

WASHINGTON DC • MARYLAND • VIRGINIA

The Magazine of Architecture and Fine Interiors

# HOME & DESIGN

## *Annapolis* **GEM**

*WEEKEND  
ESCAPE WITH  
A VIEW*

### **AWARD WINNERS**

- *FABULOUS  
MAKEOVERS*
- *AWE-INSPIRING  
LANDSCAPES*



A photograph of a modern, multi-story glass house. The house features large windows and a prominent glass door leading to a patio. In the foreground, there is a swimming pool with several lounge chairs on a concrete deck. The background shows lush green trees and a clear sky.

# glass HOUSE

Built on a single stone plinth,  
this modern home on the  
Magothy River commands  
a strong presence

BY SHARON JAFFE DAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BURROUGHS













Glass doors open the dining pavilion (previous spread and opposite) to the pool, backyard and river beyond. Catchments of black Mexican pebble capture rainwater on the concrete driveway (above). Pyramid Builders engineered and fabricated the home's three remote-controlled glass garage doors. A watery threshold (below) ushers guests into the home.



“It gets better,” whispers architect Scarlett Breeding, touring a new home she designed near Annapolis. Surveying this virtually transparent steel, glass and stone creation with sweeping water views, a visitor wonders what could possibly get any better than this.

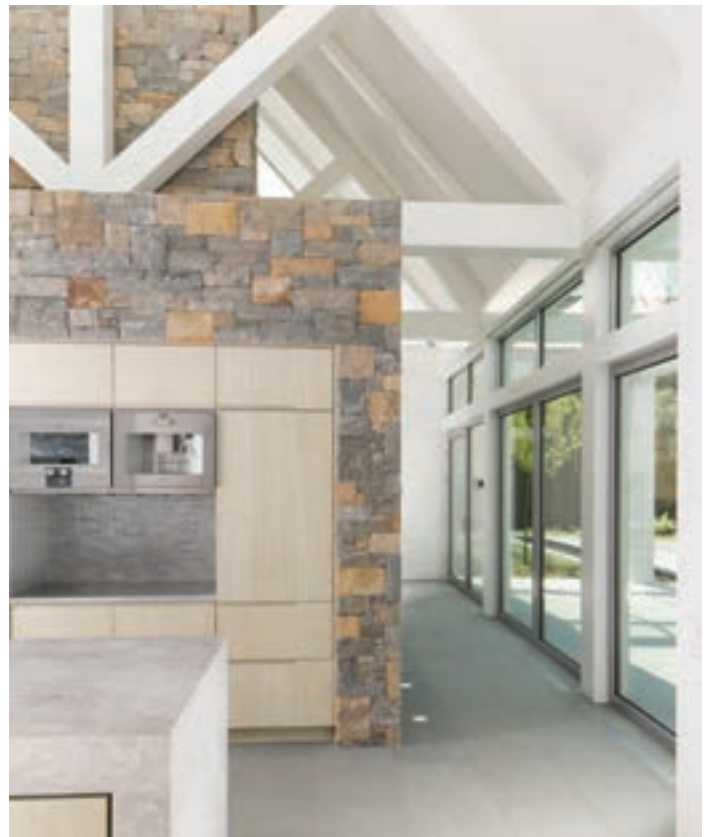
The sheer simplicity instills guests with a sense of calm—precisely what its owner, CEO of a high-tech company, had in mind for this weekend getaway. “My company provides technology that is all about accountability and transparency,” he says. “I wanted this house to have those qualities. I did not just want to blur the lines of inside and outside; I wanted there to be none.”

The owner assembled a team of experts he knew could create the modern retreat he imagined. Scarlett Breeding, landscape architect Kevin Campion, builder Bret Anderson and interior

.....  
 ARCHITECTURE: SCARLETT BREEDING, AIA, Alt Breeding Schwarz Architects, Annapolis, Maryland. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE: KEVIN CAMPION, ASLA, Campion Hruby Landscape Architects, Annapolis, Maryland. INTERIOR DESIGN: HELEN SULLIVAN, Helen Sullivan Design, Washington, DC. BUILDER: BRET ANDERSON, president; STEVE MICEK, project manager; BRUCE HART, site supervisor, Pyramid Builders, Annapolis, Maryland.







