

# YOUR COMMUNITY

**KNOCK KNOCK:** THE TRIANGLE'S MOST UNUSUAL HOUSES

## Poulos-Tate house mixes Japanese culture with modernity

BY KIM WEISS  
TRIANGLE MODERNIST HOUSES

It's easy to understand why a couple who lived in San Francisco for many years and fully embraced the Japanese culture there were so drawn to the house in Chapel Hill that Lee Munson designed and built in 2002.

Nestled on a wooded hillside, this 4,200-square-foot home offered photographer David Poulos and Peggy Tate, an executive coach, all the clean, modern space they needed, both inside and out, to comfortably transplant their love of all things Japanese into the university town they'd chosen to call home.

The first element any visitor to the Poulos-Tate house will notice is the Japanese-inspired landscape.

The landscaping was a collaborative design between Poulos and Carolyn Siverson of Kinetic Gardening in Pittsboro. Rock gardens, a "dry stream" of stones that follows the curve of the hill, stone lanterns and basins, and plant material that's as attractive in its dormant phase and it is in spring and summer suggest the ambience behind the large double doors at the main entrance.

According to Poulos, Munson designed the cypress-clad house to fit the undulating lot. As a result, the entrance is on grade while the rear elevation soars to accommodate three



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living levels and two wooden decks that extend the living space out into the trees. Abundant glazing on all three levels welcomes nature into nearly every room. The windows are actually sliding glass door systems, which open wide to allow natural ventilation during good weather. Deep roof overhangs — a nod to both Japanese architecture and sustainable design — protect the glazing from the harsh summer sun.

Inside, a broad foyer offers access to nearly every space on the main level: the living room

straight ahead, the kitchen/den/breakfast area down a hall to the left and the master bedroom suite down another hall to the right.

The staircase to the upper and lower levels, with its simple yet elegantly detailed wood and metal railing, is also accessed from the foyer. A formal dining room is situated between the living room and kitchen. And every space is a veritable showroom for the couple's collection of Japanese or Japanese-inspired furniture, art, and objets d'art.

The upper level contains Tate's office and a

guest suite. The lower level features a media room that opens onto the lower deck and what were originally two additional bedrooms. Poulos and Tate transformed the bedrooms into Poulos' office and an in-home gym.

Another thing visitors to this house can't help but notice is the plethora of bird feeders just outside every window. Almost always occupied by a variety of songbirds, the feeders invite an aviary to join the beautiful views that surround this couple's dream home.

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residential architecture,

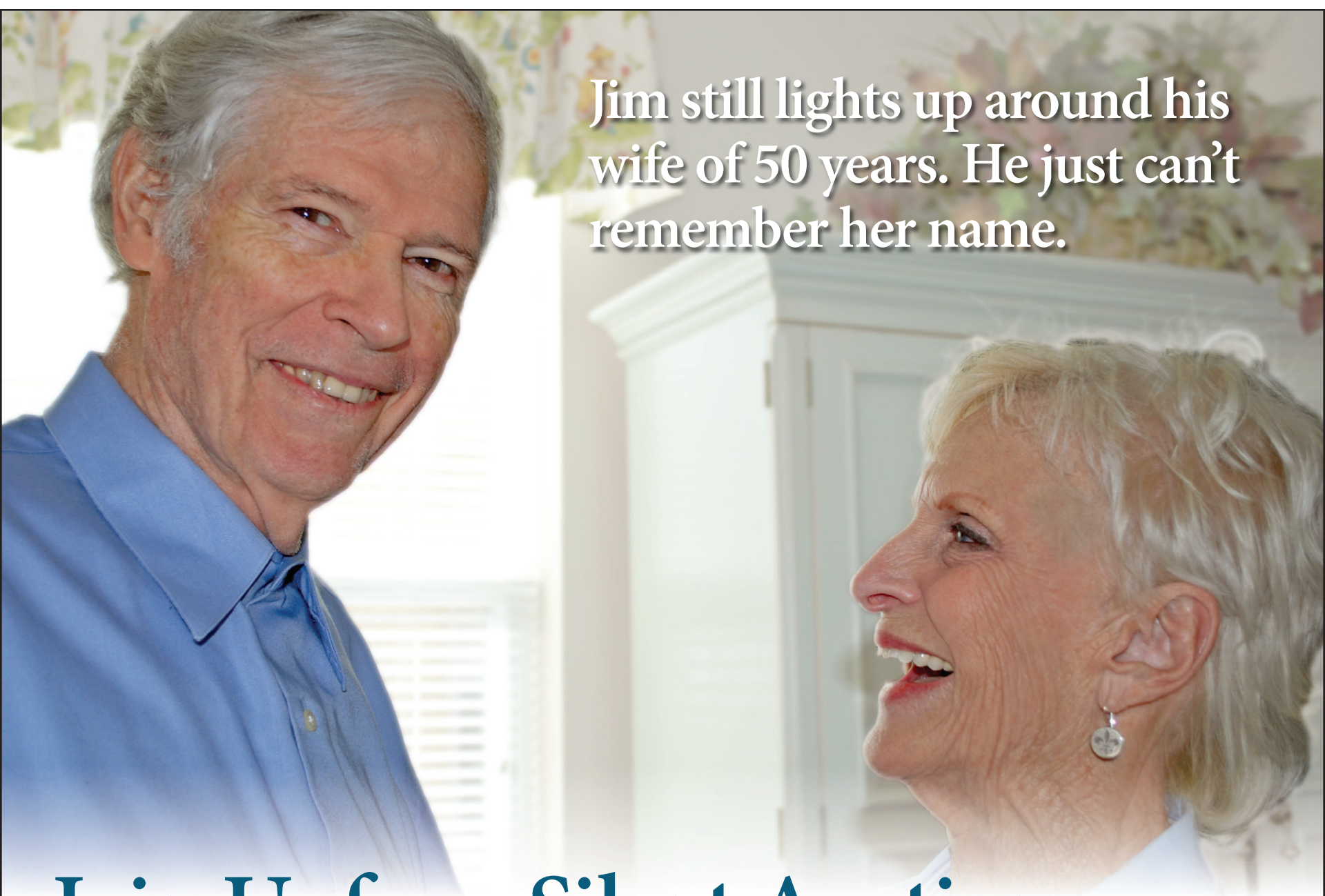
Houses. Lee Munson's



A broad foyer offers access to nearly every space on the main level: the living room, the kitchen/den/breakfast area and the master bedroom suite.

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Jim still lights up around his wife of 50 years. He just can't remember her name.

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