



BUILT FOR JOY

A light-filled retreat designed for everyday delight.

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Landscape Architect: Gregory Lombardi Design / Landscape Construction: Michael S. Coffin / Tile: Art of Tile and Stone /
Cabinetry: Kenyon Woodworking / Photographer: Jessica Delancy / Writer: Maddie Brisbane*



To craft a forever home—where joy can be experienced at every turn—was a long-held dream for a young couple and their three daughters. The couple set out to build their long-term residence from the ground up, leading the way with a clear vision and a personal passion for design. The first step was to assemble the perfect team to guide the couple through the complexities of a large-scale design and build project.

After an early conversation with Michael Lynch, Owner of Lynch Construction & Remodeling, with whom the couple had worked on a smaller renovation years prior, they met at a newly available three-acre parcel—wooded, sun-drenched, and bordered by preserved meadowlands. “I was really encouraging them about that site,” says Lynch. “It was a rare find—a large lot with neighborhood connectivity, southern exposure, and direct access to nature.”

With the site secured, the full team of collaborators came together, including Brian Morgan of DMC Architecture, Courtney Driver of Andra Birkerts Design, and Troy Sober of Gregory Lombardi Design. Together with the clients’ discerning taste, they would create a home that blends dynamic family life with luxury, leisure, and entertaining.

From DMC Senior Project Architect Brian Morgan’s first meeting with the clients, the brief was both exciting and ambitious: a house that felt like home but also like a getaway—a full-time residence with the ease and joy of a vacation property. “They gave us a very fun program,” Morgan describes. “They wanted something that worked for everyday life but also felt like a place to escape to. There are opportunities for joy, all the time in this house.”

From a full sports court above the garage to a wine-tasting nook and golf simulator, to a backyard complete with a pickleball court, pool, pizza oven, and multiple terraces, the house functions like a private resort built for both play and quiet relaxation for the whole family.

The site’s subtle but significant slope helped shape the entire design approach. “We set the house right on the edge of where the natural slope happened,” Morgan explains. “It let us create a walkout basement, terraced outdoor spaces, and uninterrupted views that lead your eye right to the river.”

Visually, the home presents as both grand and grounded, with transitional style-details punctuating the configuration. Wide cedar clapboards and an Alaskan yellow cedar roof on the main house offer texture and softness, while the detached garage, clad in untreated vertical red cedar, reads

as a weathered barn that may have existed long before the house itself. “We wanted it to appear like an outbuilding that had been later connected,” notes Lynch.

Sun studies and circulation planning were major tools for design. The home’s organization is anchored by a striking central “chimney” which, instead of a traditional hearth, functions as a light well that pours daylight deep into the core of the home through a central staircase. “It was our transitional twist on a recognizable form,” says Morgan. Though seamless in its final form, the execution of this light well was no easy feat. “The complexity of having the brick exterior of the chimney come down into the staircase tunnel took a lot of coordination between the carpenters, masons, and framers,” Lynch recalls.

A sense of freshness extends throughout, where rustic timber elements, brick masonry, and colonial rooflines meet sleek detailing and clean interiors. A gentle palette of neutrals and light wood tones weaves through nearly 78 exposed beams, accentuating the depth and texture of Venetian plaster walls and bespoke details. A series of expansive communal areas, including the kitchen, family room, and dining room, are tuned to the rhythm of the day, with morning sun pouring into one and golden-hour light bathing another.

Interior Designer Courtney Driver joined the project midstream, just as construction was underway. “It was clear the clients had this home in their mind for a very long time,” says Driver. “They expressed a clear vision which allowed us to execute, refine details, and bring in the right options—we played off of each other really well.”

“There are opportunities for joy, all the time in this house.”

- Brian Morgan, DMC Architecture



Seamlessly connected to a glossy wet bar nook, the kitchen — both expertly crafted by Kenyon Woodworking — features a quartzite backsplash, a custom Venetian plaster range hood, and a reeded island designed for dynamic family living and entertaining.



The living room affords seamless access to a covered porch just beyond. The gathering space boasts a custom reeded fireplace surround, accompanied by custom arched built-ins and relaxed yet refined furnishings. (left photo) A cozy, contained den was designed for formal entertaining, wrapped in serene tones of pale blue, gray, and chocolate. (top right photo)



The home's architecture, with its abundance of natural light and soaring ceilings, could have leaned minimalist, but subtle shifts in materials, shapes, and finishes invite depth and texture. "The neutral palette is grounding and fresh. As you move through the spaces, the tones shift through layers of texture which creates an experience that is both interesting and engaging," Driver describes.

Adjacent to a custom-designed wet bar nook painted in high-lacquer Farrow & Ball studio green, the kitchen boasts a carefully selected quartzite backsplash, custom Venetian plaster range hood, and a textural reeded dining island ideal for active family life. Inviting the outside in, an interior kitchen

countertop extends as one continuous plane through an awning window to become an outdoor bar. "The kitchen is really the center of their home," says Driver. "Even though the space has a formality, we wanted it to feel approachable and functional." Living spaces also evoke a relaxed yet refined feel with neutral furnishings in soft, layered fabrics and eye-catching light fixtures in every room.

For landscape architect Troy Sober, the property's natural beauty became the foundation for everything that followed. "The site felt more bucolic," Sober recalls. "It had this pastoral quality, which we wanted to preserve and enhance." His design emphasizes long sightlines, a soft visual descent



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- Courtney Driver, Andra Birkerts Design

Clad in untreated vertical red cedar, the detached garage—with an upper-level sports court—reads as a weathered barn that could have predated the house itself.



to the river, and a graceful interplay between structure and topography.

Rather than flattening the terrain, Sober and the team leaned into its complexity. "The elevation changes actually became an asset," he explains. Bluestone terraces step down to a circular lawn, then slope gently to the pool before continuing down to the recreational court—each level offering its own moment while staying connected to the whole. "It gave us a way to engage the landscape at different levels."

Plantings were chosen for year-round interest and environmental sensitivity: layers of ferns, dogwoods, blueberry bushes, and mature trees create both privacy and seasonal interest. Natural materials and salvaged elements, including red cedar and wire mesh fencing and stone veneer hardscaping, add a rustic elegance that complements the architectural dialect of the home.

Executing such a multifaceted project required extraordinary coordination, as underscored by a spirit of calm professionalism and mutual respect amongst all involved. "There wasn't any piece of the team that wasn't used to doing a big, complicated house," says Lynch. "Everyone from the framers to the designers was all in, and it showed."

Perhaps the greatest triumph was the client experience. "For them to say, 'This was fun building this house'—that's huge," says Lynch. "It's never easy, but for it to be fun? That's pretty great."

A light-filled retreat designed for enjoying all of the little moments, the finished home stands as a place where the family can grow, gather, and escape without ever leaving. It is a lasting reflection of the trust, vision, and talent shared by every member of the team. 🏠

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