

## Special Advertising Feature

## Beyond NYC



## The More Things Change...



PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIA B. FEE, SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOULIHAN LAWRENCE

Two homes designed by the late Elliott Rosenblum, a prominent New York City architect, are on the market for the first time ever in Larchmont, New York (top). A stately Tudor in Bronxville, New York, and its well-manicured lawn in pristine condition (bottom left). A private deep-water dock and boat ramp set off a stunning waterfront home in Mamaroneck, New York (bottom right).

## Years into the pandemic, inventory may be tight, but there is hope

by Lori Cullen

Low inventory remains an issue all around New York City and the surrounding area, from the Hudson Valley down to the outskirts of Philadelphia. Available homes in Westchester are at an all-time low, particularly in Larchmont, says Casey Rosenblum, a local listing agent with Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International Realty. "We are still having the same issue with supply and demand, which is that we have very little inventory and tons of buyers out there fighting over the homes we have."

Priced out of Manhattan or just looking for more space for the same amount of money — \$1 million to \$3 million goes much further out in the suburbs than in the city — the hunt is on for a slice of this suburban life. "We have tons of public parks, tennis courts and playgrounds, which is always a driving factor for our area," Rosenblum says.

Colleague Courtney Walker, also a Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International Realty listing agent, notes that the pent-up demand over the last few years led people who were bidding on properties and not getting them to rent locally. "So we do see buyers who are here but renting and still looking for their forever home," she

explains. "But they've been looking for a few years."

### FAMILY MATTERS

Similarly, inventory is an issue outside of Philadelphia, where homeowners live within commuting distance of New York. "We've got a lot of buyers moving with their families into the bigger houses, but we're also seeing people moving to the area to get closer to family," says Jennifer Rinella of the Sivel Group at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach. "Everything we experienced during the pandemic is still happening now — too much demand and not enough inventory."

Still, most of their recent transactions have been sell side, which can make the process less challenging. Rinella notes a seller who got a whopping 14 offers on his house. "When I put together his buy-side offer, he was accustomed to what it was like to be the seller in this market, so we were able to craft a winning offer with ease," she says. "They can put themselves in those sellers' shoes. They already know the drill."

Karen Strid, manager of a team of realtors for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, says that demand holds true for a lot of their properties. In an inventory shortage, the sky's the limit for the seller. People are waiving contingencies and financing, so they're getting deals that are non-contingent. Sellers can negotiate any settlement date they want. Some are doing rent backs, where the seller can stay in the house for free. "Right now sellers hold all the cards," Strid says.

But if you want a home, you can get one still — if you're willing to pay for it. For example, Strid recently sold two large homes for over \$3 million each to two

*Continued on next page*

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES FOX &amp; ROACH

Enjoy unimpeded views of the ocean and bay from the rooftop deck at 7 Tradewinds Lane (above). These extraordinary oceanfront homes are just an hour from New York City (below).

# Safe and Sound

## How one New Jersey builder changed the beach house construction game

by Lori Cullen

**B**efore it was demolished in 2002, seeing the distinctive shape of the Tradewinds Beach Club in Sea Bright, New Jersey, meant the beginning of summer for many.

The club was located on the barrier peninsula that separates the Atlantic Ocean from the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers, and on a clear day, the Manhattan skyline is visible on the northern horizon.

Way back in the day, Sea Bright was a fishing community consisting of simple shacks near the dunes. Later, mom and pop shops and a sprinkling of beach houses sprung up along Route 36, or Ocean Avenue, which runs directly through the center of town. But they weren't built to withstand wind speeds up to 120 miles per hour that, during a hurricane, could batter the coast.

In 2002, Phil Maconi, a builder in Monmouth County, learned the beach club was for sale and approached a local developer. With the goal of creating something extraordinary — and hurricane resistant — the Tradewinds beachfront development was born.

### SERIOUS BUSINESS

When Maconi works on a house, he thinks about safety and longevity first and foremost. Aside from being an artisan, he's also practical. "I studied the Navy's way of maintaining their ships against corrosion, how to protect against floods and things beach-related to make our builds structurally sound," he says. "By the time we got to building Tradewinds, I was quite knowledgeable in how to build coastal homes."

