

organic mix

Custom art and furniture enhance the architecture of an Annapolis home

A couple who tapped architect Cathy Purple Cherry to design their waterfront home had a very specific vision for their new abode. They wished it to embrace its surroundings through the use of organic materials, providing a strong connection to the outdoors as well as a backdrop to art they had collected over the years.

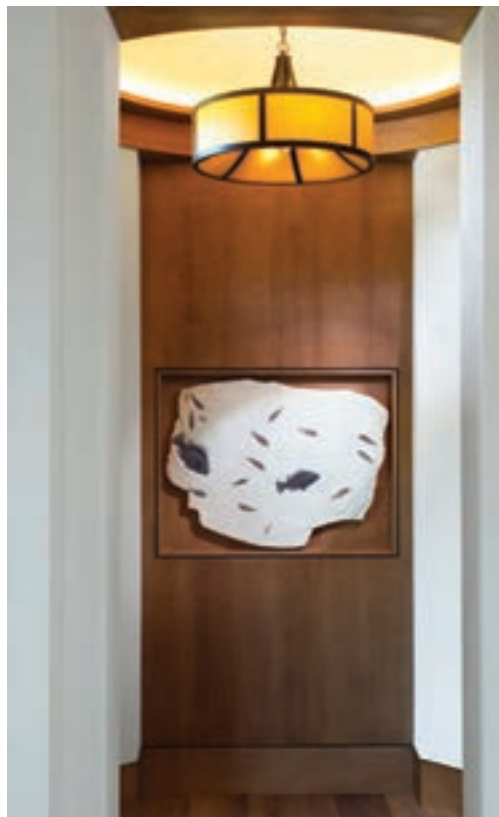
The finished house showcases giant stone slabs, Douglas fir woodwork, hand-rubbed walnut floors and a floating staircase of wood, steel and glass. Purple Cherry and designer Arlene Critzos found ways to highlight artwork that runs the gamut from paintings and sculpture to fossils embedded in stone. Critzos designed furniture that quietly supports this aesthetic. “The mission was not to compete with the architecture,” she says.

In the husband’s office (opposite, top), the stone fireplace is a work of art in itself. A live-edge desk—fabricated from a walnut slab by Hudson Furniture—occupies center stage, while the low-slung slate coffee table is intentionally unobtrusive. The custom chandelier was fabricated by Bob Jones Lighting Specialists.

In the great room (right), the stone fireplace wall complements a painting by Ashley Collins; it conceals a TV. In a hallway, Purple Cherry created a niche for an ancient piece of fossilized stone (opposite, bottom left). Gutierrez Studios fabricated the staircase, which on the lower level (opposite, bottom right) frames wall sculptures of turtles and a bench of petrified rainforest wood. A 27-foot, hand-blown glass light fixture, fabricated by Shakúff, adorns the staircase. “We were blessed,” says Purple Cherry. “We had a client who appreciated creativity.”

Architecture: Cathy Purple Cherry, AIA, LEED AP, Purple Cherry Architects, Annapolis, Maryland.
Interior Design: Arlene Critzos and Catherine Belkov, Interior Concepts, Annapolis, Maryland. Builder: Bret Anderson, Pyramid Builders, Annapolis, Maryland.
Photography: David Burroughs.





ARLENE CRITZOS'S TRADE SECRETS

■ I look at art two ways: Either it's the main feature and the room pays homage to it, or it's the opposite—the room speaks and the art fills in. The client should determine which is the right answer for them.

■ Before you begin, ask yourself if there's something special you want to showcase in your home. A designer can help you figure out the right balance.

■ Blend your furniture and art by deciding which comes first. In this case, the architecture was first, the art was second and the furniture third.

■ Art means different things to different people. It can be anything. I designed a room recently around framed floating scarves by Hermès.

■ Architecture should rule; interior design should come second.