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The front door opens to a generous foyer that provides ample room for furnishings, including a high-backed loveseat and hand-tufted custom rug from Hokanson. **FACING PAGE:** Architectural details nod to the past, but the understated profile adds modern-day appeal.

# Spirited Sophistication

Grown-up elegance and family-friendly ease happily coexist in a suburban Boston home.

TEXT BY MEGAN FULWEILER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
NAT REA | PRODUCED BY STACY KUNSTEL

 A sandstone concrete fireplace surround plays off the subtle shimmer of the Élit's wallcovering in the light-filled living room. To add punch to the neutral scheme, Polletta incorporated a bold painting by Bridges. Modern ring sconces on either side of the abstract are a clever contrast with dainty French side chairs below.







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eston, Massachusetts, has more than its share of tony homes. This one, however, a cream-colored, stick-and-shingle abode on a tree-rimmed corner lot, attracts an extra measure of admiration.

It definitely looks right at home in the neighborhood, but there is something extra—something about the exterior and, in particular, the graceful moon-shaped front entrance—that brings passersby to a stop. "I've heard that it speaks to a lot of people," says architect Erik Grunigen. "I prefer not to analyze why, because every individual has

#### PROJECT TEAM

**ARCHITECTURE:** Erik Grunigen, RGO Architects  
**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Adria Polletta, Chilmark Architectural Woodworking and Design  
**BUILDER:** Brian Davis, Centerline Construction  
**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Thomas Wirth Associates



his or her own visceral reaction.”

With its cedar shingles, decorative brackets, and many-paned windows, the house is rooted in yesteryear. But its understated profile is all about today. And that's also the welcoming interior's mode. The open layout suits modern living. Grunigen thoughtfully lined up the breakfast room, kitchen, family room, and living room on the south side, guaranteeing spirit-lifting natural light. The less frequently used dining room and cozy study occupy the north entry side.

Putting together the right team of professionals is crucial to a successful project. As designer and author Inson Dubois Wood writes in his new book, *Interiors*, “If design is the hub of a project, then

builders, relationships, communication, and empathy are spokes that facilitate it.” And for this home, the owners assembled the perfect team.

Grunigen, interior designer Adria Polletta, and contractor Brian Davis are seasoned collaborators. The homeowners researched the group's previous work and felt confident that their own project would be a fantastic fit. In addition, Polletta, like her clients, has young children, so she's aware of the need for practicality.

Even more advantageous were Polletta's dual abilities. The designer (whose experience also includes working with her mother's interior design firm, Nikki Goodnow Interiors) heads Chilmark Architectural Woodworking and Design,

 A rich walnut floor sets off the kitchen's snowy cabinetry. To further efficiency, the design team seized every opportunity for storage, tucking handy drawers even beneath the table. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** Polletta brings a whiff of formality to the dining room with earthy-hued walls and gleaming furniture, including the shapely X-back dining chairs and a refined china hutch. The Thomas O'Brien chandeliers inject a contemporary note. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** A collection of Hunt Stonem's whimsical bunny paintings keeps watch over the casual dining room off the kitchen.



"I do it all, soup to nuts. When I design the millwork, I visualize the room with its finishes," says Polletta.



A fire blazing on the family room's granite-faced hearth draws everyone close. The most popular space in the house, the room incorporates plenty of pillows for lounging on the sofa, armchair, and window seats. **FACING PAGE:** A granite floor enriches the basement-level wine room, where Polletta designed the cabinetry to house art and books as well as all the essentials.

the firm responsible for many of the custom pieces and for the meticulous millwork that lends the home its noteworthy consistency. "I do it all, soup to nuts," explains Polletta, modestly downplaying her range of talents. "When I design the millwork, I visualize the room with its finishes."

Traditional features such as coffered ceilings, crown moldings, and chair rails add stature and a degree of formality—not the stiff, use-the-proper-fork kind, but a sense that this home is destined to endure.

