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# OPEN SEASON

FOSTERING A LINK BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE,  
A WILMETTE HOME IS REDEFINED FOR AN ACTIVE FAMILY.

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / RYAN KETTELKAMP,  
KETTELKAMP & KETTELKAMP LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



**T**he bumpy brick streets in Wilmette's CAGE neighborhood—nicknamed for its four main roads: Chestnut, Ashland, Greenwood and Elmwood—are a charming throwback to another era. They're the perfect excuse for drivers to tap on the brake and take in the area's ornately adorned Victorians with wraparound verandas, charming brick Tudors surrounded by old-growth oaks and stately Georgian colonials, one of which is owned by a pharmaceutical executive and his wife.

When they first saw it, though, the couple had some misgivings about the property. Built in the 1920s, the home was updated in the 1990s by its former owners. "It had been renovated in an Arts and Crafts style with stained-glass windows and heavy dark wood paneling—exactly the opposite of what I wanted," the wife says. But the spacious abode had the proverbial good bones, and a double lot offered ample room for a large backyard swimming pool—a must-have for the husband, who swims regularly with the couple's three children: a daughter, 14, and boy-and-girl twins, 12. Perhaps most important, it was just steps from Lake Michigan, allowing for scenic morning runs and evening strolls.

With the encouragement of architects Elissa Morgante and Fred Wilson, the couple decided to take the plunge and soon embarked on a radical renovation. "The layout was a bit of a quagmire, with a lot of little rooms that didn't flow together very well," Morgante recalls. "We turned it back into a center-home Georgian with open and airy rooms that flow into each other."

The exterior also received a facelift, its red brick repainted a handsome taupe and accented with new shutters, revised dormers and larger windows. A glass enclosure added to the front brings natural light into the foyer and captures a view of the lake at the end of the street, while a black-and-white checkerboard floor and a pair of walnut cabinets with horn pulls further define the space. "We made the whole entry sequence much more inviting," Morgante says. "It's a little jewel on the front of the house."

Natural light also floods the central corridor thanks to a skylight over the sweeping curved oak staircase, which extends from the lower level to the third floor. In the same spirit, a massive brick fireplace that took up the entire south-facing

wall of the living room has been replaced with floor-to-ceiling glass doors that open to a new limestone-and-steel addition with skylights and screen doors. "On a summer day, the homeowners can lower the screens, and the entire area becomes an outdoor room," Morgante says. "They really loved the idea of bringing the light and outdoor space inside."

A new fireplace with a modern limestone hearth and a custom walnut surround now anchors the living room. The space is furnished with a built-in banquette that has a live-edge table along one wall and pieces upholstered in neutral tones. "Your eye moves over the furniture but doesn't focus on it," Morgante says. "It's intended to be a calm, serene environment." The elegant yet durable furnishings stand up to the children as well as the family dog, Fasto, a Bichon Frise-poodle mix who can often be found lounging on the sectional sofa.

The neutral hues flow into the dining area, which is enclosed in the light-filled limestone addition with floor-to-ceiling windows and doors that lead to a patio. A rectangular graphic concrete tile pattern in the floor—which serves as a "rug"—and a glitzy chandelier define the space from the open adjacent kitchen. There, the architects consolidated most of the storage into an entire wall of gray cabinetry accented by a white glass subway tile backsplash. "It's handmade, and it has a beautiful soft texture," Morgante says. "We kept the kitchen quite clean-looking, so you aren't looking at a lot of clutter."

An exception to the home's light and airy palette is in the cozy music room, where a linen wallcovering serves as a textural backdrop for a pair of club chairs. "Incorporating texture was an important component of creating an intimate experience within the open layout," the wife explains. "You can't resist running your fingers along the wallpaper or the fabrics." Likewise, a graphic print appears in the laundry room, and horizontal panels covered with boiled wool rest behind the walnut headboard Morgante designed for the master suite.

