

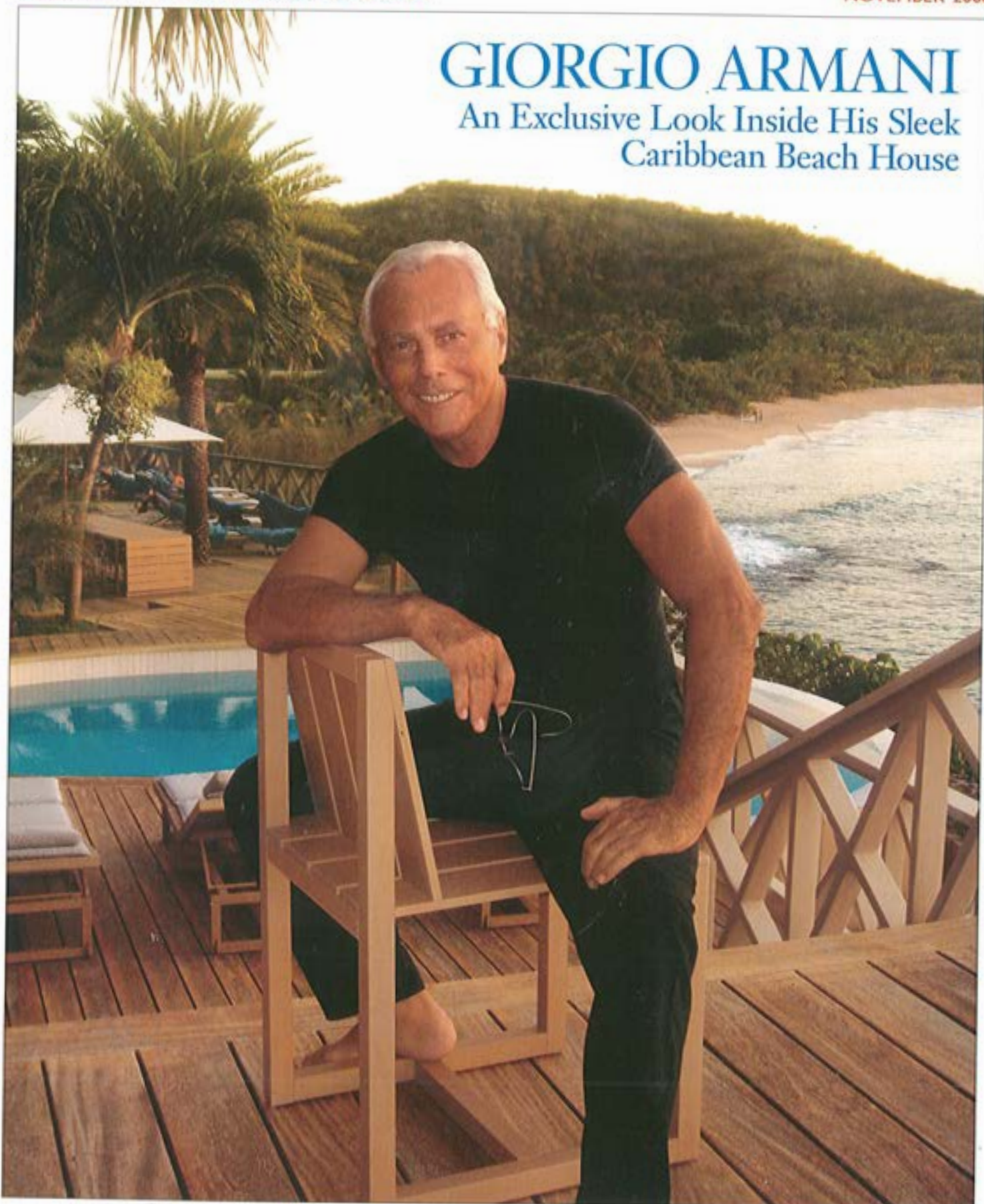
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

