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The Magazine of Architecture and Fine Interiors

THE ARCHITECTURE ISSUE

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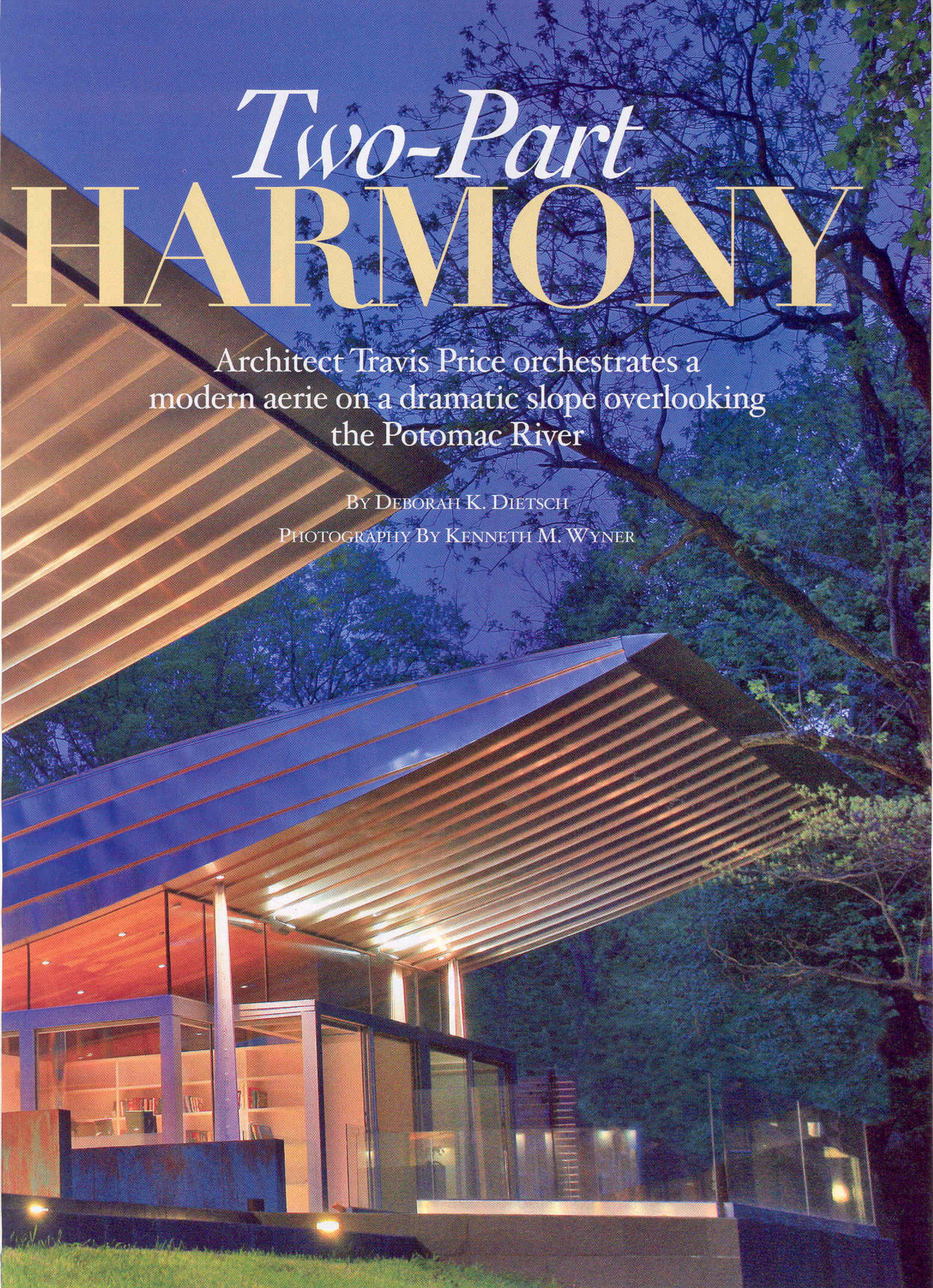
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Aluminum roofs soar upward to open the rear of the main wing, left, and guest house, right, to views of the Potomac River through glass walls.



