtle space-age technological tone. Temper man-made surfaces with natural leather, wool and wood.

- FORGO FORMAL FURNISHINGS Eating areas and living rooms should be designed to be used. White tables and lighting paired with Scandinavian blonde wood exude elegance but have comfortable charm.

- STAY SLEEK Avoid clutter with innovative storage solutions. For example, Patrick designed a back-splash composed of glass doors that hide cubby-like "function boxes" and a built-in shelf vanity with concealed drawers.



Although the bedroom wasn't part of Patrick's original commission, his concept for a custom wall treatment with a built-in millwork vanity appealed to Elena and David. The silk-covered panels feature a center sliding section that reveals a vanity mirror. The wall behind the bed is painted in a rich shade of grape wine to showcase framed photographs.