

ARCHITECTURE / GARY FRANK, H. GARY FRANK ARCHITECTS
INTERIOR DESIGN / MARSHALL ERB, MARSHALL ERB DESIGN
HOME BUILDER / RICHARD BONDAROWICZ, SMART BUILDERS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / PAMELA SELF,
PAMELA SELF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



SITE *to* BEHOLD

GARDEN VIEWS AND SPLENDID LIGHT ALLOW NATURE
TO SHINE IN THIS NEW LAKE FOREST HOME.

WRITTEN BY LIZ ARNOLD / PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATHAN KIRKMAN



Ten years is a long time to search for a property, but when you're looking for the perfect place to build your forever home, it's important to take your time. And that's exactly what a pair of Chicago empty nesters did. "We thought it through and decided we either wanted to be on Lake Michigan or on a property that was wooded," says the husband. Ultimately, they decided on a secluded tree-filled lot in Lake Forest. As beautiful as the land was, however, the existing house on the 3-acre property wasn't quite what they had in mind. But before embarking on a renovation, they spent a year and a half getting to know the site. "My wife and I would sit around the pool and talk about what we wanted," the husband recalls. Once that vision became clear—a spacious, shingled four-bedroom Hamptons-style home with a porch facing lush gardens and stunning sunsets—they called on builder Richard Bondarowicz, who then assembled the team of architect Gary Frank, interior

designer Marshall Erb and landscape architect Pamela Self to make the owners' dream a reality.

"They wanted to create a place for family to gather," says Bondarowicz. As such, all the bedrooms have en suite bathrooms. The porch runs the length of the main floor, and a total of 11 fireplaces offer warm places to convene. Another primary aim, Frank recalls, was to surround the house with naturalistic, grassy gardens inspired by Dutch landscape master Piet Oudolf, known for his work on Lurie Garden in Chicago and the High Line in New York. "Wherever you go in this house, you can see these beautiful gardens," notes the architect, who employed glass and strategic siting to maximize views, such as situating the center of the house so that upon entering on the east side, a massive cottonwood tree from 1725 is visible down the hall to the west. A skylight atop the stair hall filters sunlight onto the main floor's entry. "The central space leads you in, so you always feel enlivened by the light and the spatial quality there," Frank says.

Builder Richard Bondarowicz and architect Gary Frank gave this Lake Forest residence a Hamptons feel with a tapered cedar shake roof from Smart Roofing, Inc. Interior and exterior stonework and masonry is by MAL Construction, Inc. Complementing the lush environs is a landscape design by Pamela Self.

The garden room floor consists of 600-year-old limestone reclaimed from Jerusalem, sourced at Chadwick's Surfaces International, Inc. Benjamin Moore's White Heron provides a bright backdrop for neutral furnishings with iron accents, such as the Marshall Erb Design Collection sofa, Arteriors floor lamps, and the chairs, chandelier and sconces all by Formations from Holly Hunt.



Concealed behind what look like closet doors is a well-stocked bar enveloped in Benjamin Moore Champion Colbalt with high-contrast, brushed-white quartzite from Marble & Granite Supply of Illinois, Inc. The cabinetry is by Abruzzo Kitchen & Bath.



In the dining room, walls are wrapped in a soft gray wallcovering by Area International; J.D. Staron's rug in yellows, blues and charcoal continues the palette. Interior designer Marshall Erb notes that the circular dining table with chairs covered in Fortuny fabric, all by the designer for Lusso Design Resource, softens the square room. Lee Jofa printed drapery fabric and the delicate chandelier and sconces by David Iatesta lend a sense of airiness. The fire surround is by Atelier Jouvence.

Custom leather bar chairs designed by Erb surround the kitchen island topped with quartz from Terrazzo & Marble Supply Companies. Robert James chairs paired with a Taracea dining table provide a more traditional seating arrangement. O'Brien Harris designed the cabinetry and the panels for the integrated appliances. The French oak flooring is from Signature Innovations.



For the interiors, Erb collaborated with Frank to enhance the detailing and conceptualize the use of the rooms so that, as he says, "There are outlets where there need to be, and drapery hardware works with the millwork." Erb, whose background is in architecture, notes that Frank's understanding of classical architecture helped set the stage for comfortable rooms despite the home's size. "It still feels cozy because everything is in scale," Erb says, including the master suite, where vestibules and hallways break up the space. "There's nothing looming, and it's all due to Gary's ability to scale millwork appropriately."

Erb also considered proportion and scale when devising his plan for the casual yet elegant furnishings. He determined the best way to make this large house comfortable was to customize most of the furniture and organize seating groups. He designed pieces such as the wide living room sofa with a low back, covered in gray linen, and the rectangular sofa that anchors the south-facing garden room, upholstered in an ivory and sage twill. "The palette provides a foil to the greens outside," says Erb of the complementary grays, blues, gold and terra cotta, which also offset the formality of a collection of French Impressionist paintings. "I wanted to bring some airiness and contrast to the interiors," he says.



Afyon white marble from Terrazzo & Marble Supply Companies surrounds the Hydro Systems tub in the master bath, where tile from Chadwick's Surfaces International, Inc., and Decorator's White paint by Benjamin Moore complete a crisp and serene interior.

Encouraging a sense of flow and “trying to provide a draw to rooms for certain uses,” says Erb, was also a priority. The garden room features a planter for the wife’s herbs and a limestone sink where the husband can pot his orchids and which, during parties, is the perfect place to park champagne on ice. A dining table on the covered terrace allows the couple to enjoy their exquisite garden, which includes 60,000 bulbs from Roy Diblik, the Wisconsin plantsman who teamed with Oudolf on the aforementioned gardens. “We have our meals on the porch about five months a year,” says the husband. “It’s just a beautiful setting.” Adds landscape architect Pamela Self, who designed the master plan using a mix of native and non-native plants, “Each day feels and

looks different as the plantings change in size, shape, color and texture throughout the seasons.”

Reflecting on the project, all of the design professionals involved praise the talent and generosity of their colleagues—and of their clients. Says Frank, “Working with a great team is really important, and when you also have homeowners who are open-minded, it’s so rewarding. The house turns out great.” The owners attribute their surprisingly smooth experience to Bondarowicz, who brought the design team together. “Rich and I did our deal on a handshake,” says the husband. “We never had a contract. When you undertake a project like this, you’d better trust your builder.” ■

Neutral tones in beige, ivory and gray quiet the master, where Erb’s custom pieces, such as the bed, night tables, desk chair and sofa, provide perfect proportions. A mix of materials imparts a lived-in feel, such as bed upholstery from Arabel Fabrics, linens from Designers Linen Source and pillow fabrics from Holland & Sherry.





A porch along the west side of the residence includes a dining area with table and chairs by Janus et Cie. Cantilevered umbrellas by Tuuci shade the row of Barlow Tyrie chaise lounges on the deck alongside the pool by Quantus Pools, Inc.