Two-Part HARMONY

Architect Travis Price orchestrates a modern aerie on a dramatic slope overlooking the Potomac River

BY DEBORAH K. DIETSCH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KENNETH M. WYNER



Metaphors often guide the architecture conceived by Travis Price. Images of rising earth and clouds inspired the architect's design of a Bethesda house perched high above the Potomac River. "Seeing those natural elements on the site led me to this," says Price, pointing to the dramatic slope of the home's metal roofs, "and to focus the view on the water."

The hilltop residence is divided into two wings, spacious living quarters for the owners and a separate guesthouse for their children and visiting family. Shiny, aluminum roofs crowning both structures tilt upward to follow the contours of the site. They allow for large glass walls opening to vistas of the river and its tree-lined banks. "The house is very much part of nature," says owner Steve Salop, a professor of economics and law at Georgetown University. "You aren't just looking at nature; you are involved in it."

A visit to the house during a thunderstorm underscores Salop's point as sheets of rainwater fall from the roof to form a liquid curtain outside the kitchen windows. Constantly on display are signs of the changing seasons through the glass perimeter at the rear. "It's an inside-outside house with plenty of room for family and friends," says Salop's wife, Judy Gelman, an economist. "It's an easy house for entertaining."

Impressed by the house Price built for himself on a hill over-

ARCHITECTURE: TRAVIS L. PRICE III, AIA, principal; DIEGO BALAGNA, managing architect, Travis Price Architects, Washington, DC. **INTERIOR DESIGN:** BARBARA HAWTHORN, Barbara Hawthorn Interiors, McLean, Virginia. **LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** TOM TAIT and CAROL GALE, Thomas Tait Gardens, Washington, DC.





Visitors approach the house via a walkway winding past a garden of native plantings and a lily pond (below). The path leads to a passage (opposite, top) separating the home's two wings. Along the rear of the property, a slate terrace (above) features a reflecting pool.





looking Rock Creek Park, the couple hired the DC architect to replace an outdated home on their property with a larger, more contemporary structure. “His design has both serenity and excitement, and those are the qualities we wanted for our house,” says Salop. “Travis was one of the few architects we interviewed who came to the site and sketched what he wanted to do.”

Nature always directs Price’s approach and this project is no exception in its site-sensitive design. The architect set the house on the ridge of the hill to face the river and angled the roofs so their lowest sides face the street to make the structure appear smaller. At the front, gardens arranged into strips of native plantings emphasize the horizontal sweep of the house.

“We tried to come up with a design that allowed the building to be the star attraction,” says Tom Tait, the Washington garden designer responsible for the landscape. “We emphasized the wave-like roof by designing the gardens to roll up to the house.” Landscaping also extends to a green roof of low-growing sedums on top of the garage. Tait played up the water theme by creating a lily pond near the pathway from the street and a reflecting pool on the back patio next to the main living space.

In orchestrating the approach to the house, Price carefully sited



On the upper floor of the guest wing, Steve Salop's home office (above) is outfitted with a custom resin desk and shelving, plus an Eames lounge chair and ottoman for reading. Outside the office, a balcony (opposite) connects to the terrace for quick trips to the main wing. A rear perspective (right) reveals how well the property blends into its natural surroundings.





Copper-paneled walls (opposite, top) frame the passageway to the house. The main living room space (above) overlooks the terrace and the river beyond. The cherry dining table by Thos. Moser, red kitchen cabinets and the fireplace's copper patina add color to the modern space (left). At the rear of the home (opposite, bottom), steps lead from the patio to an outdoor dining area.



