

Habitat

WINDOWS TO THE WORLD

A well-traveled family embarks on an exciting new journey:
building their forever home. *By Marni Elyse Katz*

Photographs by Nat Rea



Cedar planks
adorn the ceiling
in the screened
porch off the
kitchen.



FORGET CHINTZY KNICKKNACKS and awkward family photos. After years of jetting to resorts on Turks and Caicos, ski retreats in Jackson Hole, and hideaways on the rugged coast of Big Sur, this Newton couple brought home the ultimate vacation souvenir—inspiration for their dream house. Planning to build from the ground up, they agreed that their new space should take creative cues from places they'd stayed during their travels. "The use of natural woods, stone, concrete, and metals [in those properties] were all relevant when defining the architecture we have come to love," the husband says.

Armed with a vision, the pair commissioned Flavin Architects and interior designer Lindsay Bentis to bring their new

Clockwise from top: Walnut cabinetry and porcelain slabs outfit the kitchen, created with help from Tone Amado of Design Group 47; the family room opens to a bi-level patio; a wallcovering by MissPrint lends a playful feel to the wife's office.

home to life. At 8,885 square feet, the finished house sports the clean lines and glass expanses often found in boutique hotels, but doesn't feel "austere or out of place," Flavin says, thanks to the team's nods to traditional New England residences (see: the divided-light windows and hipped roofs). The interiors feel inviting, too, complete with wood ceilings, burnished-brass details, and sumptuous fabrics. Lighting, meanwhile, plays up the house's cozy vibe. "The fixtures act as sculptures in these rooms," Bentis says.

A modern Larose Guyon pendant light, for one, illuminates the dining room, which extends from the sleek kitchen off the foyer. The couple, who have three children, needed seating for many, but didn't want to overcrowd the space with furnishings. Bentis's solution? A glass dining table that takes up little visual real estate and doesn't obscure the purple carpet, slim side chairs, and delicate light fixture, discovered during a designer/client field trip to New York. "Sunlight bounces right through the room," Bentis says.

From there, the family has easy access to the living room, a moody space with charcoal walls, velvet swivel chairs, and a built-in bar. The bar at the 11 Howard hotel in SoHo, where the wife and Bentis stayed during their trip to New York, served as the room's inspiration. "She wanted that dark and smoky atmosphere," the designer says.

Things brighten back up, however, in the family room, which lies just beyond a set of custom steel doors. The soul of this materials-rich project, the room features white-oak flooring, a walnut-clad ceiling, and a marble coffee table. To satisfy the couple's request to incorporate metal elements reflecting architectural styles they admired on visits to the West Coast, Bentis commissioned Loki Custom Furniture to create a steel-paneled fireplace surround. "The metal has a patina with blue, purple, and silver tones that feels very organic," Bentis says.

With construction complete, the family marvels at their new home—a sprawling testament to the places (and the adventures) they've cherished over the years. "Everywhere we go, we [admire the] design details, inside and out," the wife says. "There are cool elements everywhere; you just have to look."