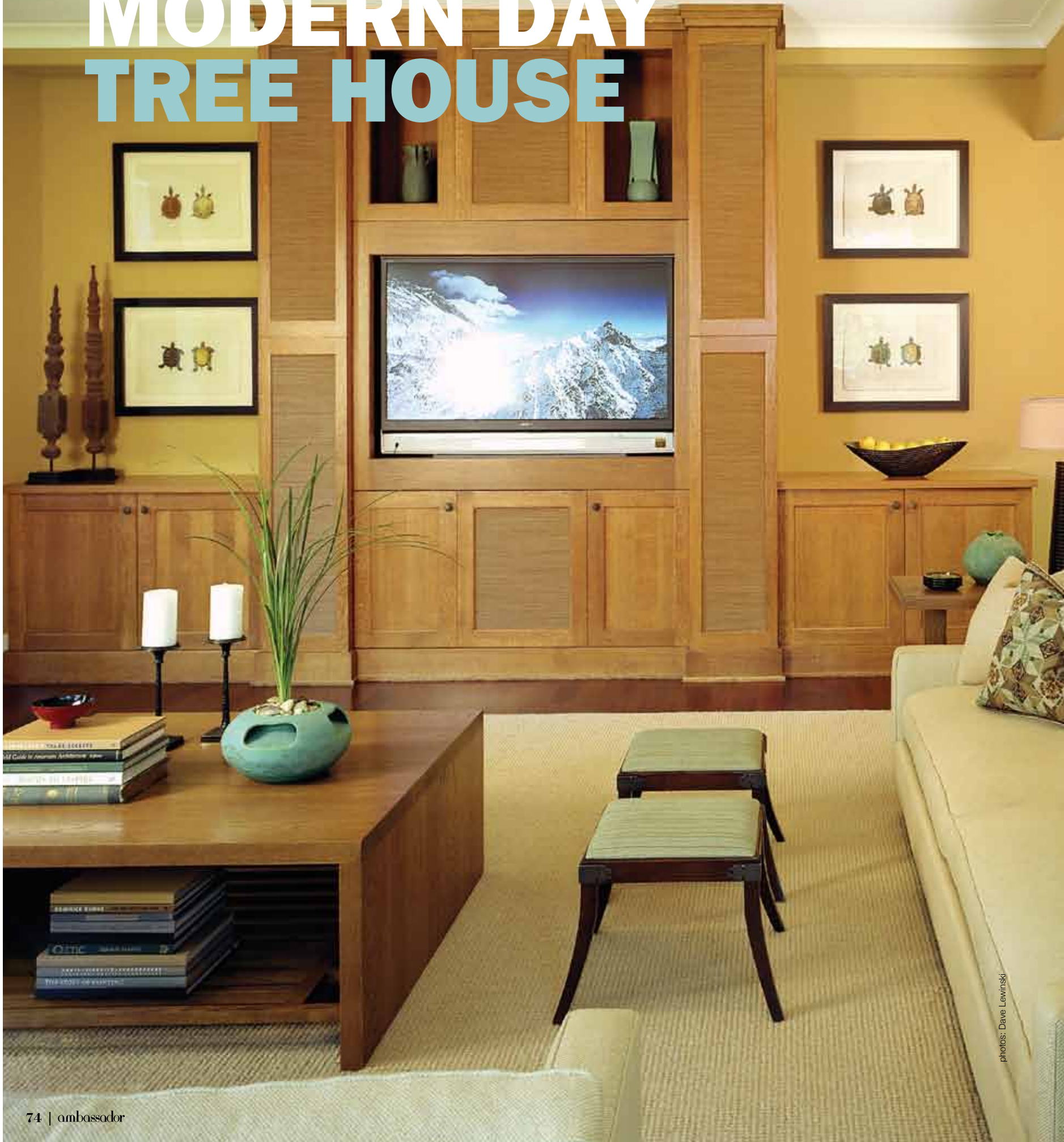


MODERN DAY TREE HOUSE



photos: Dave Lewinski



A MILFORD HOME TAKES ITS CUES FROM ITS LUSH SURROUNDINGS

Just a stone's throw away from the entrance to Kensington Metropark sits a spectacular home in a tranquil setting. The Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired design looks to Mother Nature as its muse.

Homeowners William Huszti, DDS, and Anna Chong-Huszti, DDS, owners of Huszti Dental Care, chose the quaint town of Milford to set up shop and to settle down. "As a kid, I went to Kensington, and I always found Milford to be very charming," Huszti says. After working in Milford for 16 years and looking to build a house, "We were pretty much sold on the location."

The couple, who moved into their new home last year, worked with Jimmy Angell, interior designer and owner of James Douglas Interiors in Birmingham, and David Gullo, construction manager for Bosco Building, Inc., in West Bloomfield. "This project was a pleasure," Chong-Huszti says. "Not only was their taste impeccable but the process was actually fun."

