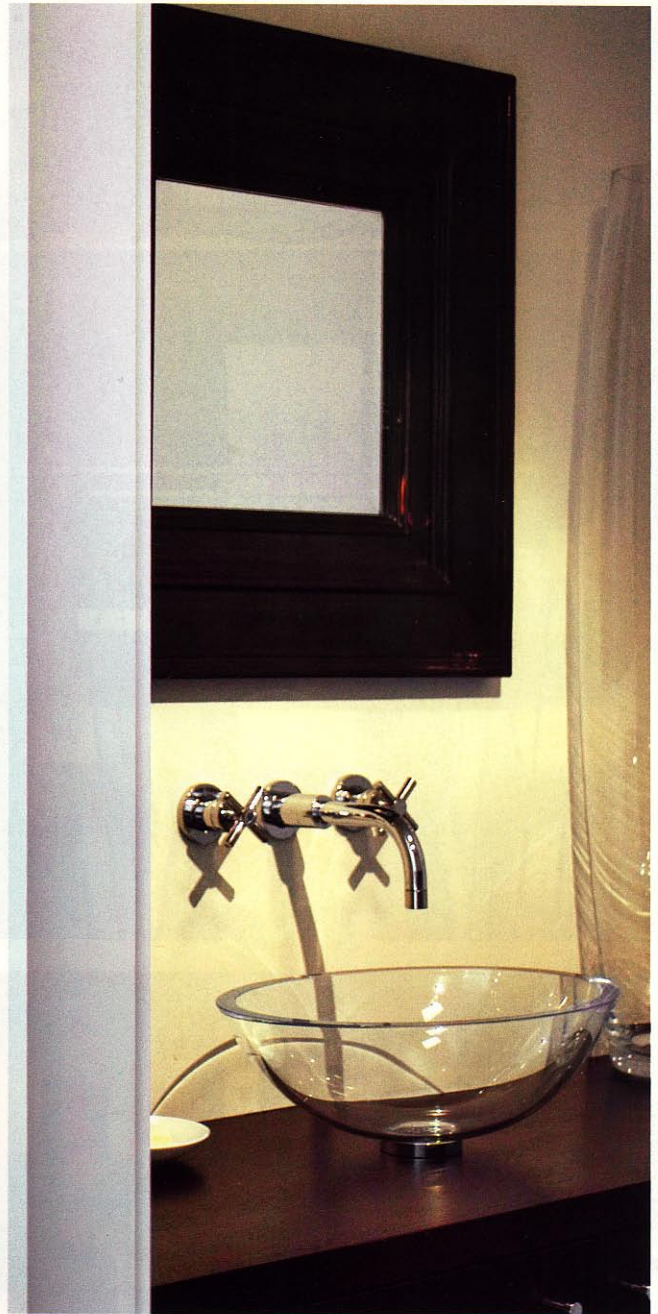


THE HOUSE THAT CHUPIK BUILT

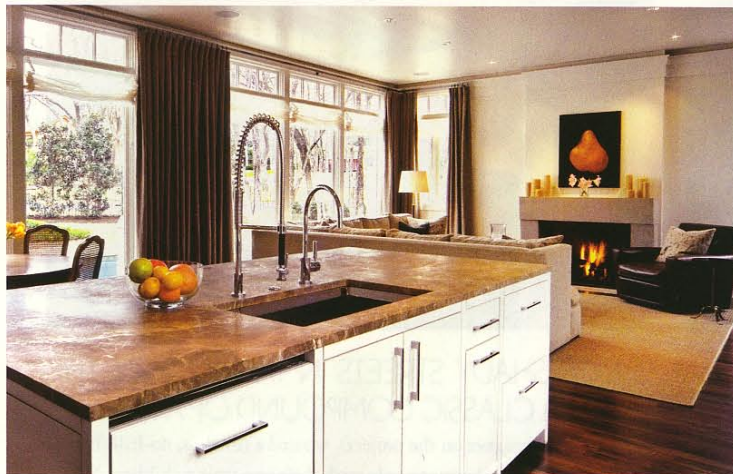
A Timeless Treasure

Photography by Paul Bardagjy



SITUATED ON AN URBAN ISLAND AMID A SEA OF SHADY STREETS IN TARRYTOWN, THE CHUPIK HOME FILLS ITS UNCONVENTIONAL LOT WITH A CLASSIC COMPOUND OF A HOUSE.

