



Architect Descending a Staircase: Above left: Maziar Behrooz in the gallery of the Bertys house in Wainscott, a showcase for the couple's collection of modern and primitive art. Above right: The addition, with planted rooftops and playful lines, "hinges itself open," Mr. Behrooz said, as it departs from the older part of the house, designed by Alfredo De Vido. A sunken courtyard off the lower level, seen here and below, and cantilevered overhangs off the library and master bedroom, add outdoor living space.

Matthew Carbone Photos

Angular, Experimental, Artful

An architect plays with perspective

BY GARISSA KATZ

"When we worked on this house, it was this complex structure. There were 150 sheets of drawings; it had so much structural complexity. And when you come in here, it's serene," Maziar Behrooz said of the striking addition he designed for Michel and Marie-Eve Bertys in Wainscott.

The couple's older daughter, Appoline, agreed. "It's a very Zen house," she said on a crisp mid-August afternoon, as a gentle breeze drifted through the rooms.

The Bertys' original house, designed by Alfredo De Vido, is a sort of modern barn, defined by simple angles, rich wood, and a soaring double-height living room with exposed beams. "It's all very well planned," Mr. Behrooz said. "It has these rigorous lines." Where it meets the addition, those lines continue at first, "then it loosens up and starts rattling around a bit."

The addition becomes a complete departure, a contrast that has a character all its own but references the original in surprising ways. "The house starts shifting to catch the sun. The views relate back to the house. There's this geometric order of the main house that gets broken up with the non-geometric order of this house. It's about walking through it," he explained.

When the Bertys decided to add to their house, they interviewed several architects, including Mr. De Vido. Mr. Behrooz was suggested by Ms. Bertys' friend Tracey Gare, a decorator. "We met him and loved his work," Ms. Bertys said by e-mail from a sailing trip in Corsica and the South of France. They appreciated "his unique architectural vision" and how his historical knowledge blended with his Persian heritage, she said.

At first, Mr. Behrooz said, the plan was to take some of the barn shape of the original house and "just extend it out. I made a model and showed them what they were talking about. Then on their way out, I showed them something



else I was working on, just a little study model." It was far more angular and experimental. The couple, appreciators of fine art and architecture, loved it.

"I let the original be what it is and brought this other house out that responds to lines of sight, geometry, the sun," Mr. Behrooz explained. He played with false perspective. Stairs get narrower as one ascends or descends them. Hallways change in width. New, false vanishing points are created, in part because the seamless resin floors have no lines to direct the eye. And the ground appears to follow you through the house, no matter what level you find yourself standing on, an effect of the planted rooftops.

There seems to be nary a right angle in the entire 9,000 square feet.

If it sounds dizzying, it's not. Instead, the architecture has a way of guiding its occupants smoothly from one space to the next. Yes, you may have lost track of whether you're facing north or east, whether you're looking out at the waving grasses on a second-story roof or the lower-level courtyard connecting the Behrooz portion of the house with the De Vido portion, but that playfulness is one of the addition's great delights.

The artfulness of the space blends well with the Bertys' sizable modern art collection and equally impressive trove

of primitive art, mostly New Guinean and African, around which the addition was built. The Bertys and their architect refer to the central portion of the house, where hallways and stairways and the two halves begin to meet, as the gallery. And is it ever.

What might be a mere hallway anywhere else is transformed by a site-specific magnet piece by Alice Hope, who lives part-time in East Hampton. It spans both sides of the hall, so that the viewer ends up standing in the middle of a what looks almost like a spectacular metal rainstorm on one side and a monochromatic pointillist's version of a topographical map on the other.

The photographer Pete Turner of Wainscott, a friend, and the sculptor Hans Van de Bovenkamp of Sagaponack are also well represented in the Bertys' collection. And then there are works by masters — Picasso, Miro, Leger, and Degas.

"I am very attracted to spirituality in art," Ms. Bertys wrote. "It's one of the reasons African and Oceanic art have a strong presence in our collection. All artists offer us their vision of the society of their time: Courbet said something along the line of 'art is only of its time.' That's why it is important to keep looking at their work."

The floor-to-ceiling windows have ultraviolet and shading films to protect the artwork. The geothermal heating and cooling system maintains a constant, pleasant temperature year round. Lighting in the gallery and throughout the addition was designed in consultation with Shine Design + Distribution.

In a well-stocked library at the north end of the addition, some of the structural steel beams are used to create the shelving. Sliding floor-to-ceiling glass doors tuck completely into the walls here, and in the master bedroom above, to make both of them open-air rooms when the weather is right.

