Points of Light

DESIGNER KATIE EASTRIDGE AND ARCHITECT MARC BRAHANEY CREATE A LUMINOUS HOME ON A HEAVILY WOODED PRINCETON PROPERTY

The entry level of this Colonial style home is highlighted with a bracketed portico and a door set that varies in color and proportions. A stucco wall encloses an inner courtyard that invites relaxation, a kaleidoscope of blooming flowers and is punctuated with evergreen for winter.

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Sitting high above a wooded vista that overlooks Stony Brook in Princeton, this new home came to life on the foundation of a previous one where the owners had lived for many years.

Architect Marc Bahouley of Lusby Bahouley Design Build and Katie Forttridge of Forttridge Design Home, both based in Princeton, collaborated with the owners to create an "upside-down" Colonial-style house. Because of the proximity of the brook, the footprint of the former house couldn’t be exceeded. Thanks to a slope, however, they were able to design the living areas on the ground floor and a suite of guest bedrooms on a lower level.

“When you walk in the front door it feels like a sea-stair house,” Eastridge says. “You walk directly into the living room and on the right, a staircase to the lower level.”

The front door opens to an expansive, light-filled space comprising the living room, dining room and kitchen. Large windows that overlook the vistas and Stony Brook below are crowned with fixed transoms that filter light and provide views. Natural oak wood floors and ceiling beams add warmth to the space. In addition, each of the homes has a skylight as well as cove and recessed lighting and lamps to augment the natural light.

A coffered living room ceiling, pitched to the top of the radiator, rises to 18 feet and is painted a custom white. The walls are a custom gray-blue hue and are accented with moldings that frame doorways and windows.

The owners wanted their home to be welcoming and comfortable, working with Eastridge to blend a comfortable contemporary sofa and chairs with vintage pieces. To these they added accents such as a black lacquer-tinged table and a round black cocktail table that contains with the lines and angles in the design of the chairs that surround it.

The deep-stained oak flooring found throughout the house is inspired by the living room with a high-pile gridded silk. “This is a walk-in home kind of house,” Eastridge says. And as one walks from the living room to the kitchen. 

LIVING ROOM | The living room is elegant and very livable. A small-scale, vintage chair upholstered in a bold, bright print pairs comfortable with treasured vintage pieces in a conversation grouping around a custom black marble-top cocktail table.

FIREPLACE | A lacquer blue fireplace wall framed the classic Cascades marble fireplace with a custom-designed bronze screen and fire tools. A Shelly lived-on canvas painting of an ocean wall the eye to a delineated custom mirror above. Different styling shows in this photo and the one at left demonstrates the room’s versatility.

NEUTRAL TONES | A hand-woven seat-and-pepper Peruvian throw with assorted fringe echoes the soft natural tones in the atmospheric oil painting by New York City artist Lindsay O’Connell.
kind of house,” Eastridge says. And as one walks from the living room to the dining area, that breeze will feel the change from soft and luxurious to the smooth texture of a plush, comfortable carpet. Its silver, charcoal, and soft grey hues bring out the highlights in an abstract canvas that covers one entire wall of the dining room, referencing a nighttime cloudscape.

Architects Marc Buhanez designed an elongated brass chandelier with gold-blasted glass shades to cast a soft light in the dining room.

Marrying the dining room to the kitchen is a tidy island that serves both rooms with storage space for items used for both functions. The unit forms a “T,” with a lower section doubling as a breakfast bar on one side and sink with work area on the other. The countertop is light pitted granite with lustrous orange and purple veins.

“The homeowner is an amazing cook, a woman who loves to entertain,” Eastridge notes. To accommodate that love, this kitchen features a La Cornue French range with a high Src burner and powerful hood.

And because good light is important to a good chef, the kitchen, which features a punched pyramidal cove that rises to 12 feet and an additional skylight.

“A lot of good meals are prepared in this kitchen,” Eastridge says. “This is a family that has so much fun in this house. They love to have their family and friends in. It’s not only an open and elegant home, it is very functional.”

Janet Parrilla, a regular contributor to Design NJ, is a Hopewell-based writer.

SOURCES: Overall design, Eastridge Design Home in Princeton; architecture, Leslie Bratuschney Design Build in Princeton; landscaping, David Netter of David in the Garden in Flemington, all lighting, Ladies-Bratuschney Design Build; living room, furniture, dressers and fireplace tools, through Eastridge Design Home; marble fireplace, design and fabrication by Leslie Bratuschney; carpet, Brava of Newark; sconces, purple chair and ottoman, Jonas Fine Upholsterers; Dining Room, Adair Perrinall through Metro Kneis LLC; dining table, Holly Hunt; wall canvas painting, Mary Brown Gallery; carpet, Bozentek; Kitchens, countertops, stone finishes in Costin stad; cabinet, custom paint finish, Terry Cornelli of Cornelli Studio in Westport.