

MINDING THE MANOR





A STATELY EUROPEAN-INSPIRED NEWTOWN SQUARE HOME IS AS GRAND AS ITS NATURAL SETTING.

BY EILEEN SMITH DALLABRIDA | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT WARGO

With jaw-dropping views of Springton Reservoir and frequent visits from eagles and ospreys, the wooded 8.6-acre property in Newtown Square had everything a nature-loving, privacy-conscious buyer would want. The cramped cinderblock house, however, was just the opposite. “Built in the late 1940s to early 1950s, it had low ceilings, small rooms, a chopped-up layout and little insulation,” the new owner says. “We needed a home that would accommodate our family of five and our love of entertaining.”

To design a European-style manor house befitting the rarified setting, the owner turned to Todd Kentzel, co-owner of Paoli’s Architetra. The two had collaborated on previous projects, so Kentzel understood his client’s desire for grandeur blended with comfort. Also at the top of the wish list was a three-car attached garage and an additional six-car semi-detached garage to accommodate his auto collection.

The spacious kitchen is made for entertaining.



Point of Views

The existing house was razed to make way for a three-story, 7,500-square-foot manse inspired by the stately homes of Normandy. Kentzel retained a 50-year-old garden wall that bolsters the vision of a home that looks as if it's been carved from the hillside. "I wanted the new home to look as though it has been there forever," the owner says.

That required a creative yet pragmatic approach, especially considering the grade of the property. "There was a lot of bedrock stone we didn't want to blast or move, so we compromised to set the height of the first floor a little higher," says Kentzel, "but without creating too much vertical separation from the garages or sacrificing any of the views."

Abundant architectural details include cast stone window wraps and a façade of natural stone quarried from Crystal Lake

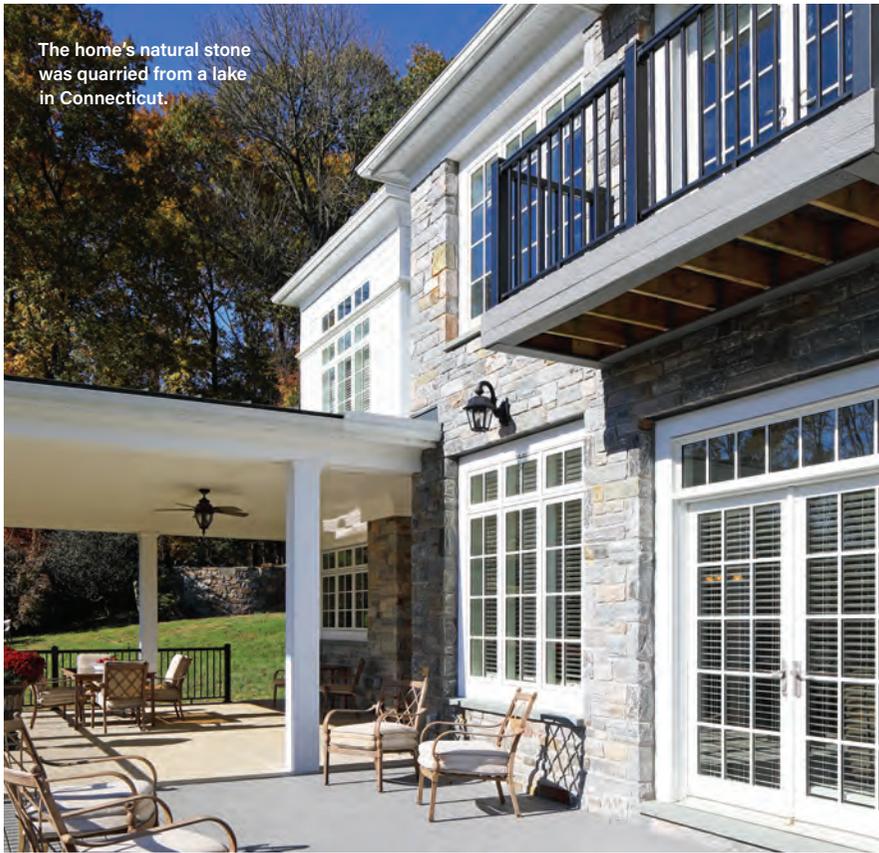
Design details include ornate wrought-iron balusters.





“We compromised to set the height of the first floor a little higher, but without sacrificing any of the views.”





The home's natural stone was quarried from a lake in Connecticut.

in Connecticut. The roof is synthetic slate combined with standing metal-seam accent roofs, terra cotta chimney pots, eyebrow dormers and decorative brackets.

Kentzel also recommended installing windows in a diamond muntin pattern on the third floor. "These architectural details are what really make the house," says the owner. "I love the design Todd came up with."

Designed for Fun

Room flow and those with water views were also important in creating their perfect home. When visitors come through the front door, they're greeted by a dramatic two-story foyer with a sweeping curved staircase adorned with swirl-and-finial wrought-iron balusters. Multiple sets of French doors create a unique open floor plan with unobstructed site lines that connect the foyer and hallway to the main living room and views of the yard beyond.

"The home is designed for the views and for entertaining," the owner says. "From every room on the main floor, you can see through to the dining room, the living room, the kitchen and *continued on page 56*"



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The formal living room boasts coffered ceilings.

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the back deck overlooking the reservoir.”

A formal living room, crowned with a coffered ceiling, has a fireplace framed with an opulent carved mantel. An elegant state-of-the-art kitchen is as functional as it is glamorous, with a massive quartz island and butler’s pantry. There’s custom crown molding and millwork throughout the house, including rare chestnut floors with black-stain detailing at the corners.

Gracious Welcome

Along with the formal dining room, an intimate sitting room and two powder rooms make guests feel at home. And each floor is easily accessible by elevator. The music room—where the owner’s children practice piano—is also a favorite destination for guests. “During the holidays, when we welcome lots of friends and family, we have the player piano in there that everyone can hear throughout the house—and that’s very festive,” the owner says. *continued on page 58*

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The second floor features a balcony hallway leading to a sumptuous master suite and walk-in closet. Shutters on the window above the soaking tub in the master bathroom open to a view of the outdoors.

Just down the hall, you'll find a morning room, a theater, a family room with coffered ceilings, and three additional bedrooms. The lower level is ideal for laid-back entertaining with a living room, full kitchen and modified theater with an open wall so the TV also can be viewed from the living room. An exercise room, guest bedroom and bathroom complete the space.

The infrastructure for an au pair's suite is already in place in the space above the garage, with 10-foot ceilings, a private entrance, and wiring and plumbing for a kitchenette, bedroom and bathroom. Outdoors, a combination of covered and open terraces allow the owners to extend the seasons. With views of the water and trees, it's an ideal perch for birdwatching. "We wanted a half-covered porch for when



The lower level is perfect for guests.

we have guests who want to be shaded or protected during foul weather, and then an uncovered section to enjoy the sunshine on a nice day," the owner says.

Even the setting of the home is meant for optimal aesthetics. The final destination on

a scenic approach down the driveway, the home impresses in a way the owner likens to a big reveal. "When you come through the trees, you arrive at the front of the house, and it's got a great wow factor," says the owner. "That's what we wanted." **MLT**

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