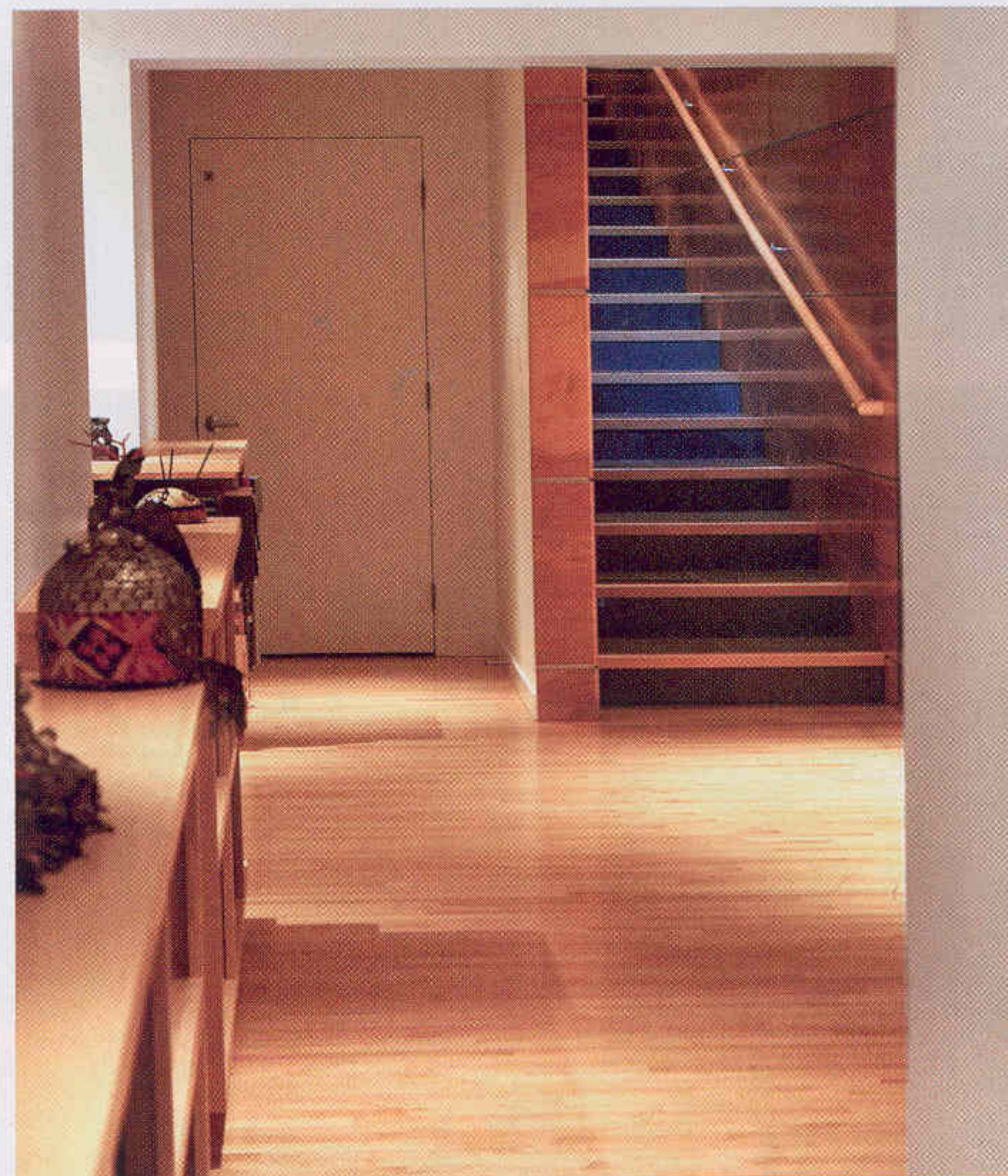


the two wings to either side of a path flanked by low, copper-clad walls. The passageway aligns with a spillway in the Potomac to draw attention to the changes in the river's flow while representing the division between the two parts of the house. The location of the main living quarters corresponds with the active currents in the river while the guest house focuses on its still waters to suggest metaphors for the different activities in the house.