The 20 beachfront homes that make up Tradewinds were designed to prioritize views and stand up against a storm. The homes feature a reverse living design, with main rooms on the top floor and bedrooms on the middle floor raising the foundations above ground. Walls designed to allow water to flow through during a storm equalize water pressure inside and out, theoretically lessening the



amount of structural damage to the foundation during a storm.

"Each house was built to a very high standard. We anchored every one of those buildings with steel every 32 inches from the bottom to the top," he says. "We used special windows built to withstand hurricane force winds and projectiles flying into them."

Seven Tradewinds Lane, one of the last of the beachfront homes to be erected, sits at one of the highest points in the development. The owners who had intended to retire there spared no expense. They wanted the most beautiful house at the time.

"When you go to the top floor, the living room, the dining room, the kitchen, it's all wide open," Maconi says. "You get gorgeous sunsets from the roof deck, the library and the three front bedrooms. Some mornings on the water you'll see dolphins crossing as the sun breaks."

When the home was completed in October 2012, all Maconi needed was a storm to test his work.

"And a storm you got," says his wife, Rosa Aiello, a Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach realtor in Monmouth County, New Jersey. "Hurricane Sandy."

### BUILT TO LAST

You could see the properties adjacent to the Tradewinds development and down into town were devastated, Maconi recalls. From Forked River to New York State, there was an incredible amount of flood damage along the New Jersey coastline.

Did Tradewinds sustain damage?

"Sure," Maconi says.

"But what was unique about Tradewinds is that everything above that ground-floor basement was truly untouched. There was very minimal damage anywhere above that level. What was below was anticipated when the initial design was made," he explains. "That's where this was a prototypical design. No homes were built like this on the New Jersey coast in 2003 that I am aware of."

So when the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) came to take a look at these homes, they became very interested in how the builder prevented the cataclysmic damage that was evident everywhere else.

Shortly after Hurricane Sandy, building codes changed. Coastal homes in New Jersey were required to be raised above flood elevation. Flood maps were recalculated. Special vents invented in 1999, which automatically open to let flood waters equalize within foundation walls, became commonplace. Nailing patterns, shear walls, strapping and anchoring structures against wind loads were added to building codes and adopted statewide.

Builders started to understand the importance of raising buildings. They understood wind loads on the structures, and started *strapping* these buildings. "We just happened to be the first development that brought it into practice," he says.

"I don't suggest that these homes are hurricane proof," Maconi says. "If there's a hurricane, don't stay on the beach. Tradewinds isn't life proof."

But his ability to build something structurally sufficient to reduce devastating losses was proven to him.



PHOTO COURTESY OF EDGE-ON-HUDSON

A club room at The Emerson, Sleepy Hollow's trendy apartment homes, shows off locally inspired details, vibrant hues and a polished industrial design.

Continued from previous page

sets of grandparents who wanted to be near their grandchildren.

### BUYER'S REMORSE?

As for why people sell, some are pandemic newcomers who simply changed their mind. Strid describes one family with three kids, whose 15-minute drive to school turned into an hour-plus drive when businesses reopened and traffic resumed.

"They had to sell their \$4-million dream house," she explains. But because inventory is tight, she sold it right away.

Another family put their home on the market during the pandemic to move to Florida. They got more than their asking price and were ecstatic. But that was a year ago. "They called last week saying they're moving back," Strid reports. "I sent them listings for sale and they compared everything to their old house. So I called the person who bought their old house and told them the family wants to come back. 'Would you consider selling the house back to them?' We signed an agreement last night. It's the first time I've ever sold the same people the same house."

### BEACON OF HOPE

Inventory may be low on the East Coast, but at Edge-on-Hudson, a luxury development in Westchester, New York, "we're doing our part to alleviate that demand with a new condominium residence, The Daymark, com-

ing on the market in a matter of weeks, and stunning new townhomes from Sun Homes coming later in the year," says developer Peter Chavkin, managing member of Biddle Real Estate Ventures (BREVE).

The mix of buyers he's seeing is compelling, making for a strong community.

"The hunt is on for a slice of this suburban life."

Casey Rosenblum

Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International Realty

"Young couples from Brooklyn and other New York City boroughs, who might not have previously considered Westchester County, are finding that our community offers the urban amenities they still desire — a walkable community with spectacular waterfront parks, a vibrant and diverse downtown, easy transit access and plenty of open spaces and recreation," Chavkin says.

