

The house was designed with a vertical profile (opposite) to fit its narrow lot. A custom swing by Wood Studio (above) enhances the flagstone front porch.

fresh take

Vintage charm and a new, modern outlook come together in a custom Palisades home

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Left to right: The foyer extends a warm welcome with encaustic cement tile by Clé and a front door in PPG Paint's Autumn Festival. A cased opening with a transom offers a peek into the library. In the dining room, custom lighting by Lumifer hangs above a Usona table, vintage chairs and a bench by Fern.

When remodeling their tiny 1923 bungalow turned out to be problematic, a love for its quaint Palisades neighborhood prompted a DC couple to raze the abode and build a brand-new one in its place. “We’ve lived here since 2009,” says the wife. “We wanted this to be our forever DC home as our kids grow older.”

The original house was poorly structured with setback issues. However, as architect Richard Leggin, who was tapped for the job, recalls, “it had a charming street presence. Creating a new home that enhanced that neighborly spirit was an essential part of our initial planning.”

The wife agrees. “We live in a neighborhood where everyone loves to be on their front porch, watching the kids and dogs play. This was an element from our old house that we absolutely had to have in the rebuild.”

Leggin collaborated with interior designer Lori Anderson Wier and builder Tony Paulos on the project, which broke ground in 2017. The family moved into their new residence in 2019.

The finished four-bedroom, 5,108-square-foot home spans three floors plus a finished basement and garage. It’s built in timeless, classic style on a narrow, steep lot with a welcoming front porch.

Varying rooflines break up the mass of the vertical house clad in traditional shiplap siding with shingled eaves. “The goal was to create a comfortable, ‘not-so-big’ family home, with meaningful spaces and beautiful details inside and out, and to make it a perfect fit in the neighborhood,” notes Leggin.

When interior designer Lori Anderson Wier was retained in early 2017, she brought six years of experience working for DC design luminary Darryl Carter to the table. “We asked Lori to do almost everything when it came to the interiors, from millwork choices to bed linens—she took the interior blueprints and ran with them,” says the wife. “She also acted as a central point of communication between the architect, builder and us.”

Architecture: **Richard A. Leggin**, AIA, Richard Leggin Architects, P.C., Cabin John, Maryland. Interior Design: **Lori Anderson Wier**, Anderson Wier Studio, Takoma Park, Maryland. Kitchen Design: Amy Collins LLC, Glen Echo, Maryland. Builder: **Tony Paulos**, The Block Builders Group, Bethesda, Maryland. Landscape Design: Wheat’s Landscape, Vienna, Virginia.



Wier felt an immediate kinship with the clients and their vision. “They had spent years considering the kind of house they wanted to live in and had collected a hefty pile of aesthetic references,” she explains. “Like me, they were drawn to spaces with an abundance of light, a graphic sensibility and a combination of modern and traditional forms.”

The intimate entry vestibule sets the tone for the home, with its double-hung windows, wood-paneled ceiling and encaustic cement-tile floors in a graphic, quilt pattern. “The main rooms flow sequentially into one another through a series of cased openings, with glass transoms in dark frames,” says Leggin of the open, front-to-back floor plan. “A central staircase connects the house vertically, with windows at each landing. And a skylight above fills the stairwell with natural light.”

The foyer leads into a dining room distinguished by walls paneled in a picture-frame style with molding layered atop vertical planks. Applied moldings on the ceiling create a linear pattern that sounds a contemporary note, while a cast-stone fireplace features a soapstone surround. “The idea was to impart a modern point of view shaped by architectural precedent,” Wier relates.

This focus is further evident in the back of the house, where a series of reclaimed beams, posts and braces creates spatial definition in the open-plan breakfast nook/kitchen/living area. A wood-burning fireplace provides a focal point, set into a hand-applied plaster wall with window seats on either side.



Wood-Mode cabinetry lines the butler's pantry (opposite). It links the dining room to the open-plan kitchen, breakfast room and living area (pictured here), delineated by reclaimed-wood posts and beams. Living room furnishings include a custom live-edge coffee table by Oliv Studio, a vintage area rug and a Restoration Hardware sofa.

