



Elegance Meets Efficiency

THIS
STYLISH
STRATHAM
HOME HAS A
TINY CARBON
FOOTPRINT

The site is idyllic—a gentle rise overlooking the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth holes at the Golf Club of New England, an Arnold Palmer-designed course situated on 450 acres of verdant farmland in Stratham, New Hampshire. The home is elegant, yet understated—a low profile contemporary craftsman in muted earth tones, with a wood and stone exterior that melds seamlessly into the surrounding landscape. Step through the front door, however, and modest gives way to magnificent.

“I like to be embraced in nature in a luxurious way,” designer and homeowner Tia Bastian cheerfully confesses. “This house reflects my attempts to marry my inner Zsa Zsa Gabor with nature.” Bastian says that in order to have a successful design, you cannot just think about fabrics and furnishings; you have to consider the environment surrounding the home and at the same time maintain a sense of self. “It’s like being happily married,” she explains. “You need to strike a balance.”

Within minutes of entering the home it becomes clear that for Bastian, achieving that balance is like breathing. “All my energy is channeled this way,” she observes. “I’m constantly evaluating design, whether it’s the success of the roofline on a house I’m passing or the functionality of a

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Previous spread: Natural light floods the gourmet kitchen at one end of Tia Bastian's home. | Facing page, left to right: Bastian considered the functionality of every space, including the wet bar at the junction of the kitchen, dining room, and living room. A sitting area off the kitchen is the ideal spot for relaxing. The wet bar features a built-in Miele coffeemaker, a wine cooler, and bar refrigerator. | This page, clockwise from upper left: The home has unparalleled views of the golf course. Windows stretch across the back of the home. The house undergoes a transformation as night falls. Bastian's attention to detail extends into the yard.



kitchen I've just entered." Nowhere was she more diligent than when creating her own environment. "When this house was being built, I walked in the back door and from 80 feet away, I could tell that a window at the other end of the house was ¼ inch off and would need to be corrected," Bastian recalls. "Glen Trueman, my builder, couldn't believe it, but when he measured the windows, I was absolutely right. I can't help myself. Details matter!"

"Working with Tia, who also happens to be an interior decorator, and building to suit her creative vision presented a unique set of challenges for my team," Trueman says. "By first developing an understanding of how Tia envisioned form and space and gaining a strong sense of her expected outcomes, we were able to construct from artistic concept to finished form. Whether it was suspended soffits, a barrel ceiling, or an enormous eyebrow arch, every phase of the project proved to be both demanding and rewarding."

A passionate admirer of modernist architect Frank Lloyd Wright, Bastian is committed to working in harmony with her surroundings by minimizing the home's impact on the natural environment, maximizing the views, and embracing an open floor plan that encourages interaction. Her recently completed Stratham residence hits every mark. Bastian designed the home from scratch on a piece of paper, always keeping the framework of the residence in mind. A house's underlying structure is

essential to its success, she contends, and if it does not work in terms of architecture, lighting, and functionality, no amount of decorating can correct it. "Everything in the house needs to stand on its own without accessories," Bastian asserts. "The house should have beautiful bones, regardless of how it's furnished." A designer and decorator for the past 25 years, this home is not the first that Bastian has built or remodeled, but she feels it is her best. Her pride in the residence extends to every room but rests most heavily in the kitchen.

"My kitchen had to be outstanding," Bastian explains. "I studied kitchen design through the National Kitchen and Bath Association's (NKBA) continuing education program at Boston Architectural College, so I had very definite ideas about what I wanted." Given the home's open floor plan, Bastian envisioned a kitchen that was as quiet and as beautiful as the surrounding spaces. It took her some time to come up with the concept—one of boxes within boxes—but once she had the vision, she knew it would be fantastic. "I wanted an Asian feel—minimalist, beautiful, and functional. I wanted the cabinets to look like furniture; in fact, I envisioned the wall holding the refrigerator, freezer, double ovens, steamer, and microwave as a big armoire." Having settled on the look and feel she desired, the next challenge was finding a kitchen designer who grasped her vision. Bastian interviewed many but knew she had found the perfect fit when she met kitchen



This page, clockwise from upper left: The open-concept kitchen is integrated with the surrounding spaces, its custom-built red birch cabinetry conceived as furniture to complement the adjacent décor. A tray ceiling and custom-built sideboard accent the intimate dining room. Diners enjoy a bucolic view of the home's front yard through floor-to-ceiling windows. | Facing page: The spacious living room forms the core of the home, drawing visitors through the front door and into the barrel-vaulted space. A six-foot-long fireplace is the focal point for the area, counterbalanced by wood beams spanning the ceiling.



designer Charlotte Nelson of Dream Kitchens. “Charlotte understood what I was trying to say with this space, and she and her team made it happen,” Bastian says. “They’re fantastic!” Nelson is equally enthusiastic about the collaboration. “Tia has such vision and passion for the spaces she creates,” Nelson notes. “When she started describing what she envisioned for the kitchen and baths in her new home, I knew it would be a distinct opportunity to collaborate with her and bring these inspired spaces to life.” Indeed, Nelson was so pleased with the results that she nominated the kitchen for an Association of New Hampshire Home Builders and Remodelers award; winners will be announced this spring.