A bank of windows in the adjacent master bathroom overlooks the backyard, designed by Ryan Kettelkamp, where there's an outdoor kitchen, terraced landings and a relaxing pool patio that takes its cues from the house. The swimming pool, for example, aligns precisely with the rear limestone pavilion, and the bands of grass and flowers that flank it are defined by concrete that follows the architectural lines. "When I get all the details right, I hear a universal 'om'—and that's really fun," Kettelkamp laughs. "It was a joy to work with Elissa and Fred to make this garden come to life."

There is life in the garden year-round: The family uses the outdoor kitchen, two fire pits, bocce court and heated swimming pool whenever possible—even during the frigid winter months, when the husband swims once or twice a week. Occasionally, the rest of the family takes part in these polar bear swims, immediately dashing into the mudroom when they emerge from the pool. "It's cold for a minute but so worth it," the wife laughs.

The invigorating plunges are a fine display of the indoor-outdoor living the family desired from the beginning. "The house isn't just pretty to look at; it also works for our lifestyle," the wife says. "You can tell how much thought the entire team put into everything." ■

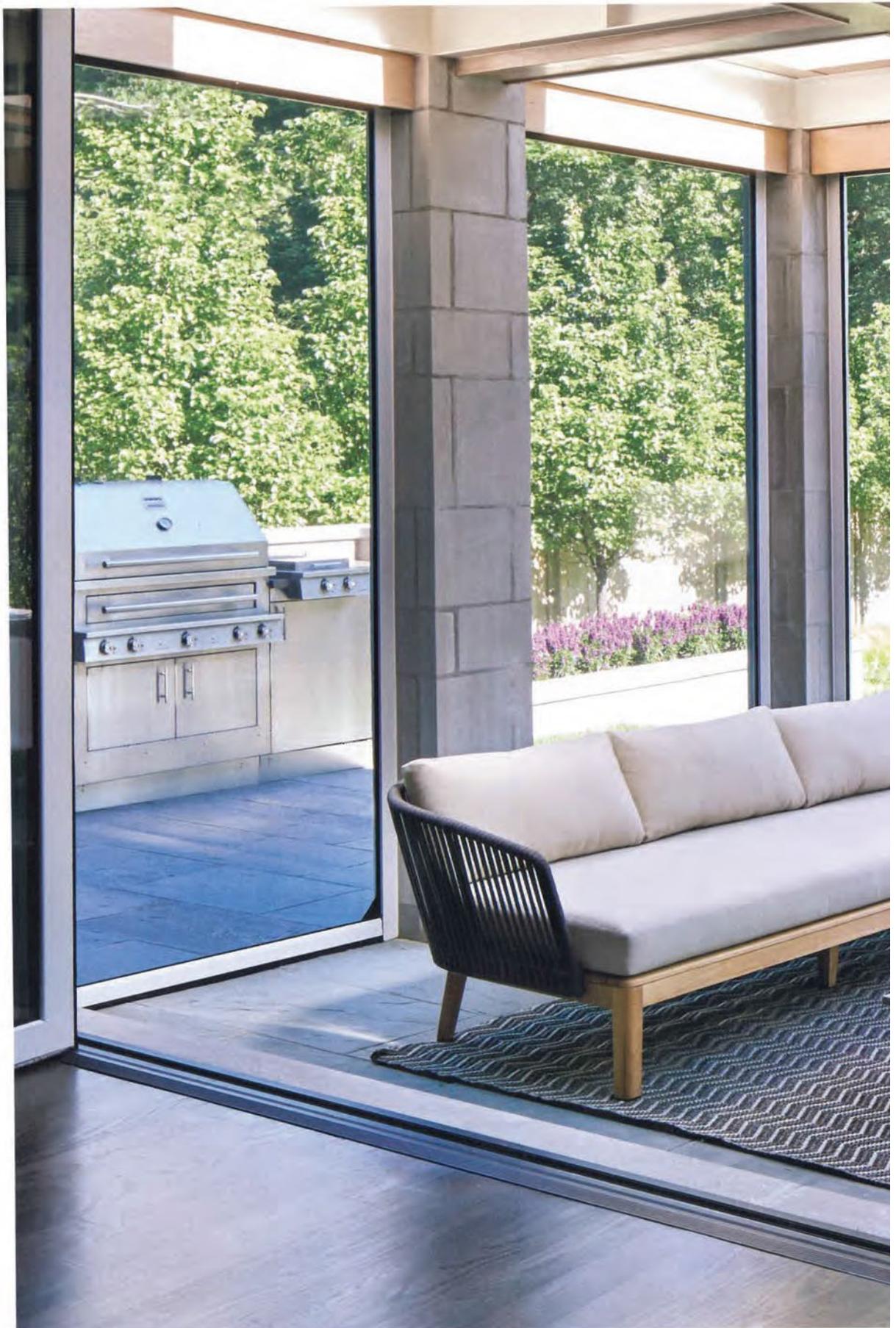
## "WE TURNED THE HOUSE BACK INTO A CENTER-HOME GEORGIAN WITH OPEN AND AIRY ROOMS THAT FLOW INTO EACH OTHER."

