

MARCH 21, 2022

INTERIOR  
DESIGN

# homes



the shape of things



# *line of succession*

*In East Hampton, New York, Bates Masi + Architects and David Kleinberg Design Associates create a contemporary family estate intended to be passed down to future generations*

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**Well before the East End of Long Island**, New York, became known for shingle-style mega mansions, its residential vernacular was the saltbox, a simple two-story volume with a gable roof that comes closer to the ground in the back than in the front. Bates Masi + Architects decided it was the right form to give a new 11,450-square-foot weekend house for a couple and their family on a large plot of land in East Hampton. The clients asked for three semi-attached buildings, one for themselves and one each for their grown children (and their future progeny). Firm principal and *Interior Design* Hall of Fame member Paul Masi gravitated to the saltbox shape, so that the structures would feel protected from the elements in the back but wide open in the front, where the higher rooflines accommodate two stories of windows, all offering spectacular Atlantic Ocean views.

Masi's other big move was to arrange the three pavilions in an L-shape, which provides a sense of enclosure around the yard and swimming pool. The saltboxes are joined by glass connectors, but only at ground level; each has its own staircase to second-floor bedrooms and baths. The architect relied almost entirely on five materials: cedar, which clads most of the exterior; oak, for much of the interior; limestone, for floors, countertops, terraces, and some external walls; darkened bronze, for various kinds of trim; and, of course, glass. "We had to limit the palette because the house is so big," Masi explains. "You lose the essence of it if there's too much going on." This ethos harks back to the early 1980s, when firm founder and fellow Hall of Famer Harry Bates—now 94 and retired—built modest beach houses out of whatever he could find in local lumber yards, a necessary discipline that became part of the firm's DNA. When Masi joined Bates in 1998, he began devising ways to keep things simple even as clients demanded more and more luxury.

This couple, intending that the property becomes a family heirloom passed down from generation to generation, wanted to make sure it would last. That was fine with Masi, who thought in centuries rather than decades while designing it. "We put a lot of redundancy into the building envelope," he explains, noting that the house is sheathed in two layers of shingle-like boards with gutters and leaders sandwiched between them to keep water away from the weather-tight shell. The cedar is fastened to the structure with custom stainless-steel clips that don't penetrate the wood, avoiding the damage nails or screws could cause the boards when they expand and contract. ➤

**Previous spread:** Connecting perpendicular sections of the three-building house, a glass cube screened with cedar slats also functions as sculpture gallery.

**Opposite top:** A colorful wall-mounted artwork by John McCracken overlooks the main living area's custom and vintage seating, including a pair of 1950's Guillermo et Chambron oak lounge chairs. **Opposite bottom, from left:** In the dining area, an Ellsworth Kelly painting faces a sculptural table by Joseph Walsh. Cedar shingles clad most exterior surfaces, including the roof.

**Bottom:** Flooded with light, this floating staircase, one of three in the house, also provides an ideal spot for the display of large artworks like this mixed-media piece by Franz West.





The saltbox form allows for openness and extensive glazing on the ocean-facing side of the house; two bronze-clad "light chimneys" peek over the roofline. ➤

"We had to limit the material palette because the house is so big—you lose the essence of it if there's too much going on"







The architect didn't make things easy for himself. Exterior walls and roofs, identically clad, meet without even a whiff of an overhang. Exposing the transition from one surface to another means there's nowhere to hide even the smallest flaw. "It's harder than it looks to pull that off," Masi admits. "Everything has to be perfect." That includes four "light chimneys," his term for a series of massive bronze-clad skylights that project through the roof. They ensure light "cascades down through the stairwells," he continues, an effect that's enhanced by open-tread staircases hanging on thin vertical steel-and-oak struts that descend from the second-floor ceiling. The stairwells double as ideally illuminated display areas for larger pieces of art (the couple are passionate collectors). And where the house turns a 90-degree angle, the nearly cubic 18-by-18-foot glass-enclosed connector space serves as a sculpture gallery. Delicate cedar-slat screens provide necessary shade, while large, operable windows make it easy getting large artworks in and out of the space.

The clients brought in *Interior Design* Hall of Fame member David Kleinberg to furnish the house. The founding partner of David Kleinberg Design Associates, who has worked on multiple residences for the same couple before, softened the vast main living area with a custom beige wool rug. Much of the furniture is upholstered in shades of gray, including custom club chairs and sofas and a pair of French 1950's oak lounge chairs. The seating is gathered around two Fredrikson Stallard cast-acrylic coffee tables that sit on the rug like massive chunks of ice. A patinated-bronze and polished-copper suspended light sculpture by Niamh Barry adds a note of drama overhead.

But Kleinberg has no desire to hog credit for this house. "It's clear that architecture was the highest priority," he notes. "The artworks were second in importance. And then came the furnishings, which were to be laid back, relaxed, and supportive of the architecture and art." What Kleinberg doesn't mention is that many of the pieces he has so carefully curated could well become heirlooms in their own right. 🍷

#### PROJECT TEAM

KATHERINE DALENE WEIL, NICK DARIN, NICK BRAAKSMA, HUNG FAI TANG: BATES MASI + ARCHITECTS. LANCE DUCKETT SCOTT: DAVID KLEINBERG DESIGN ASSOCIATES. ORSMAN DESIGN: LIGHTING CONSULTANT. STEVEN MARESCA: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. MEN AT WORK CONSTRUCTION: GENERAL CONTRACTOR. AWG ART ADVISORY: ART CONSULTANT. PERRY GUILLOT: LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT.

#### PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT MAISON GERARD: OAK LOUNGE CHAIRS, LIGHT SCULPTURE (LIVING AREA). DAVID GILL GALLERY: COFFEE TABLES. PATTERSON FLYNN: CUSTOM RUG. JOSEPH WALSH STUDIO: CUSTOM TABLE (DINING AREA). VICTORIA + ALBERT: TUB (BATHROOM). APPARATUS: PENDANT FIXTURES (KITCHEN). WOLF: RANGE (KITCHEN). VENT-A-HOOD: VENTILATION HOOD. SUB-ZERO: REFRIGERATOR. BERND GOECKLER: GLASS TABLE (SCULPTURE GALLERY). THROUGHOUT BYBEE STONE COMPANY: LIMESTONE FLOORING AND CLADDING. SKY-FRAME, WESTERN WINDOWS, MHB: WINDOWS AND DOORS.

**Opposite top:** Oak planks clad the floor and ceiling of the main bathroom, which has a custom vanity and freestanding tub. **Opposite bottom, from left:** A system of ceiling coffers brings natural light from the rear of the house into the main kitchen, which also boasts Gabriel Hendifar blackened-brass pendant fixtures. A French '60's glass-top table joins pieces from the couple's collection in the sculpture gallery.

**Bottom:** For geometric variety, the pool house has a flat roof rather than the saltbox form of the estate's three residential structures.