**A balsa wood fixture by Brooklyn-based Andrea Claire floats over the custom bubinga dining table (left). In the adjacent great room, a massive stone chimney houses a fireplace and flat-screen TV on one side and kitchen cabinetry and appliances (above) on the other.**

designer Helen Sullivan had already collaborated on his DC home and other residences. Together, they delved into the project—possibly one of their most challenging to date.

As a starting point, Breeding found inspiration in the local vernacular. “The form comes from the traditional Chesapeake cottage, with its simple gabled roof,” she explains. “There is one gable form in the middle and matching ones on either side. We reduced them to their simplest elements, then subtracted out the roof and wall planes so they became far more transparent, to maximize light and views.” Even the garage doors are glass.

Dormers and skylights create lofty second-story spaces, yet allow the house to maintain a single-story presence. “It has large room volumes but does not feel inappropriate for the neighborhood, which is primarily cottages,” says Breeding.

The pure geometry makes a powerful statement. In fact, the structure is built on a single plinth without changes in grade on the ground level, from the water threshold at the front door to the curb-less shower entries and glassy backyard pool. “The biggest challenge,” says landscape architect Kevin Campion, “was integrating vulnerability when it comes to water—our friend and enemy at the same time. We also had to respect architecture so pure that it has no gutters on the vertical roofs.” The team devised a



In a nod to European design, German raked-oak kitchen cabinetry and Gaggenau appliances are seamlessly integrated into the architecture. Even the cooktop is flush with the stainless-steel countertops and the hood installed in the ceiling. The island is clad in Renoir quartzite; glass backsplash tiles add a touch of iridescence.








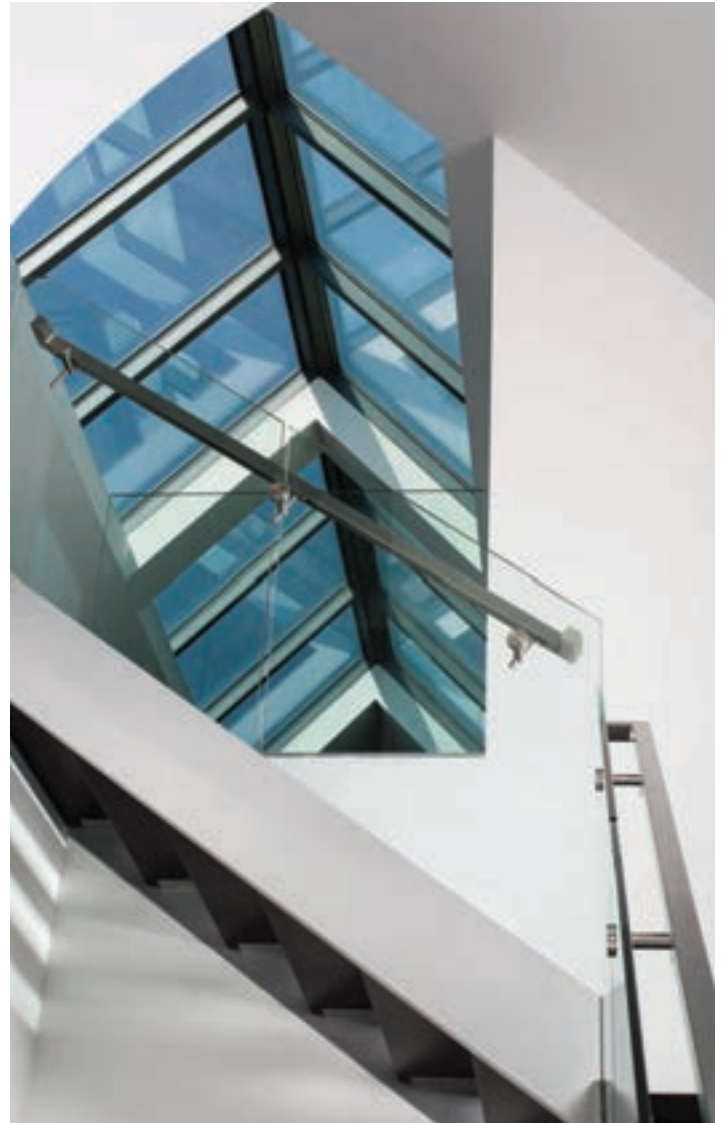
In the master suite, custom cabinetry streamlines storage in the closet (above). Macassar ebony was used on the bathroom vanities (left) for contrast. The restful bedroom (top) overlooks the river; a remote raises and lowers hidden window shades as well as a TV concealed in the footboard of the bed. The master bath leads to an outdoor shower and a hot tub (opposite) seamlessly installed in stone.



