



A Perfect Fit

This Vermont forever home manages to be both modern and classic while honoring its hillside location.

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The home's oversized mahogany pivot door echoes the supersized windows. **FACING PAGE:** Taking their cue from the lush surroundings, the designers at Wagner Hodgson Landscape Architecture created a bluestone pathway through a perennial garden of native plants that helps soften the modern lines of the ground-floor entryway. Grayish-brown Tresa siding mimics the color of tree bark.



“One with the land.” It’s a phrase that popped up frequently as retired businesswoman Patricia Pomerleau drew up a list of must-haves when planning her strikingly modern new home on a wooded hillside in Burlington, Vermont. “I grew up in this very neighborhood, and after my father gave me this beautiful lot, I knew that

TOP: An open-plan great room features a custom-made, low-rise, gray-mohair II Loft sectional. **LEFT:** An embossed Élitis Mindoro wallcovering that helps showcase one of homeowner Patricia Pomerleau’s own photographs covers the room’s accent wall. Pomerleau purchased the wallcovering before even building the house. **FACING PAGE:** The three-story home’s modern exterior is an artful composition of terraces, patios, picture windows, and vertical cladding that work together to break up the mass of the structure.



Working with Oregon-based interior designer Sonia Carlson, Pomerleau chose a natural, neutral palette of grays and whites—as well as oak flooring and a quartzite-topped island—for the sleek kitchen. **FACING PAGE:** The light-filled breakfast/dining nook takes full advantage of the home's views and features two of Philippe Starck's iconic Masters chairs. Orange frosted glass tops the Sovet pedestal table.

when it came time to build, I would do it sympathetically,” she explains. “I wanted my home to fit in naturally among the landscape as well as with the rest of the homes on this street.”

Describing Pomerleau's goals as “a challenge,” architect Rolf Kielman of TruexCullins Architecture + Interior Design worked with her and with landscape architect Keith Wagner to design a

three-story home and landscaping that, as he explains, “could accomplish the seemingly contradictory feat of being both unabashedly modern as well as being of—not merely on—the land.”

With input from Pomerleau, Kielman proposed a vertical structure that had a much smaller footprint than a longer horizontal home. “It allowed us to nestle the home into the steep hillside,”

“Not using trim demands more exacting work, but it gives the home a contemporary, clean look.” —*Builder Ric Santa Maria*





explains Kielman. The glass-fronted design also takes full advantage of dramatic views of nearby Lake Champlain and the distant Adirondack Mountains. Spacious, partially covered terraces and balconies on the front of the two-bedroom home offer drop-dead close-up views of the lot's rich landscape.

Wagner selectively thinned trees in front of the house to enhance the views. He added evergreens and birches to the front and trees and shrubs to both sides of the lot to increase privacy. Wagner and project manager Cynthia Silvey planted native species like river grass, low-growth sumac, and sedge throughout the property. "We like to use plants in a painterly way," says Wagner. "Instead of using one of this or one of that, we used wide swaths of plants, much like an

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Thanks to the abundant use of large picture windows and west-facing terraces, each of the home's levels are filled with light to better show off Pomerleau's art collection. The glass-fronted stair tower with its floating stairway includes a floor of river stones (and a sculpture of a crow) that, as Pomerleau explains, "all help to bring the outside in." A painting by Cuban artist Carlos Guzmán hangs in the guest bedroom.



“I grew up in this very neighborhood, and after my father gave me this beautiful lot, I knew that when it came time to build, I would do it sympathetically.” —*Homeowner Patricia Pomerleau*



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The primary bath features floating oak shelves and a floating oak vanity. The second-floor study opens onto the pool terrace. The same raw silk curtains purchased from The Shade Store in Boston hang throughout the house, including in the primary bedroom with its orange leather and dark-gray wool Sitia chair.



artist works with a broad brushstroke. We also took our cue from Rolf’s architecture, complementing the way he broke up the mass of the house instead of competing with it.”

Because Pomerleau has an extensive art collection, including much of her own photography, Kielman chose expansive triple-paned windows to help fill the high-ceilinged interiors with natural light to better showcase the artwork. A slab roof extends upward

and out to provide shade and keep the interiors comfortable in the summer.

Throughout the house, trim was employed sparingly, says builder Ric Santa Maria of Roundtree Construction. “Not using trim demands more exacting work, but it gives the home a contemporary, clean look,” he explains. “Also, with views like these, no one wants window trim to detract or get in the way.”

Each of the three floors has an open plan and can be accessed by either a



ABOVE: The home's slope-side location necessitated numerous retaining walls, which were made from board-formed concrete. The skillful placement of native plants, grasses, and small trees softens the angles of the walls. **RIGHT:** A plunge pool, complete with water fountain and firepit, is tucked into a terrace off the main floor that offers views of Lake Champlain and the mountains beyond.

ARCHITECTURE:
TruexCullins Architecture +
Interior Design

INTERIOR DESIGN:
Sonia Carlson Designs

BUILDER: Roundtree
Construction

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
Wagner Hodgson Landscape
Architecture

glass-fronted elevator or a floating oak, steel, and glass stairway; both are housed in a vertical glass-enclosed tower at the side of the home. "I added the elevator so it would be there if I or my guests ever need it," says Pomerleau. "I like the idea of staying here a long, long time and aging in place. That's why I call this my 'forever home.' I love it!"

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