"We're also seeing a diverse pool of buyers, including empty nesters who already own single-family homes in Westchester or Fairfield County in Connecticut," says Chavkin's colleague Jonathan Stein, founder of PCD Development. "They are drawn to the lifestyle here and the quality of new construction. First-time buyers are coming too, a testament to the sense of energy and excitement unfolding."

Stein's hint to home shoppers: Find a transit-oriented community with easy access to the city. "You'll have the best of both worlds," he says. "And homes in such communities tend to keep their value through the fluctuations the market goes through."



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PHOTO COURTESY OF EDGE-ON-HUDSON

Walking distance from two Metro-North rail stations and only a 38-minute train ride from Grand Central Station, commuters can bike, hike or relax on their townhome rooftop in Edge-on-Hudson in Sleepy Hollow.

# Up, Up and Not Too Far Away

## The beauty of living north of the Big Apple in the Hudson Valley

by Lori Cullen

If you're looking to get out of New York City but hoping to stay within arm's reach, Westchester and other communities in the Hudson Valley are just a quick bus or train ride away.

Casey Rosenblum, a listing agent with Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International Realty in Larchmont, New York, is a fan of the popular town on the Long Island Sound. "I think people end up moving to this part of Westchester for a number of reasons," she says. "The first is that it is literally 32 minutes on the train from here to Grand Central Station. If you're looking at other towns in Westchester, it gets to be more like an hour-long ride, plus the additional commute to your office."

It's a walkable village, a huge draw for people who like to get their steps in. The walk from the train to restaurants, boutiques, coffee shops and grocery stores is all of about 20 minutes. Larchmont is also a water community, alluring to those interested in boating, sailing, paddleboarding and other nautical activities.

"Our public schools are a big draw, too," she says.

### SPECTACULAR DETAILS

Courtney Walker, also a listing agent with Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International Realty, grew up in the area before living in New York City and San Francisco. About six and a half years ago, she moved back. "The difference between our area and other lovely areas north of us, like Armonk and Chappaqua, is that it feels very communal here," Walker says. "Our houses are closer together, so you really have a neighborhood versus being a little bit separate. A lot of the people who move here really do want to walk down the street and see their neighbors, walk into town and bump into friends at the farmer's market."

Rosenblum agrees: "It's hard to walk to the downtown in other villages as easily as it is for us."

And one home in the area bears pretty special historical significance, Rosenblum notes. Built for the Kane family, who also have a street named after them, the property was owned by notable people from the entertainment industry. It's also on a lot that's nearly an acre in size, uncommon for a town known for its smaller lot sizes.

"To have a whole acre in this area, which includes a lovely pool and spa, an outdoor kitchen and a carriage house, as well as what they called the tea house, is unusual," she says. In the 1920s, the tea house was turned into a screening room and has remained one ever since, though it's been modernized. "This house is unique because of its special history and how it's been updated and maintained in a meticulous way."

Although it's an old home, it feels current, fresh and lovely, Rosenblum continues, a testament to the homeowners over the years, which include Herbert Lubin, president of Associated Pictures, who was best known for building the Roxy, the largest movie theater in New York City at the time. Then it was purchased from him by Alfred Blumenthal, who was the financier of famed *Follies* producer Flo Ziegfeld.

"It holds the integrity of the architectural design,"

Walker affirms. No one has ripped out the original details, so you still have beautiful original moldings, an iconic inlay in one of the fireplaces, the original leather banisters. But at the same time, it's got a brand new kitchen and primary bathroom, plus a modern pool. "Everything has been updated for comfort in our modern age. For instance, you don't want to see the TV in the kitchen, but there is one — it just rises out of the cabinetry."

### A WATERFRONT WIN

Thirty minutes north, in the town of Sleepy Hollow, you'll find Edge-on-Hudson, a mixed-use, transit-oriented community set on nearly 70 acres along the Hudson River. Located just 25 miles north of Manhattan, this enclave of condominium residences, townhomes and apartments — with new condos and townhomes coming to market this year — is within walking distance of two Metro-North train stations (Tarrytown and Philipse Manor), which can take you to Grand Central Station in as little as 38 minutes.