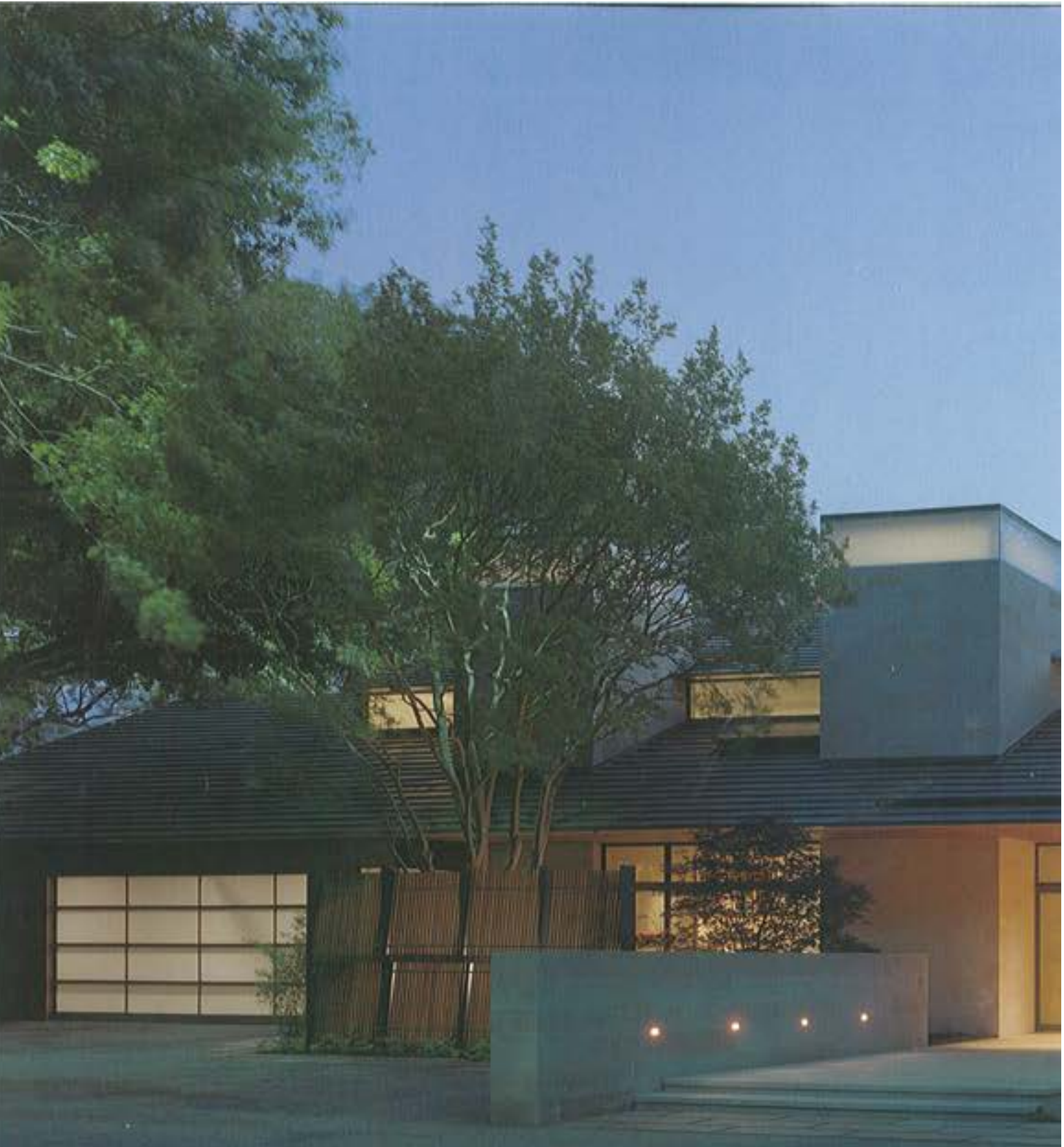
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GIORGIO ARMANI

An Exclusive Look Inside His Sleek
Caribbean Beach House





Past Made Perfect

A RADICAL REDO OF A 1970 TEXAS HOUSE FULFILLS A DREAM

Architecture by Lawrence W. Speck, FAIA, of PageSoutherlandPage

Interior Design by Emily Summers Design Associates/Text by Therese Bissell/Photography by Timothy Hursley



Three stone towers topped with clerestory lanterns dominate the front elevation of a Dallas residence designed in 1970 by Eansie Oglesby and reworked by architect Lawrence W. Speck. Of the project, Speck says, "We wanted to honor the original, but we needed to take greater advantage of its site—we took off both ends of the house, opening it to its environment."



