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**Ask the Architect** Turn unused attic space into a recreation room. ♦ page F6

# fall

Asbury Park Press

H O M E

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**Garden** Fungus diseases are running rampant this year. ♦ page F21



The Italianate villa-style home easily adapts to its surroundings.



A one-time poker table is now part of an elegant dining room setting.



## PERSONAL TOUCH

**A** sculpted bust. A collection of blue glass bottles. A 12-foot-long library table. Not merely "blinds," these otherwise intimate objects entice, and breathe life, beauty and style into their surroundings.

For Rosalind and Philip D'Achille, it's this attention to detail — the personal touch — that defines their Holmdel Township residence not just as a grand house, but a home.

Personal touches can be found in every niche of the 6,000-square-foot home, from the oak deacon's bench, which has traveled with the couple through more than 30 years of marriage, to the multi-color marble fireplace that was designed by Mrs. D'Achille.

These personal statements, though, are not confined to the home's interior. Both Mrs. D'Achille and her husband, an insurance executive, worked closely with architect William Schacht to design a house that reflects their lifestyles and personal tastes.

The couple, according to the New York City-based Schacht, wanted a house that reflected the sensibilities of their former California home. At the same time, they wanted a design that could gracefully accommodate both entertaining and occasional residence for the couple's two children and their families.

The result is an adaptation of a modern Italianate villa-style that fits the special nature of its New Jersey setting, while also nature of its New Jersey setting, while also recalling the warm, sunny and informal aspects of California.

"We wanted openness and natural light," Mrs. D'Achille said. "A free-flowing space flooded with light throughout the day."

At the same time, the couple wanted a house that was different, unique, distinguishable from every other house in the neighborhood.

In their new home, a Holmdel Township couple artfully ties together old favorites with fresh designs.

There's no denying the D'Achille home is unique — with its classic line, natural materials, sensitivity to the contours of the property and its symmetrical design, it exudes an air of graciousness and class.

Inside, the house combines grand scale with intimate detailing. A creative layout accommodates family gatherings, formal entertaining and the requirements of daily living with equal ease.

The floor plan, Schacht said, creates a residence that reflects the needs of the couple. To provide distinct living quarters and separate entertainment/guest quarters, the house design was organized to work around a central, multi-level reception rotunda and a semi-contained gallery courtyard.

Two symmetrical wings were designed, with three guest bedrooms over a spacious living/entertainment center forming one wing, and a generous master bedroom complex over the family room and kitchen-living center.

Flanking the formal loggia-style front entry is a large library and a two-story dining room. These transitional spaces are shared by both the living and entertaining functions. The library was also designed to



A sculpted bust (top) is one of the many personal touches that make the house a home. French doors in the living room and family room (above, center) open onto a private gallery courtyard. A cylindrical staircase (above) provides an expansive view of the conservatory and grounds.

function as a fourth guest bedroom, with its own private bath.

The central entry rotunda, with its abundance of natural light and openness, is also multi-functional, serving as a music conservatory and entertainment reception center.

Soft archways throughout the house complement the cylindrical entry rotunda and contrast with the rigorously rectangular geometric character of the architecture.

The circle-within-a-square design also gives the house two distinct faces — public and private. The public face is on the outside.

"People driving by get the impression that this is a formal, Mediterranean-style home," Mrs. D'Achille said. And yet, the inside of the U offers a secluded garden courtyard and what Mrs. D'Achille calls a "private, purely-for-the-family-and-friends space."

The challenge, said Mrs. D'Achille, who designed the interiors, was balancing spaciousness with intimacy, formality with comfort.

"We wanted spaces that were dignified," she said, "but which also said 'come and enjoy me.'"

After living in three previously owned homes, Mrs. D'Achille was adamant in what she wanted, and didn't want, in the couple's new home.

"In many homes you can tell where the bathroom is, because it's the only small window in the house," she said. "I defy you to look at the outside of my house and tell me where the bathrooms are."

It is impossible. A carefully considered system of transoms and clerestory windows create symmetry throughout the house, aligning to provide through light and views.

A 12-foot-long library table, which has served in various capacities during the couple's marriage, was to be placed in the dining room, and the room had to be designed to accommodate the table.

A free-flowing floor plan creates an intimate setting that can easily accommodate a house full of guests.

And a butler's pantry, an amenity in the couple's Wellesley, Mass., home had to be open and fun.

"In Wellesley, the pantry was closed, and it couldn't be used because it wasn't functional," Mrs. D'Achille said. "When we were building this home, I explained that I wanted something that was open, airy, fun but pretty."

The free-flowing floor plan, with one room gracefully moving into another, is dominated with off-white walls with pure-white trim. The whites complement the hardwood floors on the first floor and enhance the barely pink carpeting on the second floor.

Each room is lovingly decorated, not with new finds, but with personal treasures the couple — and their children — have accumulated over the years.

The dining room, for example, boasts an antique island oak table that in a previous life was a poker table. The 12-foot library table serves as a sideboard of sorts, although it has also been used as a sofa table. An antique credenza, a family heirloom, plays host to a bust sculpted by Mrs.

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