Resident Glen Gilbert always enjoyed visiting the Hudson Valley and thought Edge-on-Hudson would be a great place to live. "Our expectations have since been met and exceeded," he says.

Aside from its proximity to his younger daughter, who lives in New York City, he is most thrilled by the amenities the luxury community has to offer. "First and foremost, there are plenty of open spaces, magnificently landscaped and well-maintained," he says. "By far the nicest is the Sleepy Hollow RiverWalk."

Beautifully paved, the RiverWalk lights up at night and offers several different seating options, all river-facing and comfortable, according to Edge-on-Hudson developers Peter Chavkin, Biddle Real Estate Ventures, and Jonathan Stein, PCD Development.

Residents who work in New York City and choose not to walk to the train can make use of a shuttle van that runs continuously to and from the Tarrytown station during commuting hours. New residential buildings, a supermarket and various services and retailers will only add to the suite of amenities over the next several years.

"On weekdays, I split my time between working from home and going to my office," Gilbert says. "On weekends, my wife and I enjoy meeting with neighbors and sometimes small chats blossom into full-blown, unplanned social events with a dozen or more people and as many dogs. There's also no shortage of restaurants nearby, most within easy walking distance and some right on the Hudson."

But as beautiful as Edge-on-Hudson and its surroundings are, what's most special to Gilbert is the sense of community. "It's palpable," he says. "There's a laid-back, almost vacation-like vibe, amplified by being right on the river."

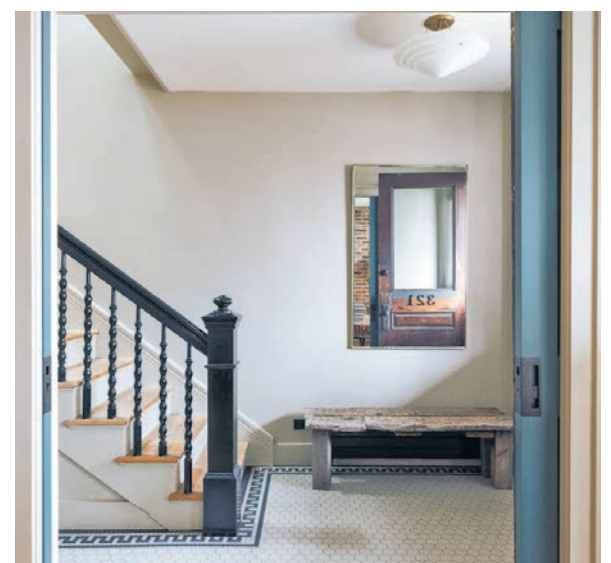


PHOTO COURTESY OF HOULIHAN LAWRENCE

Step back in time in this early 1800s, Queen Anne-style home located in the Hudson Historic District on one of the loveliest streets in town. The home, which has been completely renovated to reflect the beauty of the past while offering modern convenience, is just 10 minutes from the train station on foot.

### UNEXPECTED BEAUTY

Further north in Dutchess and Columbia counties, there is something for everyone. Farms, antiques, hiking, biking, skiing, great food and endless opportunities to get out on the river.

"The homes in this area range from the historic architecture of country homes and farmhouses on acres of land to bungalows, colonials, mid-century and very modern homes," says Chris Getman, a realtor in Houlihan Lawrence's Millbrook office. "The luxury market for second homeowners is very strong too. And the variety of homes in the area gives buyers an opportunity to find what they have in mind or expand their search to a different type of home."

He notes that many homebuyers who come to the Hudson Valley looking for an out-of-town, country experience end up in the center of the Hudson business district.

While buyers no longer feel the pressure to buy quite as quickly as they did the last few years, inventory remains low, so they have to act quickly to view any property they find interesting.

"The buyer hasn't changed as much as you might think," Getman says. "There are many from New York City looking for a permanent move who have decided to commute into the city as needed."

From Hudson, it's a scenic two-hour train ride to Manhattan.

"Every buyer is on a unique and special journey," he continues. "Their specific histories often define the style of home they seek or the specific Hudson Valley community they prefer. One couple I have worked with for some time decided it was time to sell their in-town property in Hudson and move to New Paltz — an area they had always loved that's south of Hudson and across the river. It was quite an adventure, both helping them purchase and sell. As neighbors and personal friends, it was bittersweet to see their journey take them an hour away."