During the project, Gullo says, the unique stained cedar siding caught the attention of many passersby. "It is a natural product that weathers well," says Gullo, who adds that the homeowners wanted the house to feel like it was part of the park. Unobstructed sightlines, which include views of Kent Lake, were made possible by corner glass windows.

Striking yet understated, the home's entrance leads through the foyer to the dining room, which was strategically placed beneath a sweeping dual staircase. As Huszti explains, the dining room provides a good visual of a beautiful space because it isn't used every day.

A tigerwood fireplace surround soars straight to the top of the 21' ceiling. "We wanted to take advantage of the ceiling height in the home," says Angell. "The fireplace becomes an architectural element. You don't need to put anything on it."

An oval-shaped dining room table made from rosewood features a modern-style base of hammered steel. "I really like playing with different elements," the designer says. "I took advantage of mixing earthy materials."

Expansive windows, found throughout the home, help to blur the lines between inside and out. "They're a very outdoorsy family,"



Angell says. “We pulled colors from nature as well as the rich colors that are historical to the (late 19th and early 20th centuries).”

Though the nearly 9,000-square-foot home pulls from the past, it also draws from the present. There may be a bit of a retro feel, but the rooms were infused with a fresh twist. “We didn’t want heavy Arts and Crafts period pieces,” Angell says. “The house is a modern take on the period, and the style is very mixed.”

“Our goal was to have a timeless look,” Chong-Huszti adds.

Warm wall colors in a neutral palette shift slowly from one room to the next, as does the use of materials. The gradual progression seems to mimic nature itself.

The double-sided fireplace also faces the family room, a space that Angell describes as a little more textural. A surround made from ledge rock supports a hand-hewn railroad tie turned mantel, while a one-of-a-kind built-in that spans an entire wall has an organic feel. Made from ruff sawn oak, the piece contains fabric panels that help to conceal speakers.

Straw-colored sofas in a linen blend sit low to the ground, echoing the horizontal lines of the house. Plush wool carpeting covers a portion of the wood floors. A custom credenza stores CDs and other media equipment in style. The subtleties in the space allow nature to take center stage,





no matter the season, and there are no window treatments to maximize the views, Angell says.

A series of 24 antique clock cases forms a conversation piece against the warm gold walls. "They are a three-dimensional art form," Angell says. "They are very sculptural, very collectible."

In the kitchen, the mix of materials continues. Here, the designer worked in collaboration with Dennis Palazzolo, CKD and vice president of Extraordinary Works in Wixom and Troy, and the results are nothing less than remarkable. The island is topped with concrete, while small slate tiles frame the stove. "We kept the cabinets really simple," says Angell of the knotty alder design. Peacock green granite chosen for the countertops nods to nature once more. Recessed lighting and stainless steel appliances keep the look classic and clean.

Meal prep is a family affair. Between Chong-Husztí's Asian heritage and Husztí's European background, "there is quite a mixture of fusion cooking together," she says.

The porch area off the kitchen has retractable screens. "They keep mosquitoes out," Husztí says, "but we can still hear the sounds of nature with the crickets and the frogs."

Upstairs, the master bedroom suite provides the ultimate retreat. Sheer draperies soften the space. "They don't block the view, but they still allow privacy," Angell says. Neutral walls, wool carpeting, and a custom upholstered headboard are enduring elements that will stand the test of time. The limestone fireplace, framed by espresso-colored cove molding, adds a dash of drama. A cozy seating area rounds out the space.

Like the rest of the home, the low-key high-style materials in the master bath are as durable as they are distinctive. A teak soaking tub turns the average bath into a luxurious spa treatment. Glass shelves hold towels and other toiletries, and glass tiles make the spacious shower shine. His-and-her's sinks were designed with different heights for the couple.

"It's beautiful, and it's so functional," Chong-Husztí says of the master bath. "The space gets used every day, and it still looks just as beautiful as it did the first day."

"We're a very active family," Husztí adds. "But we still want the place to look new."

Other noteworthy areas of the home include a second-floor craft room and a lower level gymnasium complete with a basketball court.

Their daughters, Olivia, 7, and Sophia, 6, enjoy the best of both worlds. In addition to the endless play space right outside their door, the gym provides a backup plan. "You get little kids in a space like that and they just go running," Husztí says. "We wanted to give them every incentive to not watch TV."

Weather permitting, the family heads to Kensington for hiking, bird watching, or a day at the beach. "It's a very active place," Husztí says.

Now, whether they choose to be indoors or out, the family has a bird's eye view of nature every single day. "When you wake up in the morning," Chong-Husztí says, "you feel like you're in a tree house."

👑 – Jeanine Matlow