



## Mix and Match

A bold design approach results in the harmonious union of a classic Craftsman home and its sleek, modern addition.

### ✂ What if we lived in a world of *and* instead of *but*?

That's the world in which Adolfo Perez, architect, and Nathalie Ducrest, designer, created this Brookline, Massachusetts, addition.

What is essentially a large new living room called for these two professionals to resolve any number of seemingly irreconcilable contradictions. Though they had never worked together before, they found themselves flowing with the ands while moving right past the buts that can trip up others.

For example, the 1,200-square-foot addition has a fresh, optimistic, modern exterior that is in sync with the stucco-clad Craftsman-style main house and the zealously guarded historic district in which it finds itself. The interior has minimalistic lines, making it easy to maintain, and organic shapes and

**ABOVE:** Surrounding the addition, bluestone terraces and fiberglass seating envisioned by landscape firm Gregory Lombardi Design combine clean, geometrical forms with organic juxtapositions—thus restating the architectural and interior design goals of the building itself. **LEFT:** A steel-and-concrete console in the entrance plays off the rigorously of the sintered-stone walls and corten steel door frame.



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| INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHELLY HARRISON |

## Special Spaces



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Wood-look ceramic floors are a warm counterpoint to the Neolith walls. Stairs lead to the main house off the entry as seen from the playroom; note the oversized, asymmetrical coat pegs by Tveit & Tornøe of Norway. A chenille sectional makes a playful sitting arrangement in the living room. The designers created a custom vanity for the bath that echoes the offbeat geometry of the entry console.

rhythmic patterns animating it throughout.

The new space has custom foosball, billiards, and ping-pong tables for action-packed fun and a quiet spot given to reflection. It's inviting for a teen sleeper, and it's an easy place for adults to entertain. "Ultimately, it feels both intimate and large, which is what the owners wanted perhaps most of all," says Ducrest.

The clients asked for a modern look inside and out. European in background, they were comfortable with the idea of a contemporary addition side by side with their traditional house. Not so the local preservation committee, which gave Perez a list of historically appropriate materials. Two of those materials caught his eye: steel windows and copper siding. He pushed both toward more oxidation rather than less, for an eventual rich, rust-proof patina.

Cladding the flat roof in copper, however, would

have been exorbitant, he says. His solution was a green roof, on which a grid of twelve-by-twelve-inch trays grows carpets of sedum and other plants.

To stay consistent with the industrial look of the outside, Perez's clients wanted concrete interior walls. That gave the architect pause. Concrete must be thick—about ten inches—and is hard to detail and prone to cracking. But the clients remained firm. It was up to Perez to find the *and*: the sturdy, industrial look of concrete, attractively detailed, and easy to

**"WE TEMPLATED EVERY SHEET OF NEOLITH, SENDING THEM TO THE MANUFACTURER IN SPAIN. THIS TOOK SOME TIME," SAYS NATHALIE DUCREST.**



Adolfo Perez designed the variable-sized circle lights that dance across the playroom ceiling. With a ping-pong table, foosball, a billiards table, and plenty of comfortable seating, the expansive space is a favorite gathering place.

maintain. High-tech came to the rescue in the form of Neolith, half-inch-thick, five-by-ten-foot sheets of manmade stone. “We templated every sheet, sending them to the manufacturer in Spain. This took some time,” recalls Ducrest.

The steel-clad door to enter the addition (or what

Ducrest amiably calls the “copper box”) from the outside sits to the right at the end of a J-shaped loop around the main house that terminates at the garage.

Just inside the door, framed by walls of Neolith, is a console Ducrest commissioned from the French sculptor Mathilde Penicaud. The console’s

