

The graceful
rebirth
of an iconic
Chestnut
Hill home

BY Lauren McCutcheon

the art of craft

IN 1912, ARCHITECT WILLIAM L. PRICE DESIGNED a grand house for the crest of Chestnut Hill. Outside, the house was sand-colored pebbledash. Inside, it was a turn-of-the-century warren of rooms. It had asymmetric bones. It was a masterpiece of Arts and Crafts design. **THREE YEARS AGO**, architect Courtney Crenshaw bought the house that Price built. Courtney's family is young. Active. They ski. They skate. They loved the house. But its turn-of-the-century-ness did not suit their modern lifestyle. **THINGS HAD TO CHANGE.** The floors needed hydronic heat. All 54 windows had to become efficient. There was native vegetation to preserve. Moreover, the space had to open naturally in order to engage its always-in-motion owners. For this last job, Courtney gathered master artisans and designers that shared her respect for honest materials and clean, contemporary lines. **THE PEBBLEDASH-BORDERED** front door (opposite, top right), has become a symbol of Price's oeuvre. (Chestnut Hill's Great Oak Holdings painstakingly restored thousands of square feet of exterior pebbledash.) Original Mercer tile covers the foyer (opposite, top left). A console by New Zealander Sefton Powrie, antique Reading Railroad wheel block, and wind turbine from Southern France (opposite, bottom left) stand in the entryway. A handcrafted desk and aluminum stool (opposite, bottom right) hint at the home's updated aesthetic.

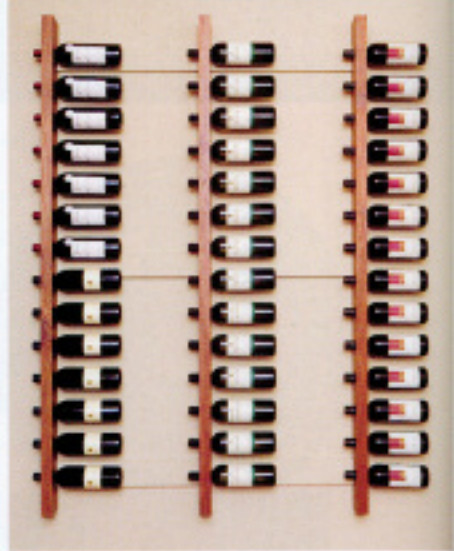
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(Clockwise from left) Steve Schultz of Electro-Mechanical Systems in Spring City, Jane Good of Jane Good Design in Flourtown, Jim Arthur of Arthur Works in Conshohocken, and architect Courtney Crenshaw. "This," says Courtney, "was an incredible collaboration."





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“THE VOLUME OF THE SPACE *was exceptional,*” says master cabinetmaker Jim Arthur. “We needed *clean lines and broad gestures.*” He and Courtney chose a single, stunning wood: English brown oak. Topping his work (above left) is extra deep marble from Renaissance Marble & Granite, and a 12-foot-long mise en place backsplash that Steve fashioned from sandblasted stainless steel. (For the facing island—see next spread—Jim dreamed up a radiant heating element to warm the honed black absolute granite counter-

top.) Courtney decided to enclose the range hood in plaster in order to make it “as minimalist as possible,” and designed a wine rack (above right) that Jim built. “Figuring out how to balance a Bordeaux bottle by its neck is a deceptively simple thing,” he says. The rack faces the pantry’s original 9-foot German nickel sink and bar (opposite), which Jim updated by building bar cabinetry with state-of-the-art marine refrigeration equipment. Says Courtney, “We basically created a room around this artifact.” ❧



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THE OPEN FAMILY AREA includes an informal living room, kitchen and dining space. "Imagine," says Courtney, "this was once six rooms." Thus opened up around a cruciform steel I-beam, "It's the energy center of the house, the action room"—and a vivid example of the work of color-savvy interior designer Jane Good (above).

"Courtney has a strong organic palette. It's neutral, and we had to find colors that were bold enough to hold up to the size of the space without overwhelming it," says Jane. The living room (top right) includes upholstered seating in poppy and tobacco from Baker, Knapp & Tubbs, and Conway linen roman shades by Designers Guild. Courtney designed the coffee table; Steve built its frame; Jim made its top from bamboo plywood from The Environmental Home Store. The blackened steel fireplace is Steve's. The built-in bookshelves are Jim's, as are the kitchen cabinetry, island and breakfast table (opposite). A vintage roulette wheel (right) came from Delaware County architectural salvage dealer John Dorety. Steve mounted the wheel on a pinion bolt so the kids could play with it. "This space is a great example of how we worked together in a daily design process that was fluid and highly interactive," says Courtney. 🍷





"THE DECISION TO KEEP the I-beams exposed led me to Steve Schultz, a guy who's the Jim Arthur of the metal world," says Courtney. Steve engineered the blackened steel stair rail that stretches from the kitchen to the second floor (top right). The inspiration for the rail's grid design: the house's old radiator covers. "They're seemingly innocuous," says Courtney, "but we thought they were a thing of beauty." Old floor joists removed to create the room's double volume space were repurposed as the stair's stringer. Steve also created the shelves and frames for the pair of walk-in refrigerators (above), which employ the same glass doors used in

grocery stores. "My family is obsessed with fresh food—and we have a grab-and-go kind of lifestyle," says Courtney. Between the fridges, a magnetic chalkboard serves as a space to post quick reminders and recent artwork. A custom magazine rack (opposite) is also signature Schultz. When the family asked for a convenient space to stow their favorite publications, he came up with the café-inspired design. "It's more contemporary, industrial," he says. "Not refined or elaborate—very geometric and simple. That's Courtney's style." Hanging on the rack are the house's original blueprints, as sourced from the Athenaeum on Washington Square. ❧



“It’s more contemporary, industrial, *not refined or elaborate*, very geometric and simple.” —Steve Schultz