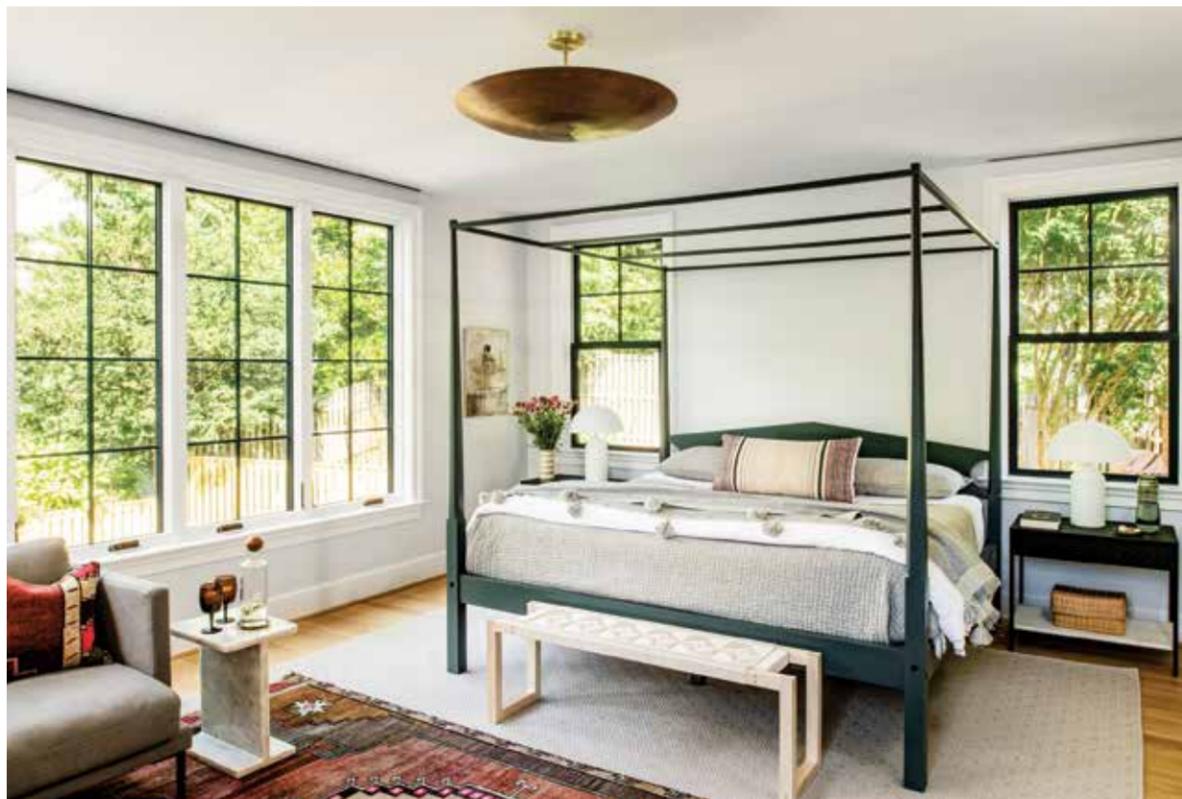


The kitchen—a collaborative effort with kitchen designer Amy Collins—centers on a deep-blue island with chamfered, furniture-style legs and a quartzite countertop in a leathery finish. “I favor a subdued palette that’s drawn from nature yet feels somewhat complicated and moody,” observes Wier. “Therefore, the window and transom frames read black, but they’re actually an inky blue-black, and the kitchen’s peripheral cabinets are a chameleon-like color that changes with the light from cloudy gray to pale mint.” Lighting throughout the home conveys a modern, sculptural quality—including the opal glass and oil-rubbed bronze fixtures above the island.

New furnishings, including the living-room sofa, blend easily with older pieces such as a vintage rug that’s laid atop a sisal in the same space. “Many of the newer pieces were custom-made by artisans,” Wier says. “I was looking for pieces that told a story. I wanted to see evidence of nature and the human hand.” For example, the Saarinen-inspired dining table in the breakfast area has a forged-steel base, while a hand-woven seat adds interest to a bleached-oak bench in the master bedroom. Natural-fiber textiles prevail, including leather, suede, linen, wool, hemp, cotton and sisal.



Designed in collaboration with Amy Collins LLC, the kitchen (above) embraces such classic elements as handmade, glazed backsplash tiles, a custom soapstone sink and unlacquered brass hardware with exposed screws from House of Antique Hardware. Opposite, clockwise from top, left: A cozy corner of the living area invites residents to curl up on a vintage chair updated with a Schumacher cushion. Window frames are stained an inky blue-black, while sliding, four-panel glass doors by Loewen bring the outdoors in.



“We gave the house the heart and soul of an older home.”