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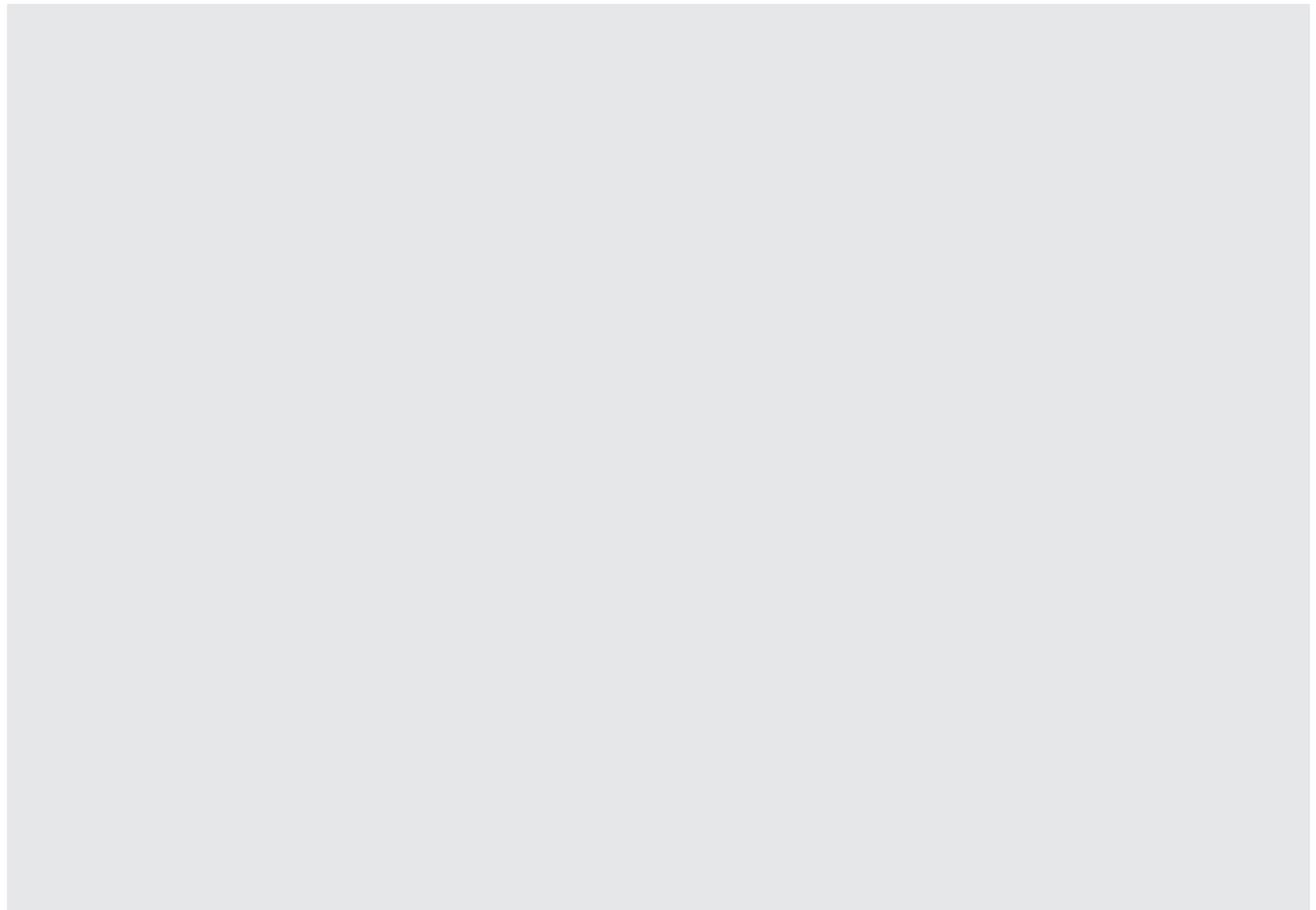
A custom billiard table in a matte lacquer matches the concrete-lookalike walls; its organic shape appears to float, softening the straight lines of the upper play area. A sliding barn door opens to the playroom for entertaining, or closes it off for privacy.

**FACING PAGE:** Tiered terraces offer plenty of spots for outdoor gathering, while a radial array of corten steel plates defines the dramatic fire pit.



steel surface and concrete base complement Perez's minimalist materials, while also breaking up the formal geometry of the entry with a kind of syncopated rhythm. Ducrest elaborated on this theme with Perez's custom-made lighting circles that not only move up and down but dance from one area to the next, tying spaces together. Warmth comes from the wood-look ceramic floors Perez and Ducrest chose.

From the entry, veering left in a clockwise loop, you go through Perez's 750-foot gut renovation of the main house basement: first the garage stairs and entry, proceeding to a new mudroom, laundry room, bath, and playroom. Down a step from the playroom, on a lower grade, is the living room, featuring a three-sided fireplace and an iconic bubble chair for meditation. In the center, Ducrest placed an On the





Rocks chenille-covered sofa by Edra, chosen because she could “play around with the sections like a big puzzle” and create a spot to observe all the action in the round.

From the bubble chair and fireplace, the view looks out on an outdoor kitchen to the far left, the upper terrace straight in front, a fire pit to the right, and the lower terrace beyond the sliding doors of

the sitting room, all skillfully arranged by landscape architecture firm Gregory Lombardi Design.

One more turn in this clockwise loop leads back to the entrance. This marks the end of the tour of a copper-clad world that feels both straight-lined and organic, modern and traditional, large and intimate.

Well designed *and* beautiful. [www](#)

**RESOURCES :** For more information about this home, see page 172.