A modern shower stall with a glass door and a showerhead, looking out onto a scenic view of a lake and mountains. The showerhead is on the left, and the glass door is on the right. The view outside shows a large body of water, mountains in the distance, and a small boat on the water. The sky is overcast.

“We wanted a seamless transition from inside to out and vice versa. Everything is elemental, honest and true.”

— HOMEOWNER



subterranean system that filters water away from the house. Catchments of black Mexican pebbles in the driveway and perimeter of the house capture water and serve as a strong design motif.

The home's three connected volumes form an "L." One stretching from the street toward the water houses the garage and guest suite and upstairs, a bunkroom with built-in beds and an office commanding views of the river. Perpendicular to this volume are the central, most transparent one containing the great room, dining pavilion and kitchen and another on the same axis housing the master suite and a bedroom for the owner's son. A lower level includes a nanny suite, rec room and wine cellar.

Throughout the interiors, a clean-lined, pared-down aesthetic prevails. Conventional building details are either nonexistent or so well hidden that nothing competes with the simple palette of bluestone floors, stone walls, steel and glass. As the owner explains, "We wanted a seamless transition from inside to out and vice versa. Everything is elemental, honest and true."

In the great room, exposed trusses counterbalance the loftiness. "The trusswork gives intimacy and warmth to this glass house," says Breeding. "We've succeeded in making a very contemporary house not feel cold." A massive stone chimney adds context and texture. It houses a fireplace and TV on the seating room side and on the other, anchors kitchen appliances and cabi-



A floating staircase (top, left) near the master bedroom leads to the son's room above and the finished basement below. In the garage wing, stairs (top, right) ascend to the lofty bunkroom (above), where the son hosts sleepovers on built-in beds with drawers for storage. Designer Nancy Twomey of Finnian's Moon Interiors furnished the space, featuring a play table and swivel chairs (opposite).







The owner's office (opposite) in the far right pavilion (above) reveals dramatic gable-roof architecture and unencumbered water views. Terraced lawns descend to the dock, where his motorboats and yachts are at the ready for cruises on the bay.

netry. Made by Premier Custom-Built Cabinetry, casework in the kitchen and throughout the home cleverly eliminates clutter and enriches the material palette with German raked-oak surfaces. The precise fit of each detail, from air diffusers recessed in the stone floors to floating staircases, presented challenges at every turn. In fact, one of the cabinet installers nicknamed the house "Scarlett's Rubik's cube."

"In modern construction," says builder Bret Anderson, "everything is a zero-tolerance fit and is exposed. How these materials come together sets the quality level of the project. All of the interior trim and millwork in this house is integrated in such a way that it is seamless and holds the design together."

With its proximity to the Magothy, guests in the dining pavilion almost feel as though they're on a yacht. Glass panels slide open to expose the room to the elements. Automated screens bordering the kitchen shield the house from insects. The room's only adornment, a balsa wood light fixture, floats above the table; it is one of three commissioned by the owner, who loves the glow they cast at night. "In the wind," he says,

"they look like a modern, Asian-inspired homage to Calder."

The glass-walled master bedroom and guest suites flank the dining pavilion. The guestroom appears to hover above the pool, installed so completely flush with the stone deck that it resembles an aquamarine pane of glass. From the master bath, a door leads to an outdoor shower and hot tub sunken in stone.

In furnishing the home, designer Helen Sullivan sought pieces with an organic feel, from their colors and shapes to the fabrics. "Everything is soft and mellow," she explains. "More than just comfortable, the house is very calming. It has a Zen quality."

Behind the home, lawns terrace down to the river, rimmed by native grasses and perennials. "The plantings manage storm water and connect the site to the Chesapeake," says Campion.

After arriving at his new retreat on weekends, the owner admits, he rarely leaves. "This team executed perfection," he insists. "Who would want to leave?" ❖

*Photographer David Burroughs is based in Annapolis.*

SEE RESOURCES ON PAGE 224.