Lori Anderson Wier

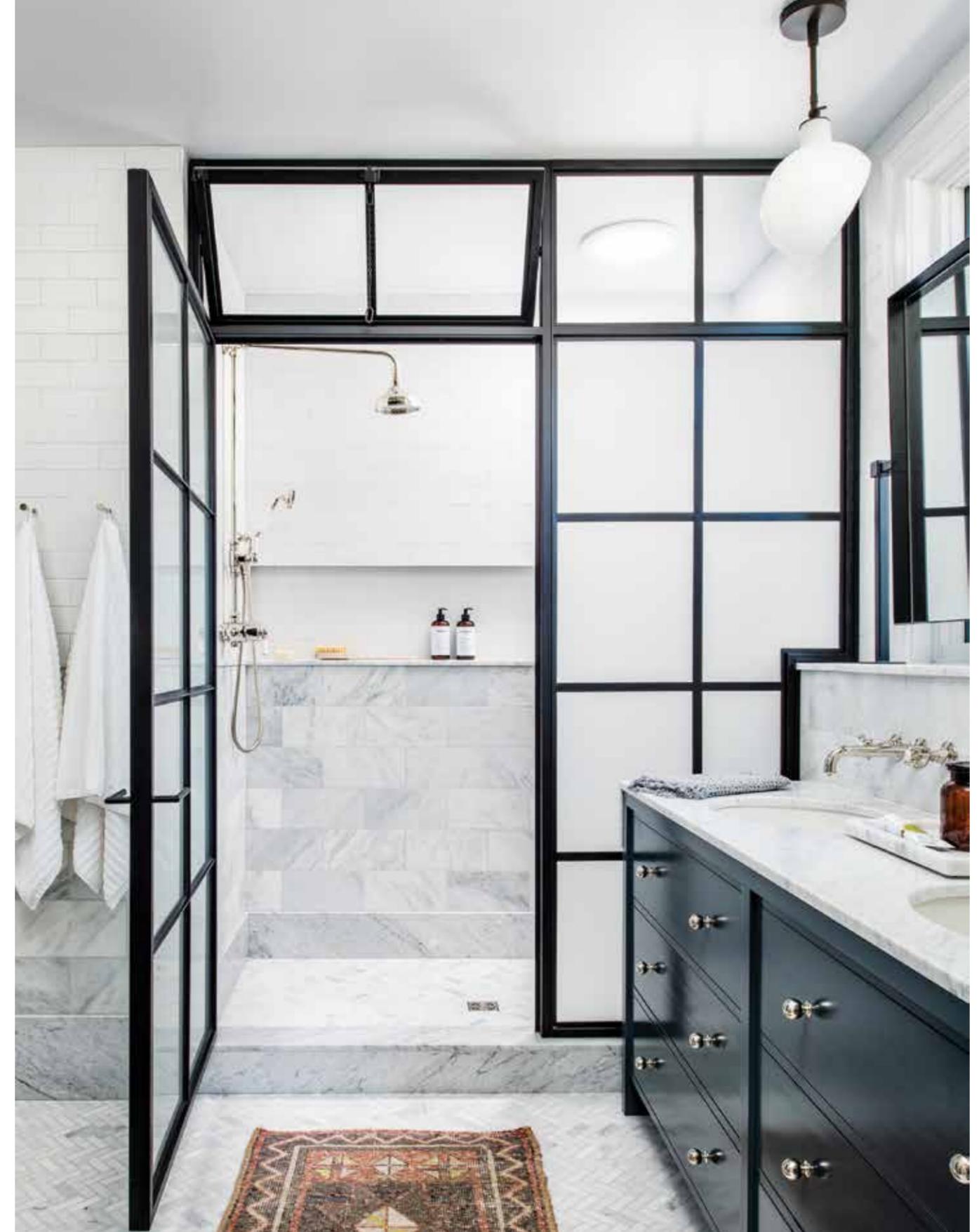
The master bathroom is a standout. “Inspired by the homeowners’ stay in a luxury Chicago hotel,” Leggin recounts, “it features frosted-glass-paneled doors for privacy on either side of the his-and-her vanity.” Wier mounted custom mirrors above each basin. Herringbone-patterned marble tile floors and bricked-marble half-walls with a stone-ledge detail add elegance.

White-oak floors unify the spaces—including the third floor, which contains what Leggin describes as “one of the house’s surprises”—a light and airy home office with sloped ceilings and views across the Potomac. It contains built-in perimeter workspaces for the whole family and a raised table for special projects.

The couple are happy with their custom home, which captures a fresh, timeless sensibility. “We consider ourselves a pretty typical DC-area family—two working parents and kids constantly on-the-go,” says the wife. “When we come home to our new house, we can relax and refuel because of its clean aesthetic, natural materials and great spaces.” ■

SOURCES OF NOTE

Windows: windsorwindows.com through theanderscompany.com. Dining Room Chandelier: lumifer.us. Dining Table: usonahome.com. Living Room Coffee Table: olivrstudio.com. Kitchen Pendants: rejuvenation.com. Kitchen Backsplash: fireclaytile.com. For a complete list of resources, see homeanddesign.com.



In the master bedroom (opposite, top), a bed by Great Windsor Chairs offers a fresh take on the traditional four-poster; bedside tables are from Faithful Roots and the glass bedside lamps are from Oluce. Symmetry rules in the master bathroom (above and opposite, bottom), where custom steel-and-glass doors screen the shower enclosure and WC. A skylight brightens the marble-and-ceramic-tile shower, with fixtures by Waterworks.