ABOVE: Donald Moffett's *Gold Tree*, a circa 2003 video installation, above the stairs to the living room, and a circa 1929 Swedish carpet are "the only moments of pattern in the house," notes interior designer Emily Summers. A circa 1999 Philip Eglin sculpture is by the window. Carpet, FJ Hakimian.

OPPOSITE ABOVE: In the light-filled kitchen, limestone countertops echo the colors found outdoors. Summers and her team selected brushed-aluminum cabinets for the material's reflective qualities, as well as its warm, modern appearance. Bulthaup cabinets. Countertops from Walker Zanger.

If there are two basic points Lawrence W. Speck, a tenured professor and former dean of the school of architecture at the University of Texas at Austin, inculcates in his design students, they are to respect the work of their celebrated forebears and to wield the tools of invention and engineering in moving beyond prescribed architectural boundaries. With his restructuring of an existing house in a leafy suburb of Dallas, the teacher has, in effect, created a textbook study that incorporates each of his pet precepts into a single graphically illustrative example.

In 1970 the late, esteemed Dallas archi-

tect Enslie (Bud) Oglesby designed a house for a friend in Highland Park. The building—never representative of Oglesby's oeuvre because of compromises he made in the name of friendship—had deteriorated over the decades. When one of the city's more prominent philanthropists sought a new residential direction after the death of her husband, she enlisted the services of Emily Summers, a Dallas interior designer familiar with the house and its provenance. Summers advised her client to purchase the property and presented her with a select list of potential architects for the significant amount of work it required. "She

looked at some great portfolios," Summers says. "But she and Larry were completely in sync. It was clear that he was the right person to make the house into something it had never been before."

Speck, in addition to his academic post, is a principal in the Austin office of the architectural firm PageSoutherlandPage, a large commercial practice that takes on few residential commissions. "There was a period of about 10 years," he allows, "when I didn't design a single house." However, the particular conditions of the Highland Park project—practical as well as theoretical, touching on his own academic history of lessons learned and lessons taught—



LEFT: Separating the dining area from the kitchen is *Vibration*, a circa 1982 ceramic hanging by Anne Barres. The resident, an active philanthropist and member of the city's arts community, studied ceramics and has built a significant collection. Edelman leather on dining chairs. Carpet, FJ Hakimian.



were catnip to someone so steeped in the modernist tradition of Texas and so amenable to righting an architectural wrong.

"It was an old clunker of a place," Speck says, "a heartbreaker. Bud was such a good architect, but this was the worst thing he ever did: not well built, bizarre finishes, materials, arrangements, rooms. If it had been designed for a regular client instead of a friend, it would have looked very different. As is true of all of his buildings, though, it was beautifully sited. We considered leveling the house and just retaining that nice footprint, except that none of us, especially the owner, could bear to tear down anything of Bud Oglesby's. She



ABOVE: Speck suspended a stainless-steel mesh curtain in the main stairwell, balancing the solidity of the limestone walls. The material, he explains, "has a buttery feel—not harsh or cold, very warm. We cut and sandblasted it to give it a soft, irregular texture." The bronze panels are by Darcy Miro.



OPPOSITE LEFT: At the edge of an outdoor dining area, a fountain—a collaboration between the landscape architect, Mary Ellen Cowan, of MESA, Speck and Summers—"provides animation as well as gentle, ambient sound in the garden," says the interior designer. **OPPOSITE RIGHT:** The lower-level plan.

said, and I agreed, 'Keep what you can.'"

