

THE LIVING ROOM can seat a crowd — an important consideration for the homeowners, who entertain frequently. SOURCES: rug, Rug & Kilim in Millburn; bar and coffee table, Norman Shaw Design Associates in Long Island; bronze lion and Tanzaku paintings, Michael R. Bernstein Esquire Fine Japanese Art in New York City.



THE SPACIOUS HOUSE, situated on a quiet Middlesex County street, is geared for livability. SOURCE: builder, R.G. Scarano & Grinaway in Monmouth Junction.

# WELCOME HOME

A Middlesex County family relaxes in a new house with an Old World spirit

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THIS HOUSE DECEIVES THE CASUAL VISITOR. THE décor in many of the rooms has a distinctly formal air, yet every space tolerates the wear and tear of an active family of five plus three dogs and two gerbils. Interior designer Lola Wachsberg said her clients set livability as the overriding goal for the 7,000-square-foot house. Wachsberg, whose firm is Creative Interiors in New York City, described the environment as “very warm and welcoming,” partly because materials were chosen with the busy family in mind. “The owners entertain constantly. I didn’t want to do silks knowing that.” The homeowner elaborated that she and her family “wanted a great house: comfortable, livable, not too



A MAHOGANY FLOOR frames the Oriental rug in the spacious dining room, whose walls are upholstered in a Bergamo fabric. SOURCES: table, Giard Emilia in New York City; chairs, Astoria Imports in Brooklyn (to the trade); rug, James A. French Fine Oriental & Antique Carpets in New York City; drapes, Alan Schatzberg in Little Ferry with Christopher Hyland fabric.



GIALLO ANTICO granite crowns the cherry cabinets (above); copper and nickel tiles glimmer from the backsplash above the cooktop. SOURCES: cabinets and countertops, Norman Shaw Design Associates in Long Island; cooktop and ovens, Thermador; dishwashers, Bosch; refrigerator, Sub-Zero.



■ The kids can skate and practice their soccer moves on the limestone-tile floor (right). SOURCES: flooring, Artistic Tile in Paramus; chairs, Astoria Imports in Brooklyn (to the trade); bar stool, Invincible/IPF in Paterson (to the trade).  
■ Leaf-shaped ceramic tiles (left) from Artistic Tile adorn the breakfast room fireplace.



formal. A place we can give great parties and have family visit. ... We wanted floors you could rollerblade on and practice soccer on."

Wachsberg, American Society of Interior Designers and American Institute of Architects/Associate, joined the project before ground was broken. As a result, the designer said, "We built this house together, and I felt like it was mine. Everything I put in here has special meaning."

Early on, Wachsberg and her clients changed the home's design to tailor the floor plan to the family. "We

made some rooms larger and some rooms smaller, needs that the family has, because I knew their lifestyle," said Wachsberg, who had worked with the owners at their previous Middlesex County house. She added that a major change was to make the living room 10 feet longer so people can circulate more freely during get-togethers.

When it came time to furnish the house, Wachsberg faced one challenge repeatedly: "getting fabrics that aren't discontinued, that come in in the right color. If



TUMBLED MARBLE (left) makes a bold design in a bathroom. SOURCE: marble, Artistic Tile in Paramus.

■ Pillows dress up the bed in a girl's room (lower left). SOURCES: bedding, Royce Decorators in Old Bridge; headboard, Astoria Imports in Brooklyn (to the trade).

■ Windows in the children's rooms (lower right) have an arched cornice. SOURCES: window treatment, Royce Decorators in Old Bridge.

■ The homeowners paneled their family room (opposite) after the house was finished. The large painting is by Israeli artist Tarkay. SOURCES: carpet, Major Mills Inc. in Clark; sofa, Mario Basciano in Staten Island with fabric from Major Mills; paneling and coffee table, Norman Shaw Design Associates in Long Island; painting, J. Richards Gallery in Englewood.

“The owners entertain constantly,” says designer Lola Wachsberg. “I didn’t want to do silks knowing that.”



you miss the cutting, you can't get it [the fabric]. The dye lots come in slightly different, and you have to change everything.” The problems led to a long wait for items such as the living room’s draperies.

Furniture proved to be less of an obstacle. Wachsberg reused some items from her clients’ last home. In the living room, for instance, the designer and homeowner simply added a few pieces to furnish the larger space. And the round oak table in the breakfast room, a family antique, moved from the formal dining room of the pre-

vious residence. But most of the furniture is new, a necessity for maintaining the proper scale in the interior design. The house has generously proportioned rooms with many 10-foot ceilings — and a 20-foot ceiling in the living room.

The decorating style is eclectic, although its essence is traditional. The occasional contemporary piece mingles with fine antiques from Europe and Asia. Notable examples include the dining room’s display cabinet, which had been used in a Scottish department store



**MUTED GREENS** dominate the master suite. **SOURCES:** armoire, Norman Shaw Design Associates in Long Island; Ultrasuede sleigh bed, Major Mills Inc. in Clark; bedding, Royce Decorators in Old Bridge.

but was probably made in France during the nineteenth century; the dining room chandelier, unmarked but believed to be Baccarat; and nineteenth century Tanzaku paintings from Japan, mounted as hanging scrolls in the living room.

Colors throughout the home are generally soothing. The wife wanted the color scheme to establish a serene atmosphere, and — because she naturally gravitated toward peaceful colors — the goal was easily met. The foundation for the color scheme is a collection of earthy neutrals the

homemaker classifies as “taupes and camels and browns.” Splashes of burgundy and muted greens, mostly sage tones, serve as subtle counterpoints to the neutrals. The retiring colors offer an ideal backdrop for the owners’ artwork, which ranges from impressionist oils to signed-and-numbered Norman Rockwell prints to a nineteenth century bronze lion by Japanese sculptor Atsuyoshe.

In addition to the carefully chosen accessories and furniture, Wachsberg and her clients opted for top-tier materials throughout construction of the house. The

The wife gravitated toward “taupes and camels and browns” in her color scheme.



**HONED, TUMBLED MARBLE** creates a sumptuous master bathroom. **SOURCES:** marble, Artistic Tile in Paramus; ottoman, Mario Basciano in Staten Island.

kitchen may serve as the best example: copper and nickel tiles shimmer around the cooktop, a hand-carved linen-fold design embellishes the dark-brown cherry cabinetry, and the floor is camel-colored limestone that’s perfect for those in-line skates and soccer balls.

In the adjoining breakfast room, ceramic tiles that resemble autumn leaves — both in shape and color — decorate the fireplace. A sprinkling of those same leafy tiles appears in the nearby drywall and limestone floor; cutouts in the wall and flooring allow the

leaf tiles to be recessed so they’re level with the surrounding surfaces.

A few steps away is the casual family room. After the home was built, the homeowner decided to warm it up with oak paneling over the original drywall. Burgundy seating and bright artwork make the family room one of the most colorful spaces in the home.

In addition, each bedroom has its own bathroom with attention-getting tiles, most of them tumbled marble in various hues. For instance, a boy’s bathroom has tiles of

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