The pathway terminates in a slate-paved terrace at the rear of the property that provides a generous platform for taking in the natural surroundings. On the side next to the living space, steps lead down to an outdoor dining area and grill nestled under the trees.

The homeowners, who will soon be empty nesters, liked Price's idea for the two-part house as a way to age in place. "We were at the point when we wanted space for ourselves and to give our kids their own space," says Gelman. She and her husband spend most of their time in the home's larger wing, where the rooms are arranged on one level and can function independently from the smaller guest house. "We call them terminal A and terminal B," Gelman jokes of the two wings, comparing their upturned roofs to architect Eero Saarinen's similar designs at Dulles airport.

Inside the main wing, the rooms are surprisingly livable. "There is plenty of space but the house isn't huge or overwhelming," says Salop. The living/dining room opens to a galley kitchen and a free-standing fireplace separating a seating area from the dining table. Down a hallway are Gelman's home office and the couple's bedroom and bathroom. Like most of the spaces in the house, they focus on the outdoors through walls of glass. Solid partitions between the rooms are also topped with glass to create the open feeling of a loft.



The owners' bedroom (top) and bathroom (opposite) in the main wing focus on outdoor views through glass walls shaded by the overhanging roof. Partitions in the rooms are topped by glass dividers to maintain a sense of openness. Stairs lead from the main living quarters to the lower level of the guesthouse (above).





On the upper floor of the guest wing, Steve Salop's home office (above) is outfitted with a custom resin desk and shelving, plus an Eames lounge chair and ottoman for reading. Outside the office, a balcony (opposite) connects to the terrace for quick trips to the main wing. A rear perspective (right) reveals how well the property blends into its natural surroundings.





“The house is very much part of nature. You aren’t just looking at nature; you are involved in it.” —STEVE SALOP

The guest house is built into the lower side of the hill and is reached via a staircase next to the kitchen. It provides bedrooms for the couple’s youngest son, a senior in high school, and his grown siblings, plus a music room and a TV lounge. Salop’s airy home office occupies a corner of the upper level closest to the main house. A door leading to a balcony allows him quick access to the terrace and main wing.

In both wings of the house, interior designer Barbara Hawthorn worked with Price to create plenty of built-in storage and shelving so the rooms would remain clutter-free. Her greatest challenge was making sure Salop’s glass-enclosed office looked inviting as visitors passed it on their way to the home’s entrance. “Steve didn’t want anything impeding the view but he had a huge need for storage and work space,” Hawthorn says. Her solution was to design a sleek desk in translucent resin and plenty of file cabinets to hide his paperwork. An Eames lounge chair and ottoman provide a comfortable spot for reading and relaxing.

In contrast to the cool, hard-edged architecture, the interiors in

the main wing are softened by warm colors and varied textures. Panels of stained plywood cover the ceiling and Asian-inspired cherry furniture from Thos. Moser adds a crafted feeling to the dining area and master bedroom. Hawthorn customized the dining table with two removable leaves so it could be lengthened to seat 20 for large holiday dinners.

Upholstered sofas and Barcelona chairs in the open living space are paired with a wooden coffee table split into two parts, suggesting another metaphor for the home. Red cabinets from Ikea brighten the kitchen where a durable hardwood floor holds up to constant use. As the day unfolds, shifting patterns of light are cast through glass walls onto floors and walls to change the colors and mood. “The home isn’t sterile like the Bauhaus, but is full of natural rhythms,” says Travis Price. “This is modern architecture with soul.” ♦

Frequent Home & Design contributor Deborah K. Dietsch is based in Washington, DC. Kenneth M. Wyner is a Takoma Park, Maryland, photographer.