The kitchen is undeniably a chef’s delight—one wall is filled with double ovens, a microwave, and a steamer unit, flanked on one side by the largest refrigerator Miele offers and on the other by the company’s largest freezer. Around the corner, a built-in Miele coffeemaker tops a wine cooler and bar refrigerator and backs up to a wet bar that offers beautiful sight lines to the living room and dining room. Close your eyes and you can hear the clink of glassware and the easy hum of conversation. Appliances and other kitchen essentials are concealed in stunning red birch cabinets, hand built by custom cabinetmaker Warren Bain of Northeast Woodworking, and a broad island punctuates the space, topped by a recycled glass countertop that catches the sunlight streaming in through the

floor-to-ceiling windows that stretch across the back of the home. “I oriented the entire kitchen towards the golf course because that’s the ‘money shot,’” Bastian notes with a smile.

While the view is admittedly breathtaking, there is just as much to delight the eye as one moves out of the kitchen and into the living room. Rich, 5-inch-wide, custom-milled cherry floorboards reflect the sun and throw the gaze upward to a barrel-vaulted ceiling spanned by solid wood beams and illuminated by cast iron pendant lamps. A contemporary 6-foot-high fireplace, custom-built in Connecticut, punctuates a red birch wall unit handcrafted by Bain. Together they provide a stunning focal point for the space. “Tia was very easy to work for,” Bain says. “She had a vision for the house and she knew exactly how it should all come together, which made it a pleasure to do the job.”

Walk a few feet farther, and you find yourself in the master suite, a space where Bastian’s creativity is on full display. An illuminated double-tray ceiling soars above a striking, organically inspired mural, hand painted by Bastian, which forms the bed’s headboard and hints at the natural beauty just outside the room’s double doors. Step into the master bath, and you are in a spa environment. A generously sized soaker tub, occupying prime real estate overlooking the golf course, anchors this space. The tub is flooded by natural light and filled by water that falls like rain from a circular faucet embedded in



This page: The master bath is designed for relaxation. The vanity features white pedestal sinks atop mahogany cabinets. | Facing page, above: Bastian's artistic touch extends to the walls. A mural, hand painted by the designer, adorns one wall of the master bedroom, creating an organic headboard. | Below: A soaker tub occupies one wall of the master bath and is fed by a cascade of water issuing from an outlet in the ceiling.

the ceiling. On the nearby vanity, white vessel sinks gleam atop mahogany cabinets abutting a wall of delicately hued slate tiles, and light cascades downward from a contemporary glass chandelier. "Lighting is incredibly important to the overall look and feel of a home, but it is often overlooked or treated as an afterthought," says Bastian, who uses lighting like a chef uses seasoning, playing up certain elements while simultaneously pulling the entire dish together. "I give a lot of thought to the lighting in the homes I design. At night, my houses take on a completely different look. I make my lighting count."

All of this seems lavish . . . and it is. But the home's elements are also smart and efficient. The spacious, 6,200-square-foot home is Energy Star certified, meaning that it is 20 to 30 percent more energy efficient than a standard home. Throughout the building process, Bastian worked closely with an employee from the State of New Hampshire to ensure that all certification requirements were met. When the home was completed, the state conducted an inspection and, after confirming that the home passed all the tests, designated Bastian as a certified Home Energy Rater. It is an involved process, Bastian concedes, but the results justify the effort. The entire house is geothermal, meaning that it runs almost exclusively on water and electricity. Water stored in two large tanks heats the house and then is recycled for use in showers, toilets, and sinks. Electricity, which is brought in to light the home, is captured and stored in a capacitor. Typically when electricity enters a home, Bastian explains, about 30 percent escapes through the copper wiring. "This is electricity you're paying for," she says. By installing a capacitor to the outside of the house, however, Bastian captures that escaping energy and stores it for future use, thereby keeping the electricity bill down.

A 500-gallon propane tank that powers the ovens, cooktop range, and fireplace supplies the home's only additional energy. Energy use here is minimal as well; after three years in the home, Bastian has only used 20 percent of the propane. "It's an incredibly efficient system," Bastian notes. "Nothing is wasted and the savings are remarkable. The most expensive electric bill was during a brutally cold snap in January of 2010," she says. "It was \$217." Bastian also installed energy-efficient appliances throughout the home—her ASKO washer and dryer, for example, were imported from Sweden and will wash and dry a load of laundry at a cost of \$0.23.

"Design isn't something that starts or stops at your front door or even from room to room," Bastian concludes. "It starts at your curb and must follow through consistently all the way to your backyard. Don't stop until you've reached your lot line." ■

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