The owners, Randy and Viki Chupik (who also served, respectively, as builder and interior designer on the project), wanted a timeless, no-frills house, erected with natural materials. They envisioned a home where they both could work but also live harmoniously with their two young children. When they approached architect Jennifer Marsh of Designhouse, they had plenty of ideas and could verbalize what they wanted, but their fear was that nothing they found in books or real life manifested their vision. They sought timelessness that didn't reference any specific trend; they imagined modernity that was clean and utilitarian without being avant-garde. Marsh led them to the works of Carlo Scarpa and Charles Rennie Mackintosh as well as showing them images of 20th-century Italian, French and English rural villas. From that study grew the vision of a house that would ride the razor's edge between contemporary styling and a familiar, livable design that would weather and age yet never seem old.



Previous pages, left: This free-standing bathtub highlights the master bath, evoking a European mood.
Top middle: A balcony hangs below the high ceiling on the second floor, overlooking the rest of the house.
Bottom middle: Natural light from perfectly placed windows like these in the dining room illuminate the house.
Right: The inviting powder room is hidden behind a concealed door.
This page, top: An alternate view of the balcony. **Bottom:** The kitchen and dining room space overlook the pool and backyard and form the nucleus of the house.
Opposite page: Dark wood and white walls contrast to give the house a nautical feel.

On first sight, the Chupik home seems bigger than its 5,000 square feet. Double-faced, it dominates an oblong piece of land set between two streets. Its illusion of size comes from the fact that the house is divided into three sections: the main house; a detached, two-story structure (that serves as Randy's office as well as an upstairs guest apartment) with a separate entrance; and a clever backyard space that includes a breezeway, pool and courtyard that function as an additional living area. The space between the main house and the office, though not an original part of the plans, resulted from rigorous requirements due to a bisecting sewer easement, calling for a creative challenge on behalf of the architect. In the end successful, the backyard opens up the outdoors to the indoors, creating a reciprocal flow and gentle harmony. In the same spirit, Marsh placed the pool immediately against the house to suggest a sense of reflection or a floating structure without defined boundaries.

The application of hand-burnished stucco, applied in the same manner as was used on Italian 15th-century rural estates, evokes the essence of a European manor house. The hand-split slate on the roof, combined with details such as ipe wood soffits, adds an air of elegant permanence, while an oversized front door (albeit smaller than it seems) defines an exterior with minimal fenestration.

Still, the interior is all about natural light. With careful consideration of daylight conditions and creative use of window placement, Marsh ensured that very little artificial light would be necessary during the day. Bright and airy, the home avoids froufrou decoration, opting instead for clean molding, cabinets painted white to match the walls, warm walnut floors and mahogany doors. Steel stair railings and steel and chrome hardware contrast with the natural tones and textures of the furnishings.

Without being grandiose, the house accommodates all aspects of a growing family—even a hidden mudroom just off the pool area that shares space with a built-in bar. All upstairs bedrooms have en suite bathrooms that include closets. The master bedroom, tasteful and refined, is more about storage than showiness. More luxurious, the master bathroom is highlighted by a freestanding bathtub, a nod to the essence of European hotel found throughout the house. A balcony overlooks the backyard and pool area and has views to the east for 200 feet. Below, the family room, divided from the pool only by a wall of windows, connects to the kitchen, allowing Randy and Viki to keep an eye on the kids while they cook.

Since the owners run personal small businesses from home, office space became a priority. The sense of leaving home to go to work—yet still being close by if needed—was vital to the design. Marsh put Randy's office in the detached building and Viki's on the other side of the house, embedded within the garage. Both have separate entrances for clients, a brilliant notion that forces separation of domestic life and work.

Randy's eyes sparkle as he leads the tour of his newly finished dwelling. As a builder, he knows how hard it is to be delighted with the finished product. But his construction experience is what helped him create his dream house. "We've had 10 houses before this one, and that's how we knew what we were after," he says. His daughter beside him adds, "All the other houses have names but not this one yet." They grin at one another as if considering what to call it.