—ELISSA MORGANTE



In the foyer of a Wilmette home, a custom stained walnut cabinet with horn pulls designed by Morgante-Wilson Architects and built by Lambright Woodworking in Topeka, Indiana, offers storage while disguising the mechanicals. It is flanked by a pair of metal stools by Arteriors covered in teal hair-hide from Parkwest Furniture.

A window wall by NanaWall opens to create a continuous flow between the living room and the limestone addition. When the sun goes down, a hanging Hive lamp from Lightology illuminates the space, which is furnished with a teak sofa from Janus et Cie and a pair of chairs around a concrete-topped Kettal cocktail table. The rug by Surya is from Creative Visions.









A patterned concrete tile floor from Exquisite Surfaces and a Glow Lighting crystal chandelier with a black organza shade distinguish the open dining area from the surrounding living spaces. The steel-and-wood table is from Rustic Elements, and the chairs are from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams.

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Jessica Charles stools from Baker introduce a softer element into the kitchen, where a generously proportioned center island with a leathered quartzite countertop from Contempo Marble & Granite bridges the gray perimeter cabinetry and the white island cabinetry. The hanging metal pendants are by Visual Comfort.









**Left:** In the powder room, a blue quartzite weathered-metal wallcovering from Maya Romanoff emphasizes the wood grain in the custom vanity with a Stone Forest bronze vessel sink. The mirror is from West Elm, and the glass pendant lights are by LBL from Lightology.

**Opposite:** A Brunswick & Fils rug from JD Staron and faux burlap-textured wallpaper from MDC evoke a cozy atmosphere in the music room, which is furnished with a pair of club chairs from RH and a cocktail table by Arteriors from Creative Visions. The Stonegate by AFX hand-rubbed bronze overhead light, featuring a silk Dupioni shade, is from CAI Designs.





Outside, the limestone addition in the back of the house overlooks the pool from Downes Swimming Pool Company and landscaping by Ryan Kettelkamp. The exterior doors and windows are from Pella.



**Above:** Large oval mirrors by Uttermost maintain the master bathroom's open view of the backyard from the custom stained walnut vanity built by Lambright Woodworking. The fluted-glass globe fixture is by Shades of Light, and the Tech Lighting vanity pendants are from Lightology.

**Right:** The owners enjoy the seating area in their master suite, which is furnished with a pair of gray velvet slipper chairs and an ottoman, all by Michael Berman Limited from CAI Designs. The Rosewood side table is from Kravet; the raw silk Roman shades are by Schumacher.



A gray silk-chiffon pendant by Stonegate by AFX from Lightology, a high-pile loop carpet by Bellbridge and custom wall panels upholstered in fabric from Rodolph evoke a soft and welcoming ambience in the master suite. The bed linens are by Eastern Accents; the bench is from Parkwest Furniture.