What was eminently retainable was the planning principle of zoned areas. Speck and Oglesby, products of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in different eras, each had incorporated the tenets of Louis Kahn, a central one being the division of "servant" (stairs, elevator, storage, mechanical) and "served" (public and private living) spaces. "In plan, you could see a Kahn clarity, but you couldn't feel it in the house," says Speck, who "brought back a rigor and geometry" to the spatial configura-

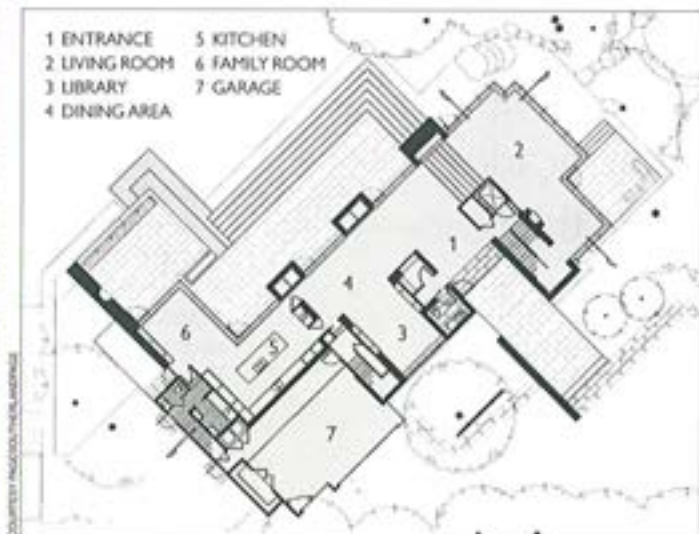
tions and, through his use of form and material, a narrative to the massing. His six stone volumes of servant spaces—three articulating the front façade, three articulating the rear, where they are separated by wood-clad upper-level rooms—are a rhythmic, Kahn-inspired order of solids and voids. And the original roof was a two-tiered band of wood shingles that still exhibits, as Speck (having installed Bermuda-style copper shingles) puts it, "that distinct Oglesby horizontality."

