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Contemporary Edge

WATERFRONT VIEWS AND CHIC CITY STYLE
GUIDE A RENOVATION IN LIVABLE LUXURY

FOYER | Redesigned into a more open layout, the foyer features a contemporary stairwell and white oak floors laid in a herringbone pattern. “The entryway was designed to feel crisp and relaxing” to enhance the flow between rooms and keep the eye focused on the reflective blue waters, interior designer Yelena Gerts says.

DINING ROOM | Elegant and edgy, the dining room table has an exotic wood veneer in a lacquered finish. Brass elements add luster throughout. The custom built-in buffet with its wood veneer backdrop is almost like an art composition that flows seamlessly into the millwork. The same type of wood frames the perimeter of the ceiling.

The exterior of this Coastal Colonial-style home — nestled along the banks of the Shrewsbury River in Monmouth County — retains the enduring architectural features the new owners respected in other homes in the community.

It was the interior of the 5,525-square-foot house that felt out of sync with the tastes and lifestyle of the New York City transplants: a young growing family of three. “The existing space was outdated, traditional and incongruous with their clean and modern aesthetic,” says Yelena Gerts,



KITCHEN | Two-toned cabinetry elevates the style of the kitchen, tying in with black and brass accents that are common threads throughout. Antiqued mirrored insets on upper wood cabinets reflect light, while natural quartzite surfaces evoke a fluid, watery feel. A wood-paneled refrigerator seamlessly disappears into the pantry zone. Slight graining in the cabinetry feels more contemporary, Gerts notes.

BREAKFAST NOOK | With its unobstructed views of the river and beyond, “the breakfast nook is the center of family meals and bonding,” Gerts says. “The cozy vignette ties in with the rest of the kitchen and home vibe.”

principal designer and owner of House of Style & Design in Holmdel.

Gerts and her team collaborated with Little Silver-based Merrick Construction Inc. to carry out a gut renovation and remodel — a process that took two years to complete during the height of the pandemic. “The clients wanted to maintain the architectural elements of their new neighborhood” but infuse the interior with the contemporary city style they love, says Gerts, an allied member of the American Society of Interior Designers and member of the Window Coverings Association of America.

The result was achieved in part by incorporating rich, textured upholstery, various wall coverings, exotic veneers with contemporary flair and plush custom rugs for added depth and detail, Gerts says. A carefully selected neutral palette established a cohesive flow throughout the house, allowing the expanse of river views to act as an ever-changing backdrop.



A deep sectional and plush swivel chairs set the stage for large family gatherings in the stylish living room. A raised wool-and-silk area rug provides pattern. Shimmery cork wallpaper brings the outdoors in, and the fireplace's new marble façade works in harmony with the stone surfaces in the adjacent kitchen.

In the entryway, designed in an open layout with minimal furnishings, the waterfront takes center stage. Overhead, an organic branch-style chandelier in brass and stone seems to mimic the tree beyond. “The gorgeous water views became a focal point,” Gerts says, and the designs and floor plans take advantage of those views. Walls and woodwork were painted crisp white in high contrast to the interior window frames, which were painted black to accentuate the landscape.

White oak floors in a herringbone pattern with satin gold inlay “add

a special, unique touch” to the entryway and adjacent dining room, Gerts says. Reserved for more formal occasions, “the dining room is peak elegance,” she says, with a lacquered wood veneer table, sleek chairs and striking alabaster and brass light fixtures. The custom built-in buffet was designed to flow seamlessly within the lines of the millwork, and the same exotic wood veneer that covers the centerpiece backdrop was used to frame the perimeter of the ceiling, providing a bit of edge and contrast to the foyer. Other finishing touches are more subtle, such as the

luxurious, white velvet window treatments embellished with brass trim that complements other brass finishes in the room.

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More casual family meals take place in the breakfast nook, where riverfront views delight from every angle. This space is well-appointed with a built-in window seat, performance-upholstered chairs and an antiqued brass and clear acrylic chandelier. It was designed “to keep the close-knit family environment present throughout the space in comfort



OFFICE | Designed for the husband's use, the office has a mix of wood tones, textured wallpaper and a sculptural chandelier made of stainless-steel tubes. Custom built-ins on the opposite wall (not shown) house a television, shelving and storage space.