Ms. Bertys' favorite spaces in the addition are the gallery

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Unexpected Pleasures

Happenstance in Sun or Shade

BY ABBY JANE BRODY

Gardening, so it is said, is the manipulation of nature. However, some of the most electric, as well as subtle, compositions within a garden can occur through happenstance: The gardener introduces a packet of seed or a seedling given by a friend and nature takes over, often for decades afterward. It is the gift that keeps on giving.

The golden California poppies in a sunny area in Calista Washburn's East Hampton garden, for example, originated from a packet of seed scattered years ago. Throughout the summer they give a burst of color, hopping over the walkway to bloom along with purple catmint. This season she added a packet of seed from a darker poppy, and hopes that they will not only reseed, but also hybridize with the others to create an array of shades in future years.

Whether you have a sunny or shady garden, there is a nearly infinite number of plants that will provide you with unexpected pleasures. In my own garden are deep plum opium poppies (Lauren's Grape) that make unplanned appearances throughout it, always in beautiful association with more permanent plantings in both sun and shade.

They were dazzling in early summer this year among the white mopheads of an Annabelle hydrangea cousin, and also across the way in a patriotic red, white, and blue vignette, with purple hydrangeas and white deutzias. All this from a single packet with about 20 different varieties of seed from the Hardy Plant Society that I purchased about 10 years ago for the munificent sum of \$12.

A grouping of very frilly, very double, pink poppies dominated a portion of Jim Jeffrey's East Hampton garden in late June and early July. Jim's brother told me they had originated in their mother's garden and Jim had kept them going in their flamboyant forms over the decades.

Spires of delphiniums are the stuff of gardeners' dreams, but in our region they remain only dreams unless you treat them as annuals and replant every year. Thanks to the friend of a friend who visited her garden back in the mists of time, but who sent a thank-you envelop of seed, the dream has become reality in Ms. Washburn's garden. The seed was from larkspur, an annual delphinium, and her beds are filled with an army of floral spires in a much coveted purple-blue.

If you garden in shade, digitalis are excellent candidates for this school of happenstance gardening. Nothing is more romantic than to see a mass planting of white foxgloves lingering in the deepening dusk of early summer.

Thirty years ago I bought a six-pack of mixed seedlings of the biennial *Digitalis purpurea*. They return in random locations, some years in great abundance, but in others, only a paltry few. It isn't as easy to develop pure seed strains of digitalis as it is with poppies. I've tried to save seed of plants with pure white, unspotted flowers, hoping they would dominate the seedlings, to no avail. This year a strong, clear pink cropped up, and I'm positive my friend and gardenmeister Juan, who adores brilliant color, scattered its seed abundantly. We'll see what happens.

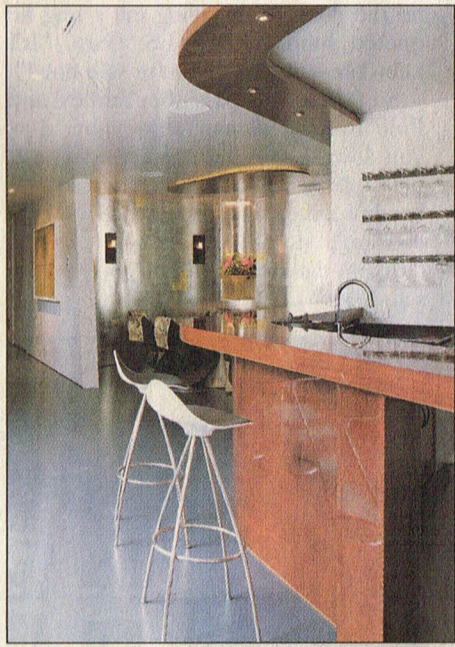
Two other perennial digitalis are well worth adding to a shade garden: *Digitalis grandiflora* (also called *D. ambigua*) with soft butter-yellow flowers and *D. ferruginea* (rusty foxglove) with tall tightly packed spires. *D. grandiflora* combines beautifully with everything and flowers over a

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Poppies among hydrangeas

Abby Jane Brody



Angular, Experimental, Artful

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and the library. "The former because it is so spectacular, the latter for its intimacy."

A deck off the master bedroom and the overhang above it are cantilevered. Outside, a triangle-shaped infinity pool gives way to a meadow, a small pond, and tumbling gardens. Beyond a line of trees, there is the glimpse of a farm field.