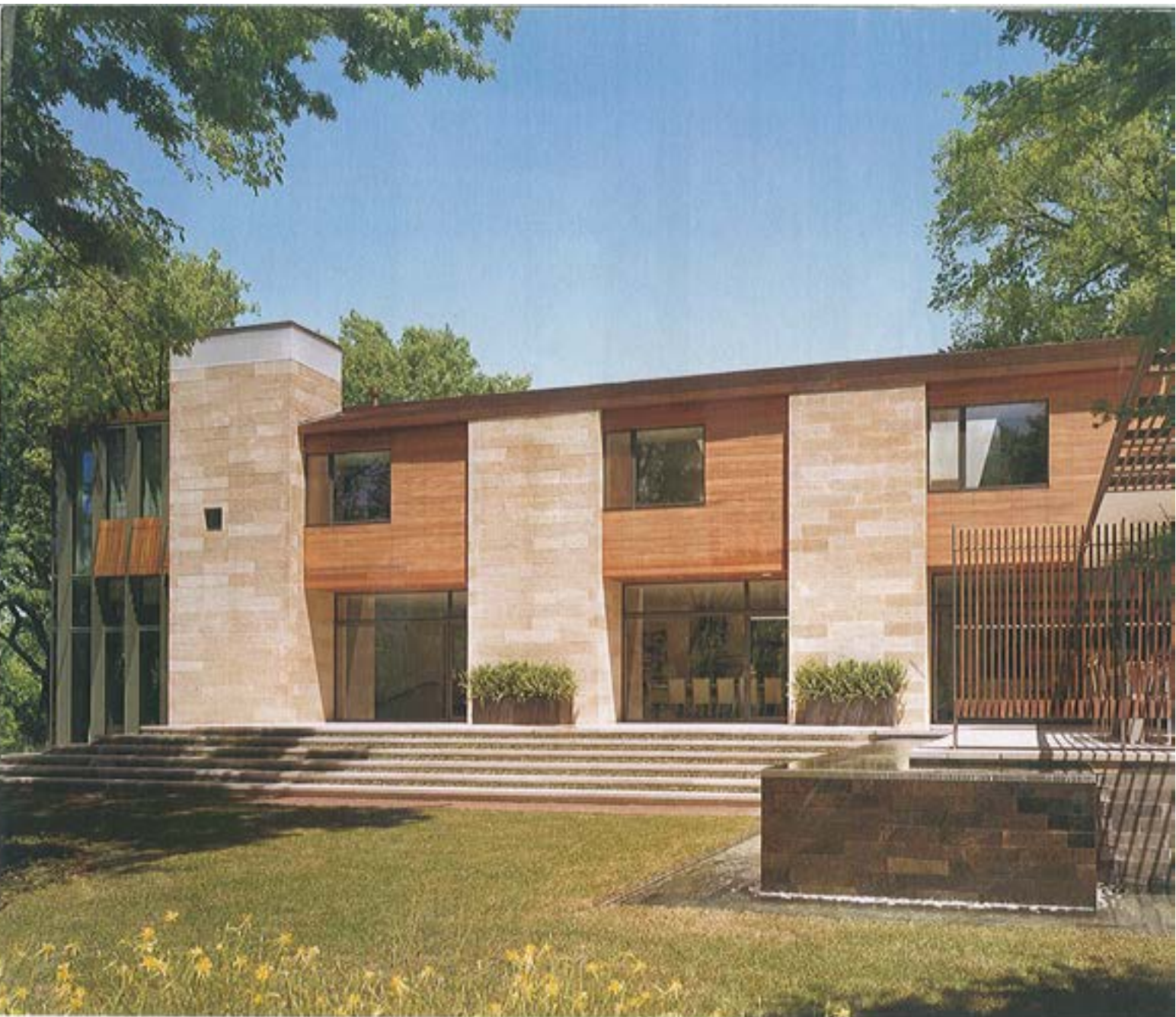
Speck and Summers—along with

PageSoutherlandPage project architect Jason Smith and Wendy Konradi, of the Summers office—worked closely from the start to resuscitate and realize the potential of the house, which occupies a heavily wooded, in-town site overlooking Turtle Creek. "Everything we did was in response to the spectacular setting," says Summers, whose seamless palette of soft greens and creamy earth tones extends from the fabrics and carpets to the sea-grass-limestone countertops in the kitchen and the white-oak floors



A glass curtain wall maximizes views of the site. "You can't believe you're in the city—in the master suite, especially, you think you're in the tree canopies," notes Speck. Fabrics on bed, Larsen. Pollack drapery sheer. Armchair and ottoman fabric from Henry Calvin.





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While extensive, Speck's renovation preserves and celebrates key concepts of Oglesby's work: The horizontality of his design is reflected in the wood siding on the upper level and in the limestone courses of the towers. Moreover, these volumes represent Oglesby's interest in creating zoned spaces.

and cabinetry throughout. "The views were forced and truncated before," she comments. "We wanted to take the eye naturally all the way through the house."

Reaching out to the surrounding terrain, Speck, who undertook a "radical renovation" by reworking most of the structural aspects of the building, lopped off both ends and replaced them with glazed wings. His most innovative new component is the multistory (fronting the living room, mezzanine study and upper-level master suite) glass-and-steel curtain wall that becomes a glass box at the northwest end. The curtain wall, which permits virtually

unobstructed views, hangs from a cantilevered plane by slender steel blades; it is lightly tacked to the foundation at the bottom. Speck, with the blessing of the owner ("She was open to experimentation and to my trying something here on a scale not possible on a much larger project"), tested the properties of the metal. "To make a delicate curtain wall that maximizes visibility, the big, clunky steel members have to disappear," he explains. "When it's taut, pushed to the limit, it's very efficient: a minimal amount of material for the most performance. We were hanging the indi-

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PORTRAIT OF A HOUSE

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throughout this enjoyable, stimulating project," says McGann, "was to create a dignified atmosphere in which Mr. Stone could exhibit his work and entertain important visitors while retaining the house's less formal, warm, family feel." Since they had become firm friends, decorator and residents were able to comment freely on each other's ideas, and this undoubtedly helped them find a solution that worked on both a private and a professional level.

