



The house, constructed by builder Seth Churchill, is clad in stucco and grounded with fieldstone to give it the sense of nestling into its sloping pond-side site. Architect Janet Jarvis's design is clean and contemporary, with a nod to the New England vernacular.

ON THE CUTTING EDGE

Text by **Bob Curley** / Photography by **John Gruen** / Produced by **Karin Lidbeck Brent**

A home overlooking a Litchfield County pond blends the rustic with the contemporary in a design as solid as the granite ledge upon which it perches.

An oversize glass door lets lots of light into the foyer, where a deer statue stands as a reminder of the homeowners' intent to blend the outdoor environment with the indoors. **FACING PAGE:** An antique chest and mirror provide a sense of permanence in the foyer and make the perfect platform for seasonal decor.



When someone wants a waterfront house badly enough, not even New England bedrock can stand in the way. Before they could even start building, the owners of the aptly named Laurel Ledge, which overlooks a pristine pond in Kent, had to cut a half-mile road through their wooded property to reach the waterfront. There, the vision of a



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The colors of autumn suffuse the living room, from the Holly Hunt chairs and sofa to the A. Rudin armchairs and wall art. Open ceiling beams and a leather-clad ottoman add a hint of rich rusticity. A limestone Chesneys Marseilles mantel evokes eighteenth-century French Provincial design; the roman shades can be dropped to create intimacy around a merry fire. Clever furniture arrangements create this cozy nook that overlooks the water.

private compound—complete with main and guest houses, swimming pool, soccer field, boat house and dock, and a barn-like field house containing indoor tennis/basketball courts—began to take shape as excavators blasted away at a granite ledge to secure the home’s lofty perch peering over the pond.

Three years and millions of dollars of site work and construction later, the house was completed in harmony with its peaceful surroundings, clad in sedate stucco and fieldstone, heated by a complex geothermal system, and with an interior by Boston designer Polly Lewis that reflects the color palette of New England.

Located at an old campsite on one of the most unspoiled bodies of water in Connecticut, the home has a “modern lake” aesthetic, in the words of Idaho-based architect Janet Jarvis of The Jarvis Group.

Stonework details and Craftsman-inspired open beams under the eaves add character to the clean, contemporary lines of the home, which steps down toward the waterfront in three tiers of living space.



PROJECT TEAM

Architecture: Janet Jarvis, The Jarvis Group

Interior design: Polly Lewis, Lewis Interiors

Builder: Seth Churchill, Churchill Building Company

Landscape design: Rick Worcester, Worcester + Worcester Landscape Architects



“THE OWNERS LIKE A COMFORTABLE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT,” SAYS POLLY LEWIS. “THEY WANTED THE DESIGN TO CAPTURE EVERY VIEW, BUT NOT BE PRECIOUS.”



Pretty things come in threes in the custom kitchen, where a trio of A. Rudin high-backed stools in faux leather line a concrete-topped counter lit by bronze pendant lights. **FACING PAGE:** Bathed in light from both natural and manmade sources, the dining room centers on a rough-hewn table from Mecox Gardens softened by an octet of Holly Hunt chairs in Dedar fabric.

“We wanted something that nestled into all the granite outcroppings as much as possible, and would not be too prominent a house on the lakeshore,” says Jarvis, who also designed the owners’ Sun Valley home. The Connecticut house “is very un-Western and different,” she says. “We wanted it to be in a New England vernacular.”

Laurel Ledge is more than a vacation home. The owners spend most weekends here with their teenage sons, much of the time outdoors. “They live in New York City and have a very busy life, so this is a great getaway,” Lewis says. The sports-minded kids, of high-school and college age, spend time practicing serves and shooting hoops in the field house (which has retractable hoops that convert the tennis court into a basketball court) or working on foot skills on the outdoor soccer field. Mom and Dad, meanwhile, can lounge by the pool and hot tub, or take a boat out on the lake. In many ways, the property is still a camp, albeit a meticulously designed and extremely private one.

A geometrically patterned rug greets visitors at the entry of the house, but otherwise the fabrics, window treatments, and floor coverings favor solid colors: beige, leather-lined Stark carpets over oak floors, monochromatic chairs, and kitchen countertops stained dark brown. “The owners like a comfortable and clean environment,” says Lewis. “They wanted the design to capture every view, but not be precious.”

Walls free of molding, plain-fronted cabinetry, and accent fabrics in bold red, orange, and green help bridge the gap between the unfussy contemporary furnishings favored by the husband and the wife’s collection of rare antiques, positioned strategically but sparingly around the home. “They are very much fall colors,” Lewis says, noting: “The owners go away in the summer, so this is more of a fall, winter, and spring house.”

The decor creates a seamless transition between the home’s ample outdoor spaces, including wrap-around decks secured with open steel railings, and



the sunlight-flooded interior, with rooms that bask in pond views from walls of windows, some sliding open to reveal screens for letting the breezes in on sunny days.

Rustic elements also find their way into the

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RIGHT: A custom headboard in gold fabric by Pierre Frey plays well with the yellow and purple bedclothes. **BELOW:** The master suite's yellow curtains and George Smith chairs match the headboard as well as the fall colors outside. The throws and ottoman are in shades of client-pleasing purple. **FACING PAGE:** A spacious deck flows easily from the dining room and living room, offering ample dining and gathering space of its own, with JANUS et Cie chairs surrounding a Gloster Halifax teak extending table.



house, such as a heavy, rough-hewn dining-room table surrounded by more contemporary Holly Hunt chairs and lit by an open-frame iron Gregorius | Pineo chandelier. Substitute teak for the table and rattan for the chairs, and you have the outdoor furniture just steps away on the deck. The chairs, part of the Amalfi collection by JANUS et Cie, wear cushions striped with autumnal colors of orange, beige, and brown.

Tall twin doorways, designed as much to let in sunlight as for access and egress, connect the dining room to the kitchen, where high-backed stools outfitted in green faux leather face skinny concrete counters (not at all fragile, assures Lewis) overhung with pendant lights. "It's a little more modern influenced," says

Lewis, but Belgian tile floors and natural stone backsplashes keep the kitchen warm and inviting.

The limestone fireplace and open beams in the living room—the latter sourced from a tree that was removed from the property during construction—also speak to rustic elegance. While the Holly Hunt chairs and ottoman are arranged to absorb the warmth of the fire, two green chenille-upholstered armchairs face the windows overlooking the pond, giving the sense of an enclosed patio and making a favored spot for curling up with a book. The windows here recess into the wall at the push of a button to create a de facto screen room.

"The room was so big, and we had to work around the fireplace," Lewis says. "We had extra space, so we designed that area to capture the views again."

The children's bedrooms are downstairs from the main living spaces, while the master bedroom and bath are upstairs, so the house offers plenty of privacy for everyone (a guest room occupies a space over the garage). With a winged, gold-fabric headboard by Marlborough, Massachusetts-based upholsterer Dan Connors, the bed in the master is draped in shades of purple favored by the couple, but the muted colors bespeak Tuscany more than royalty.

The pond-side home was built for the long haul, with a design as rock solid as the ledge it sits on. "The owners very much wanted it to be a legacy, a generational gathering place for their families from New York and Boston," says Jarvis. "The kids were in grade school when we started; now they are in high school and college. It will be interesting to see how the home evolves over time." ■

RESOURCES : For more information about this home, see page 150.