Visitors stepping into the spacious foyer (large enough for a high-backed Dakota sofa by Oly) look straight through to the inviting family room, a space that

believes its usefulness. There's a comfortable sectional, a generous ottoman with an ostrich leather top, and a bounty of storage for games and books, keeping things tidy. Versatile window seats flank the raised hearth. And like the rest of the house, the palette is neutral and soothing, with splashes of bright color scattered here and there for punch. Above the fireplace, vibrant bouquets painted by Arizona artist Jodi Maas evoke summer year round.

The adjacent kitchen echoes the family room's neutrality with Calacatta marble counters and a wealth of pale cabinets. No ordinary galley fixtures, each cabinet conceals a ship-shape walnut interior, making it as handsome inside as it is out. The trio





of Tesla lanterns from Visual Comfort that hangs above the island provides light without bulkiness, and a sleek stainless hood watches over the cooking area. The roster of top-notch appliances includes two refrigerators—plus a third for wine storage. If the parents are enjoying a

casual Sunday lunch with the children at the mahogany kitchen table and crave, say, a rosé, it's only an arm's reach away.

Serious wine tasting ensues in the finely crafted, temperature-controlled wine room on the basement level. The couple and their guests cluster about a



To facilitate grooming (and a happy marriage, according to many), the couple enjoy his and hers baths and dressing rooms.

Élitis wallcovering, with its underlying hints of gold, and the French side chairs seem to denote grown-up time. But this hub is also for everyday gatherings. "The owner's seven-year-old daughter often uses this room as her make-believe office," Polletta says. The sofa, coffee table, and chairs are transports from the owners' previous nest. Polletta enlivened the sofa with pillows and re-covered the chairs in Groundworks by Lee Jofa. The custom area rug is posh but patterned—all the better to withstand traffic.

The second floor holds two guest-rooms for out-of-town visitors. Polletta has brought as much charm to these as she has to the kids' rooms and their parents' private quarters. In the master bedroom, an opulent Ulf Moritz wallcovering by DL Couch magnifies the light. Subtly textured, the couture backdrop complements a Lucite bench and a silver trumpet table—contemporary contrasts to the prim armchairs and ladylike chaise alongside the fireplace. A moody abstract painting is the sole spot of color.

To facilitate grooming (and a happy marriage, according to many), the couple enjoy his and hers baths and dressing rooms. A large glass shower in between serves as the link. Twin built-in mahogany armoires designate Dad's quarters, while Mom's realm is as feminine as they come, with a marble-topped vanity and a chic and cozy rug.

It's just the sort of pampering space a busy mom craves. And, after all, if the exterior is going to speak to those passing by, shouldn't the interiors carry on an intimate conversation with those who live within? •

**RESOURCES** For more information about this home, see page 196.

A chaise covered in a soft Kravet fabric is a coveted reading spot in the master bedroom. The shiny nickel table is by Barbara Cosgrove. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** The wife's bath holds a Victoria ghost chair and a curved window seat for relaxing. A coffee-colored stain enriches the mahogany vanity and armoires in the husband's bath. Opposite the couple's bed, a Carrara marble fireplace boosts the cozy factor. A painting by Bridges adds a jolt of color to the serene space.

custom table on Donghia stools while they sip and converse. More exquisitely built cabinetry (this time of bird's-eye maple) makes way for all the necessary accoutrements. And there's also a TV should some major news or sporting event be unfolding.

Back upstairs, the breakfast room, with its cache of whimsical bunnies painted by Hunt Slonem, is idyllic for casual family meals and all kinds of assorted activities. Polletta introduced a custom tiled sideboard by Ercole to counter the dark table and leather chairs.

Nearby, the elegant cocoa-hued dining room offers yet another mealtime option. Wing chairs flank the ends of a gleaming table by Baker that looks even more luxe at night when the candles cast a glow. A graphic Mary McDonald hand-knotted rug pulls it all together.

Without much coaxing, dinner guests can be happily ushered down the hall to the living room for dessert. The shimmering