This dramatic home has been updated to optimize family living and entertaining flow. The elegant, warm entry boasts an impressive double staircase, original floors and gorgeous moldings (left). An original Kane estate, this distinctive Larchmont Manor home is set on private grounds just shy of one acre (right).

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HOULIHAN LAWRENCE

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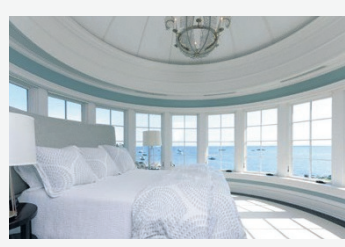
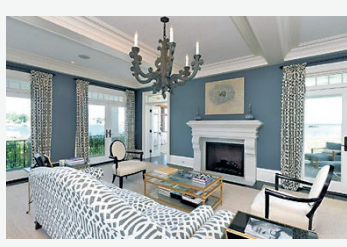
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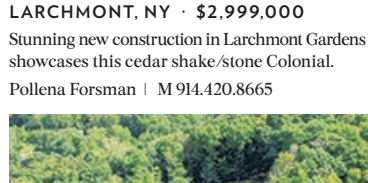
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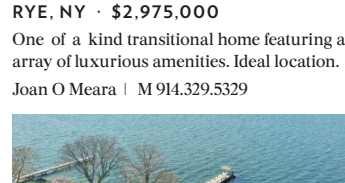
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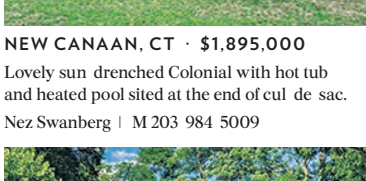
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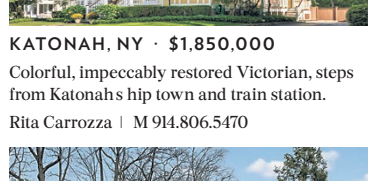
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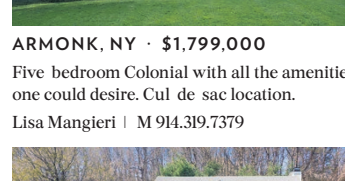
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This well maintained five bedroom Ranch in sought after Windmill neighborhood.  
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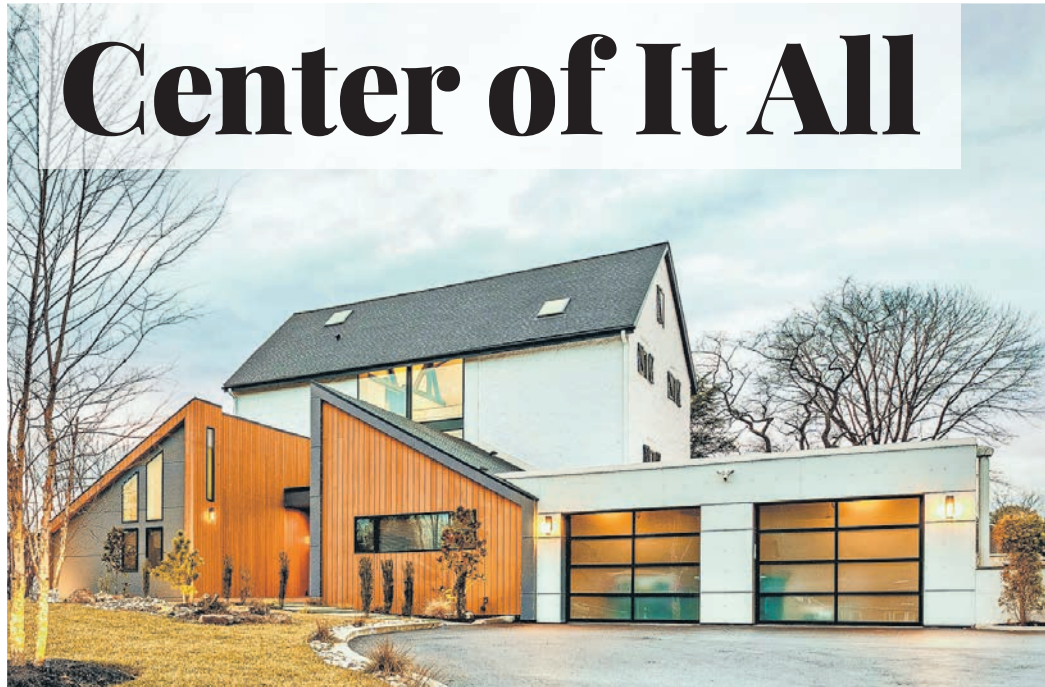


