



HOUSE *of Light*

An adaptation of a
Hugh Newell Jacobsen design
creates a slice of heaven
in Chevy Chase

A vaulted porch connects the two main pavilions of the home. It opens to a sleek marble pool deck delineated by a bold red wall with a cantilevered marble bench.

BY BARBARA KARTH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIMOTHY BELL



After living in a 1950s rambler for roughly 20 years, Charles and Charlotte Perret became fascinated with a home in their Chevy Chase neighborhood that had been built by Anthony Wilder Design/Build. When they met to discuss remodeling possibilities, Wilder and architect JP Ward introduced the couple to a concept design by renowned DC architect Hugh Newell Jacobsen, a “Dream Home” created in 1998 for *Life* magazine’s annual feature that showcased a home by a well-known architect. “We fell in love with it,” recalls Charlotte. “It is exactly our taste: the simplicity and little oddities such as the oversized chimney—which we love.”

The Perrets decided to tear down their house and build a Dream Home of their own. They purchased Jacobsen’s design and turned to Wilder to adapt it to their site and their own specific needs. Five years later, their Jacobsen-concept/Wilder-built home has won both local and regional awards from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry and is in the running for a national award.

The home displays such typical Jacobsen trademarks as simple gabled forms and linear rooflines. It consists of two pavilions joined in the center by a third housing the main living area. The right pavilion houses the kitchen and dining room while the other contains the master bedroom and two other rooms that double as home offices and guest rooms, each with its own loft.

PROJECT DESIGN: HUGH NEWELL JACOBSEN, FAIA, Jacobsen Architecture LLC, Washington, DC; adapted by ANTHONY WILDER and JP WARD, AIA, Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc., Cabin John, Maryland.
CONTRACTOR: ROB FARRIE, project manager, Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc. **LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** ANTHONY WILDER and GEORGE BOTT, Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc. **INTERIOR DESIGN:** KARY EWALT, Anthony Wilder Design/Build.



The home’s gabled forms (left) are a trademark of Hugh Newell Jacobsen’s designs. The flagstone bridge with glass rails (right) was one of Anthony Wilder’s adaptations to the original plan. A light strip embedded in the walkway (above) adds drama and dimension to the approach. Bold artwork and furnishings in the foyer (opposite) set the tone for the clean-lined, modern interiors. A painting by the owners’ daughter, Eugenie Perret, hangs above the red bench.





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Wilder and Ward customized the home while preserving its clean lines and amplifying the light. In fact, this house is all about light.

In the foyer, daylight streams through three small dormers to highlight white walls and ebony-hued hickory floors. Spotlights suspended from the ceiling illuminate a painting of Istanbul's harbor by the homeowners' daughter, Eugenie Perret; a bench from Minima, her contemporary furniture showroom in Philadelphia, sets the minimalist tone for the rest of the house.

Another of Eugenie's paintings occupies the space above the living room fireplace, creating an exciting, kinetic focal point. Individual gas jets and a long, narrow firebox offer a novel take on the traditional hearth.

The dining room and kitchen flow together, yet the dining room reflects a refined sensibility that separates it from the spacious, functional kitchen. Rectangles of draped cloth soften the fluorescent ceiling light. Bright red lacquered cabinetry adds drama to the room.



Another painting by Eugenie Perret makes a strong statement above the fireplace in the living space (above) that joins the home's main pavilions. The living room opens to the vaulted porch and to the back terrace, where comfortable furniture (left and opposite) creates an inviting spot for al fresco gatherings.



Kalwall, an opaque composite, clads the vaulted ceiling of the porch (this page), admitting light but blocking heat gain. Red lacquered cabinets by Neff, an oversized Silestone island with classic barstools and built-in wine refrigerators marry form and function in the kitchen (opposite). Draped fabric on the ceiling diffuses harsh fluorescent light.

Doors from the living room, master bedroom and kitchen often remain open to the porch in pleasant weather.



The dining room in the kitchen pavilion (these pages) overlooks the back terrace. Windows on three sides bathe the space in natural light.







From the master bedroom (above), an open stairwell filters light down to the expanded lower level of the home. A skylight above the shower (right) and a rectangular window with frosted glass (far right) illuminate the master bath. The bedroom overlooks the lap pool (opposite), which is equipped with a current for exercise. The design team concealed pool machinery behind a red wall, which acts as a visual and sound barrier.





As the design neared completion, Charlotte expressed the desire for a screened porch. In response, the designers created a roomy living space with a vaulted ceiling of Kalwall, a translucent material that blocks out solar gain on a bright day. Doors from the living room, master bedroom and kitchen often remain open to the porch in pleasant weather.

Beyond the porch, a terrace of marble steps down to a pool. With a perimeter of gravel, the marble rests slightly above grade, visually denying the heft of the stone. At night, lights embedded in the gravel illuminate a red concrete wall and the marble bench slicing through it. "That bench weighs over 1,300 pounds," Wilder says. "It took 12 people to pick it up and slide it into the wall." Firmly suspended, the bench appears to float.

After the first phase was complete, the Perrets decided they wanted more space to accommodate visiting children and grandchildren. Utilizing the basement was the obvious option, though it was dark. With the marble decks in the rear, excavating the front of the property was the only possible solution for adding more space.

Wilder's team expanded the lower level toward the front of the house; it now consists of a large entertainment area, an exercise room and a guest room and bath. Windows in the front of the house and an open stair well from the master bedroom pour plenty of daylight into these spaces.

The excavation inspired Wilder and Ward to create a below-grade courtyard outside the lower rooms, traversed by a flagstone bridge leading to the front door.

A small stand of bamboo reaches upward, softening the austerity of the entry.

In the master bedroom, light from the expanse of windows fills the room, which overlooks the pool. The tranquil master bath maximizes space. Twin vanities are separated by a passage to the shower behind one vanity and a toilet behind the other. Natural light flows down to the shower and bathtub from skylights above.

This iconic, contemporary Dream Home is now full of energy generated by the sun—and by modern innovation. ❖

Contributing writer Barbara Karth resides in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Photographer Timothy Bell splits his time between Washington, DC, and New York.

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