"You see a triangle in the main house at the gable end. You see that here in the overhangs," Mr. Behrooz said. "There are peaks and points in the same way. It just hinges itself open."

The rooftops on the addition are all planted and the horizontal planters at their edges also serve as gutters, a hanging garden of sorts, as Mr. Behrooz refers to it on his Web site, mbarchitecture.com.

The planted roof serves several functions, the architect said. To build the addition, the Bertys tore down an old house on the property, which had long ago been their main house and then became a guest house. "If you took the green surface area before the [new] house was here and after, we have more green surface area now," Mr. Behrooz said. That helps to reduce rainwater runoff and reduce energy use. Solar panels are on the top level of the roof.

"The house is like a landscape," he said. Looking out at a roof but seeing green plants gives "a sense of being grounded, not floating."

Mr. Berty was an early executive in the global I.T. consulting firm that eventually became Capgemini and was the founder and former chairman and C.E.O. of Capgemini U.S.A., its American subsidiary. His wife is a passionate home chef with a blog, I Am Therefore I Cook, where her brief bio says she "lives to cook in Long Island, New York."

"When we had an idea, an architectural concept about what this house was, they really respected that and were compassionate about that," Mr. Behrooz said. And while they were very involved in many aspects of the project, in particular Ms.

Berty, who brought her own distinct aesthetic sensibilities to bear on the interiors, "at some level, they were also very hands-off. I could do things I wanted to do and she did all these things she wanted to do."

"We spoke about windows a lot," Ms. Berty wrote in an e-mail. "For me windows are determinant. . . . Outside is what I want to see when I'm inside."

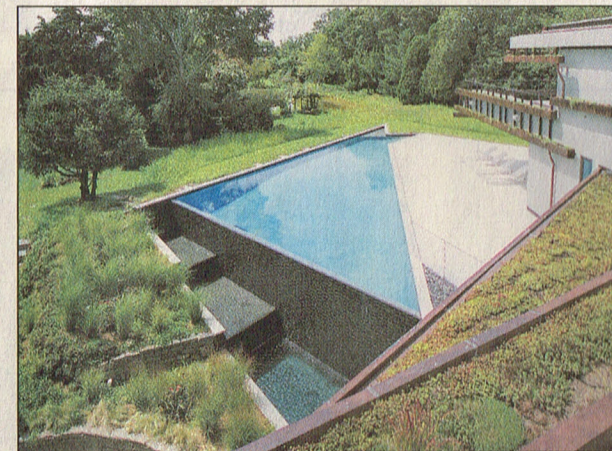
Asked about the most exciting part of the design process, she said, "Actually, some of the very technical discussions were the sexiest: green roofs, geothermal, and solar panels." And when it came to interior design, Ms. Berty said, "although I know exactly what type of surroundings I want to live in, it was great to rely on [Tracey Gare] to find the right artisans to get it from."

Among those artisans are Michael Hastalis of Springs, whose shop fabricated a beautiful wood bar in the lower level of the addition as well the cabinetry there; Cy Ross of Springs, who did the library shelving, and Walt Honer, who did the poured resin floors that are such a distinct feature.

"The resin floors make the walls feel like sculptures," Mr. Behrooz said. And the walls themselves have no baseboards. "I like the shadow line and how it makes the walls look like they're floating," the architect said.

In a house like this, though, even the mechanical and structural engineers, Chaleff & Rogers and Gilsanz, Murray, and Steficek, and the builder, Joel Bass, had to be artisans. It's not every builder who can so beautifully execute a wall with no baseboards.

The addition, completed about a year and a half ago, is more than double the size of the original house, if you include the lower-level square footage. It has six bedrooms (added to the three in the De Vido wing), the library, bar and wine cellar, gallery, and an attached caretaker's cottage. It's fairly grand in size, but manages not to feel that way, perhaps because it is a house that is so clearly lived in and loved.



At top, from left: The lower-level, with a bar by Michael Hastalis, includes a dining area with curved silver and gold-leafed walls. Where the original house meets the addition, the architect continued its formal geometry, then slowly let it loosen up. Marie-Eve Berty in the library. Middle row, from left: The pool picks up the addition's geometry; planted roofs can be seen in the foreground. Stairs and hallways vary in width, part of the experiment with "false perspective." At right: A portrait of the Bertys' daughters by Serge Clement hangs in the master bedroom, where sliding doors tuck completely into the walls to let the outside in.

Matthew Carbone Photos, Except Stairway Photo by Rich Faron