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Special Advertising Feature

Beyond NYC

# Center of It All



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES FOX & ROACH  
 This 173-year-old converted bank barn in Media, Pennsylvania, has been uniquely redesigned with a focus on marrying old charm with a modern style (left). Just two miles from Route 30 in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, this private oasis set on 1.4 acres isn't just a home, it's a lifestyle (right).

## Living outside of Philadelphia but feeling so close to New York, D.C. and Delaware

by Lori Cullen

When you think about the suburbs of New York City, you might not think of Berwyn, Pennsylvania. But that's changing for many.

This idyllic small town outside of Philadelphia is just two miles from a train to the Big Apple. "It's really rare to live so close to Center City and have New York City be so accessible," says Karen Strid, manager of a team of realtors for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach in Rosemont, Pennsylvania. "It's kind of the best of our world close to that world."

She notes the town was known for its great schools, amazing farmer's markets and beautiful scenery pre-pandemic, but now also boasts typical big-city features like fabulous high-end clothing stores and specialty coffee shops.

"This location is right in the center of so many good things," she says.

Still, the area's got what she likens to a Jackson, Wyoming, feel, with cows, foxes and hawks aplenty. It has a lake in the center, which is available for use by all the surrounding homes.

There's a lot of socializing — bonfires, happy hours, canoeing — as well as the Devon Horse Show, one of the biggest horse shows in the country.

Strid, a Villanova, Pennsylvania, resident, knows firsthand the beauty of living just close enough to — but not directly within — a big city. With one sister living in New York and the other in Washington, D.C., "We can be at the beach really fast. We have the Poconos for skiing. And we don't have to sleep over when we go to New York," she says.

### A ROCK STAR DESIGN

Meanwhile in Media, Pennsylvania, Reuben Rath appreciates the town's proximity to the airport. "I went to school not far from here, worked in Philadelphia, and later in New York, all while living in Media. Logistically the location works really well, whether someone works in downtown Philadelphia or Wilmington, or if they travel — the airport is only 15 minutes away."

A managing partner at dwell&co. and realtor at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, Rath works from home

in a 170-year-old barn that was reimagined into a uniquely modern and rustic piece of design. Also the builder, Rath purchased the property in late 2019, designed, renovated and moved in with his wife and then 3-year-old daughter in 2021.

Inside, vaulted ceilings and massive floor-to-ceiling windows shed light across the open floor plan. Through the glass walls of his second-floor office, which overlooks the multilevel family space beneath, Rath can keep an eye on his daughter at play in the living room.

His daughter, now 4, loves to peek at dad through the see-through stairs and clear panels that connect one side to the next.

"The walls are glass and the floor is polycarbonate. You'll probably laugh at this, but the flooring used to be a major rock and roll band's stage," he says.

From an aesthetic standpoint, Rath's goal was to bring in as much light as he could.

He acknowledges if he were somebody else looking just at pictures of the house, he might find it too modern.

"But when you see it in person," he says, "despite the size and aesthetics, it's a very homey and cozy place."

### LOTS TO LOVE

While the home has smart lighting and sound as well as other high-tech features he can control from his phone, the kitchen backsplash is the original stonewall of the barn, in addition to glimpses of the original architecture throughout the house.

"I love the community," he says, about this cul-de-sac. "Each house is very different, from an architectural as well as a demographic standpoint. It's a nice, tight community with ample privacy for everyone."

As for downtown Media, only a five-minute drive away, it's a spread of amazing shops and restaurants that give it a quaint, small-town charm that's earned Media the nickname "Everybody's hometown."

Lori Cullen is a freelance writer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, specializing in education and family-related topics.



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