"Rhonda and I are very visual people," Richard Stone adds, "so we thought we knew pretty much how things would turn out. But Adele came up with all

"Rhonda and I are visual people, so we thought we knew pretty much how things would turn out. But Adele came up with all these amazing solutions."

these amazing solutions. We'd had a big old sideboard in a bedroom for years, and Adele said, 'Let's try it downstairs; let's just try it.' We did, and it looked so much better. As a painter, of course, I reckoned that when it came to color, I knew exactly what I wanted. So I chose a blue that I thought would set off the pictures nicely. And Adele said: 'Let's try a slightly lighter blue; let's just try it,' and I have to say that with her particular choice the pictures looked even better."

Much of the furniture had been brought from previous residences, including antiques that Rhonda Stone had collected in the United States. More exotic objects come from the family's frequent trips abroad, notably to Africa. Discreetly hung in the elegant reception rooms, Richard Stone's portraits come to life amid the family furniture, artifacts and souvenirs in a way they never could in the best gallery or museum exhibition. There is no doubt that these works are as much at home at West Bergholt Lodge as Richard and Rhonda Stone are, in a house that in more ways than one could be called picture-perfect. □

MERGER ON PARK

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careful with the carpet, picking out a light-colored Tabriz. "You don't copy or match the art, you play to it. We're talking about references so subtle you shouldn't even be aware of them—you should feel them but not see them." When it came to placing the furniture, so as not to overload a space that "wasn't exactly English-drawing-room size," she floated it all into the formerly dead center of the room.

The 1940s Adnet writing table by the big library window is long and narrow and covered in luggage-colored leather (Adnet worked with Hermès, Gomez points out). Anywhere there wasn't a window or a door Shamamian built a bookcase. "If you have a beautiful library"—the designer gestures to the Motherwell above the sofa, the Stella over the fireplace—"you should really use it." In fact, the couple share the desk, working side by side.

The master suite is "vanilla—I mean, how many ways can you describe white?" Gomez asks rhetorically. Well, as the writer Ali Smith dazzlingly rhapsodized, there's "the white before green"; there's "blue-sky white, heat-haze white"; there's "the white of sun, the white that's behind all the colors there are...open-mouthed white...white spilling over itself"; there's even "the white that longed for bees,

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that wanted you inside it, dusted, pollen-smudged." Gomez is a designer who appreciates just how complex white can be.

She and Shamamian have given their clients a studied whole—a home that is elegant without being dauntingly formal; a tone that is never broken. But, as one of the designer's many mantras goes, calm does not necessarily mean passive. "Actually the apartment's pretty young and spirited for a duplex spot on Park," the husband says, adding, "We wanted it to look like ours and not be recognizably someone else's, and they wanted that for us." □

Visit ArchitecturalDigest.com to watch a video of Mariette Himes Gomez discussing her influences and oeuvre.

PAST MADE PERFECT

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vidual pieces, and until we put in the tension, everything was flapping in the breeze. With thin blades as the structure—there aren't any tubes or flanges—that it stands at all is amazing."

An interior reference to the glass wall is the stainless-steel mesh screen suspended from a translucent lantern down the center of the main stairwell tower. The screen, also hung in tension, eliminates the need

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for guardrails, as it provides enclosure. Oak treads and landings that seemingly float apart from the Lueders limestone walls, as well as constantly changing natural illumination from overhead, starkly contrast with the stone's weight and permanence. This juxtaposition of light and heavy—of mutable transparency and monolithic mass—effectively restates the overall architectural theme.

Given the climate, the outdoor living areas—a broad limestone-paved deck, intimate seating off the living room and a trellised dining terrace—share a ranking with the interior spaces. Notes Speck of the trellis and its complementing vertical screen/bench: "In Texas, we're all about shade and dappled light; and wood slats catch every possible breeze." A wraparound, continuous-flow fountain designed by landscape architect Mary Ellen Cowan, of MESA, introduces the elements of sound and motion to the rear garden.

"I'm a big believer in dialogue, and the project always involved more than just us," says Speck. "I would think through design ideas as if Bud were in the room, imagining that he was completely free to create what he wanted. I knew he'd be figuring it all out in today's terms and not be afraid of doing something new. I didn't worry one whit about transforming his work: I thought of it as a true collaboration of us and him, where we reinterpreted his thinking with moves that were unavailable to him at the time." □