

Strong rectilinear architecture blends perfectly with the gently curved two story section of the home.





# A THOROUGHLY MODERN MAKEOVER

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DURSTON SAYLOR







Nestled into the gently sloping landscape and overlooking a quiet Connecticut lake sits an architectural gem redesigned by award winning Westport architect, George Dumitru of Studio Dumitru Architects. Well known for their “attention to detail and purity of style”, Studio Dumitru sought to “pay respect not only to this iconic home but to the original architect who designed it”.

Originally designed in the 1990’s by another award winning architect, Roger Ferris, the house is sited on four acres in Weston, Connecticut. The current renovation involved modifying and adding onto the original structure. “Every house has to serve the people that live in it and in this case, the clients wanted to make the

**RIGHT** Horizontal wood slats on the inside of the windows are used to create a privacy screen to the left of the main entrance and throughout the gallery space.

**ABOVE** The renovation included construction of a new three car garage which opens to the parking courtyard in the front of the home.





Natural light floods the newly constructed glass gallery. Dumitru has described this space as his modern interpretation of a cathedral ceiling.





house work with their lifestyle which was quite different from that of the previous owners,” according to Dumitru. “Adding a few more features resulted in a more unified flow of spaces which culminated in the creation of a homogeneous structure” that fits perfectly with its’ current owners. The scope of work included converting the original garage into an exercise room, mud room, storage area and new three car garage. This new space was then connected to the main portion of the home by creating a glass gallery which offers “expansive views of the lake, Zen garden, newly constructed pool and surrounding landscape”.

Solid stone steps, constructed of a single slab of granite, lead from the parking courtyard to the newly designed main entrance of the home. Though more open and transparent, it still maintains a “significant level of privacy”. The delicate curving façade of the two story high section of the home, left of the entrance, seems juxtaposed against the strong rectilinear lines visible in the gallery’s wood and glass construction. Faced in a soft gray stucco, its’ solid design serves as another contrast to the open feel of the glass gallery on the right. Horizontal wooden slats within, seem to intersect with the vertical wooden beams that connect the glass walls. Constructed of fir on the outside and maple on the inside, they serve as supports within the “story and a half gallery, a modern interpretation, Dumitru says, of a cathedral ceiling”. The interplay between the architectural elements inside and out is ever present throughout the home and its’ surrounding property.

This thoughtful mix of architecture and materials is evident within the home as well. The living room was “enlarged and oriented to take advantage of the lake views” according to







Chris Wright of Westport based Wright Brothers Builders. The fireplace serves as the focal point of the room. Interior designer, Jamie Herzlinger, wrapped the fireplace wall with Bird's Eye Maple, blending it with the cool texture of a Travertine marble surround and the two inch thick raised Travertine hearth. Bird's Eye Maple was also used in the design and construction of the custom entertainment

**OPPOSITE TOP** A rich mixture of textures and finishes combine to give the home's kitchen its' a sleek look. Aluminum cabinets , warm brown Michelangelo Marble on the island, black granite for the perimeter counters and black glass match-stick tile on the backsplash to give this space a clean, contemporary feel.

**OPPOSITE BOTTOM** The gentleman's bath was designed with Australian walnut and sophisticated fixtures.

**ABOVE** The Zen garden looks out over the pool towards the lake, furthering the connection between the house and water.

wall. Designed to cantilever out, it provides "chic storage", keeping everything neat and tidy. The maple pattern creates a sense of movement on the surface areas of both. With a neutral palette prevailing here, Herzlinger has designed this "uber-sophisticated" space to include a mix of furnishings from Donghia and Holly Hunt which have been upholstered in a combination of rich mohair and subtle suede. The glass and steel construction of the Mattaliano coffee table is a nod to the architectural glass present throughout the home. "Making modern inviting", this minimal design translates as very tailored and inviting.

That sense of movement is also seen in Herzlinger's intricate pattern of the black glass "match-stick" tile backsplash in the kitchen. Black granite has been used to surface the perimeter counters and blends well with the chocolate tones present in the four inch thick slab of "Michelangelo marble" used on the island. Sleek aluminum Poggenpohl cabinets add an additional layer of texture to this space. Dennis Miller counter stools covered in

Holly Hunt leather complement the surrounding color palette.

With clean lines and a cosmopolitan feel, Dumitru designed the "Gentleman's Bath" to include Australian walnut cabinetry, sophisticated lighting and contemporary fixtures. Large scale mirrors reflect light and give it a sense of expanse.

Dumitru reorganized and opened many partially closed spaces to improve the flow within the house and take advantage of the panoramic views of the property and lake. From an architectural standpoint, he has designed each element to appear as if it flows seamlessly into the next, spilling over as it extends down towards the water. For example, the horizontal fir beams which are flush on the inside, jut out from the Zen garden to the pool and pick up the rhythm of the vertical fir gallery supports between the gallery's glass walls. Down lights in those horizontal beams supply a vertical light stream to the wall below, furthering the connection from one level to the next.

Dumitru collaborated with Bruce Eckerson, ASLA of Wesley Stout Associates



## RESOURCES

### Architect

#### Studio Dumitru Architects

George Dumitru, Principle  
The Mill  
49 Richmondville Avenue, Suite #106  
Westport, CT 06880  
203.226.5156  
studiodumitru.com

### Builder

#### The Wright Brothers

Kelly Wright  
325 Post Road West  
Westport, CT 06880  
203.227.8215  
wrightbuild.com

### Interior Design


#### Jamie Herzlinger Interior Design

Jamie Herzlinger  
New York – Scottsdale  
800.983.0031  
jamieherzlinger.com

### Landscape Design

#### Wesley Stout Associates

Bruce Eckerson, ASLA  
96 Main Street  
New Canaan, CT 06840  
203.966.3100  
wesleystout.com

A photograph of a modern house at night. The house features a white upper level and a lower level with a stone retaining wall. The stone wall is illuminated by downlights at the end of vertical beams. The house has large windows and a covered patio area with lounge chairs. The interior lights are on, and the patio is lit up.

As night falls, down lights at the end of the vertical beams wash the retaining wall with soft light.





in New Canaan to redesign the landscape surrounding the newly designed property. As the landscape architect involved with the landscape design surrounding the original home, Eckerson had intimate knowledge of the property in its' beginning stages. Sadly time had taken its' toll on some of the original vegetation. Much of the tree canopy created by the four or five rolls of American Holly trees planted in the nineties was lost. Fourteen to sixteen feet high and eight to ten feet wide, they had formed overlapping arcs creating a sense of enfilade at the front of the home. Eckerson chose a Coral Burst Japanese Maple to flank the main entrance. Providing an additional layer of privacy, its bark turns a "brilliant red in the winter". "Boxwood hedging was replanted as a segmented hedge that respects the architectural structure of the gallery." Eckerson added that "holly was planted in angled arcs to radiate out from the curve of the home's left side." Walnut and Maple trees now create the canopy once provided by the original holly rows.

In the back of the home, this collaborative team further enhanced the property by adding another terrace level containing the pool and raised pool deck. Stainless steel bars, two inches thick and four feet high were anchored into Phoenician Buff granite, to create a fence around the deck. A combination of Dwarf Fountain Grasses and Feather Reed Grass soften the hardscape below the beams in front of that wall. The layering effect of having the Zen garden fountain appear to flow into the pool creates visual interest and further enhances the connection between house and lake.

Dumtiru concluded by saying; "that every project is a team project and the success of It rests with how well that team works together. Every member of this team worked very hard and the results can be seen throughout." ■

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