FAMILY ROOM | The porcelain stone fireplace façade "has an organic feel" that echoes the natural patterns found in nature, Gerts says. Reclaimed veneer was used to construct the built-in shelving units. Custom pillows punctuate the family's room's warm, earthy palette, which gets a punch of color from the neon graffiti artwork. Sofas are upholstered in a charcoal taupe performance fabric.





The primary bedroom's cream and silver palette "pushes forward the water views as the pop of color in this space," the designer says. A large area rug anchors the room, which was divided into zones for sleeping, watching television or relaxing by the fireplace (not shown). Mirrors over the dresser reflect the water and open up the width of the room.



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In lieu of the typical bright white kitchen, Gerts and kitchen design firm Spyglass Design in Princeton worked together to craft a highly functional space in a style befitting the rest of the house. White-painted base cabinets are balanced by upper cabinets in a natural walnut finish with mirrored insets that reflect light and river views; the backsplash and countertop surfaces are covered in natural quartzite.

The kitchen is clean and uncluttered thanks to built-in ovens and a wood-paneled refrigerator that disappears into the pantry zone. Glass pendants cast a jewelry-like effect over the 10-plus-foot island, which houses a built-in microwave, sink, mini-fridge and multiple storage drawers. Touches of black and brass in the lighting and hardware "mirror

the color balance" in the space and create a cohesive flow, Gerts says.

The family room — designed for comfort as well as relaxation — uses plush performance-upholstered seating, woven wallpaper and other accents in an earthy charcoal taupe palette, Gerts explains. Incorporating custom tailored accent pillows in high-end fabrics "is our opportunity to bring texture and color into the space," she says. "They are like statement pieces for the room ... like little artwork for upholstery." Speaking of art, Gerts describes the colorful neon graffiti piece "as a token of love for this home, family and project."

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The living room, lighter in tone with sumptuous champagne-toned swivel chairs and a deep sectional, is geared for family entertainment and large family gatherings. "Natural stone and natural wood finishes were chosen to keep the elegant casual style," Gerts says. The entire room is wrapped in a shimmery cork wallpaper from Phillip Jeffries that "illuminates the space so beautifully when the sun hits it, bringing the outdoors in," the designer adds.

A respite from daily life, the primary bedroom is a place where the owners can go to relax and unwind. "Channeling at the head of the bed keeps the room soft and inviting," Gerts says, while cream and silver tones add to the sense of luxury and modernity the clients prefer. Lush window treatments open up to reveal an expanse of breathtaking water views and natural light that are also reflected in wide mirrors on the opposite side of the room.

From the use of mirrors to other glass surfaces and lacquered finishes, "it's all about bouncing the light around the room and keeping the home alive every moment of the day," Gerts says. ☐

SOURCES Overall: interior design, House of Style & Design in Holmdel; contractor and all millwork, Merrick Construction Inc. in Little Silver. **Foyer/Entryway:** wall color, "Decorator's White" by Benjamin Moore. **Dining Room:** custom furnishings and accents, House of Style & Design. **Kitchen:** collaboration between House of Style & Design



Wrapped in glass-beaded wallpaper, "the powder room is the jewel of the house," Gerts says. The integrated marble sink "mixes beautifully with the brass finishes and sconces."

and Spyglass Design Inc. in Princeton; stone fabricator (here and throughout), Thor Marble & Granite LLC. **Living Room:** wallpaper, Phillip Jeffries, custom furnishings and accents, House of Style & Design. **Office:** wallpaper, Phillip Jeffries; furnishings and accents, House of Style & Design. **Family Room:** wallpaper, Phillip Jeffries, custom furnishings and accents, House of Style & Design. **Primary Bedroom:** custom furnishings and accents, House of Style & Design.

*Editor's Notes: To view the home's primary bathroom, see "Ebb & Flow," page 40, August/September 2022, or on our website at www.designnewjersey.com. This project won multiple 2022 Design Excellence Awards from the American Society of Interior Designers, New Jersey Chapter: Residential Single Space, **Gold**; Residential Two or More Spaces, 2,500 Square Feet or Less, **Gold**; Residential Two or More Spaces, More Than 5,000 Square Feet, **Gold**; Residential Small Bathroom, 50 Square Feet or Less, **Bronze**; and Residential Large Kitchen, 151 Square Feet or More, **Silver** (tie).*