

**The War Widow:** Read our series on a story of love and war, heartbreak and healing

## The outside-inside connection

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BY MARK S. REYER - CORRESPONDENT

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*Home of the Month is a collaborative effort with the N.C. State University College of Design through its Home Environments Design Initiative. Featured homes, selected by an expert panel, highlight the benefits of good home design and represent the diversity of homes and home renovations designed by North Carolina architects. The articles, written by faculty, graduate students and alumni of the School of Architecture, bring to light the attributes of each home. Our goal is to offer inspiration and knowledge that can be applied to your living space.*

The house, on a steeply sloping, wooded site in a quiet residential neighborhood near UNC-Chapel Hill, is a work in progress. And it might look familiar. The Wheeler Residence was the Home of the Month in August 2006, when the focus was on the outdoor spaces. Now Phase 2 is complete. That work transformed the main interior space -- the foyer, the living/dining room, kitchen and stair gallery -- into an open plan that provides better flow throughout the house.

Raleigh architect Louis Cherry worked with his clients, N.C. Museum of Art Director Larry Wheeler and interior designer Don Doskey, to develop a design that could be implemented over time, allowing the homeowners to more easily afford all the changes they wanted.

The owners wanted their mid-20th century California bungalow, built in 1960, to connect to the landscape and accommodate large gatherings for parties and fundraising. They also wanted a place to display an extensive art collection.

Of course, when they removed walls to open up the space, they also took away a place to hang art. The architect addressed that issue by designing a series of simple wall planes that serve as backdrops for the collection. The configuration of the new walls keeps the flow somewhat open, allowing for ease in entertaining large groups, and at the same time creates discrete zones for quiet living.

### The kitchen is the key

A ceiling plane connects these new public spaces and provides a place for down lighting. The living/dining room ceiling follows the original roof line, creating a space that opens to wooded views.

The design and construction of a glass corner in the existing kitchen connect the outside and inside. The kitchen becomes a new focal point from the exterior, and, from the inside, one sees a series of garden spaces that were created in the earlier renovation. In fact, all the views to the outside are carefully framed and become living pictures that change with the seasons.

The kitchen has very clean, minimal lines. The CaesarStone countertops flow right into the window frames, giving the illusion that the kitchen really does open to the landscape and the woods beyond, again acting as a work of art.

The layout of the kitchen is almost galleylike, making it highly efficient for preparing meals and entertaining. The work area is at one end with the sink, stove and refrigerator. The long countertop doubles as a food prep area as well as a serving area for guests during larger parties. The other end of the kitchen functions as a bar area.

The custom-made white cabinetry is very simple in appearance, but the insides of the cabinet doors and the window frame are painted chartreuse. This accent, along with the glass-tile backsplash behind the stove, provides a burst of color that is complemented by the views from the outside.

### A warm and rich simplicity




The simple layout of the public spaces of this house gives the homeowners an opportunity to use the artwork and the natural light from the strategically placed windows to give the space warmth and richness. This is enhanced by the use of simple materials such as mahogany floors, painted drywall, lacquered wood cabinets, glass and glass tile.

By taking on this project as a series of renovations, the owners are able to tweak the design as their needs change.

The architect and the owners stress the importance of having a vision for the space and developing a master plan to help achieve it. As a reminder, the homeowners keep a small, wooden model of the overall design in their downstairs study.

**Mark Reyer is a graduate of the College of Design with a bachelor's of environmental design in architecture and a master's of architecture degrees. He is an architect in the Raleigh office of LS3P Associates.**

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