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FASHION MEETS FUNCTION IN THIS KID-TESTED, DESIGNER-APPROVED HOUSE IN BEDFORD CORNERS.

Story By Julia Lange
Photography by Phillip Ennis

(This page) The Quadrille-upholstered sleigh chairs were inspired by Jonathan Adler's favorite palette (chocolate and blue) and signature geometric pattern. The creamy sheepskin rug is from ABC Carpet & Home.

(Opposite) With its free-form zebrano wood table and Phillip Jeffries cork wall, the dining room elicits an organic feel.

(This page) The kitchen island, topped with double-thick zebrano wood, is surrounded by something slightly less earthy: chrome and plastic barstools from Knoll.

(Opposite) In the kitchen, the matriarch installed a modern piece of her New Jersey childhood: Saarinen's iconic 1956 pedestal table, ringed by the designer's equally legendary Tulip chairs.

There's a house in Bedford Corners that isn't just kid-tested, it's designer-approved.

Sure, the family room couch is covered with indestructible brick Crypton fabric (pour a cup of juice onto a cushion and the liquid just rolls right off), but the silhouette of the sectional is sleek enough to satisfy any mid-century-modern maven. And although the colorful rug nearby cleverly was chosen in part to hide spills, it's also the work of British design star Paul Smith.

In this newly built, 8,600-square-foot, cedar shingle-style house, there are no Baccarat vases to break, no crystal candy dishes to send crashing to the floor. "There's no foofie stuff, no tchotchkes, none of that junk," says the thirtysomething owner, who works in finance and lives in the comfortably chic quarters with his high school-sweetheart wife, a physician, and their son, three, and daughter, eight months.

But he didn't just cut out decorative clutter (the foyer, for instance, is barren but for a Rosemary Hallgarten zebra-print rug). He streamlined the interior structure of the five-bedroom, six-and-a-half-bath house, nixing beamed ceilings and elaborate wainscoting. The result is an aesthetic that he deems "clean, simple, and modern." Decorator Kim Freeman rattles off other adjectives: "childproof, livable, informal, colorful, practical, minimal." She calls the look a combination of Jonathan Adler and Knoll, albeit a Popsicle- friendly one.

(Above) The living room has a cozy sitting area with chairs upholstered in blue and chocolate and a comfy chocolate velvet-and-leather sofa from Profiles in Manhattan.

(Right) More Adler influences adorn the living room, including the white lacquer console table from Desiron. Alabaster globe lamps from Oly contribute to the soothing, serene environment.

(Opposite) The family room epitomizes the house's fun-yet-kid-friendly philosophy. The sectional is covered in Teflon-like Crypton fabric and the Paul Smith rug camouflages apple juice stains among the swirls.

Indeed, an Adler rug acquired when the owners still lived in their Murray Hill apartment (they moved from Manhattan into their home during the summer of 2007, after more than two years of design and construction) is what spun off the design of this Bedford Corners property, which sits on just over three acres, says its architect, Ken Andersen, a principal at R.S. Granoff Architects in Greenwich, Connecticut. Their grass-green, brown, and charcoal square-print rug ("they're all about the dizzy carpets," says Andersen) set the tone for what the family wanted in their new, much larger space: a fun, unfussy aesthetic.

It's just about the only piece that survived the move to the suburbs. Now the rug sits in the first-floor office, anchoring a pair of black-framed chairs covered in lime-green Kravet velvet. "I'm really proud of them for going for these colors," says Freeman, whose firm, Kim Freeman Style & Design, is based in New Castle. "They were willing to do fun, and this is fun in a serious office. It didn't take coaxing."

Other pieces, if not Adler per se, are Adler-inspired. The living room's sleigh chairs are upholstered in one of the designer's signature color combinations—blue and chocolate—and feature a diamond pattern, of the designer's trademarks (the fabric is from Quadrille), while the nearby console table from Desiron is finished in classic Adler-style white lacquer. The table is topped with alabaster globe lamps from Oly, but it's no surprise to find the mantel free of objets d'arts. Although the owner says the room is rarely used, he made sure the furnishings were as relaxed as those in the rest of the house, adding a sheepskin rug from ABC Carpet & Home and a comfy chocolate velvet-and-leather sofa from Profiles in Manhattan.

"There's nothing worse than not being comfortable in your own house," he says. The important word for the snugly proportioned room is "soothing," says Freeman, pointing to the dove-gray Benjamin Moore-painted walls.

"Whimsical," however, is perhaps a more appropriate way to describe the Knoll-bedecked kitchen. Introduced in 1956, the studio's legendary Saarinen pedestal table sits by the window. The matriarch grew up in New Jersey with a version of the same piece and surrounded it with Saarinen's equally iconic Tulip chairs, the molded white fiberglass capped by blue, red, and green cushions. There are additional nods to the 1950s in other corners of the house, including the silver-and-black swirled foil wallpa-

per from Cole & Son in the powder room and the penny round floor tile in the guest bathroom.

Knoll also bellies up to the zebrano wood-topped kitchen island in the shape of polished chrome barstools with clear, grid-imprinted shells designed by Marco Maran. A third Knoll design pops from the second-floor landing with a Saarinen's cherry-red Womb chair. Competing with it for throne of the palace: the master bedroom's baby-blue nailhead lounge chair, which the owner spied during a shopping trip with Freeman to the Kravet showroom in Manhattan. It's become his prized possession. "It's the sexiest lounge chair," Freeman says. "Goodbye, La-Z-Boy!"

The master bathroom features two LCD TVs, a Duravit tub with a double-windowed view of the circular driveway, and fixtures from Best Plumbing Tile & Stone. The iridescent, shades-of-the-sea wall tiles are from Bisazza.

(Right) The owners have a yen for '50s chic, such as the powder room's black-and-silver swirled foil wallpaper (Woodstock by Cole & Son, from Lee Jofa).

To achieve the casual but elegant air, the owners ripped out pages of *Elle Décor* and *Metropolitan Home* and presented them to Freeman to spark ideas. Helping the process was the fact that Freeman is a former home-furnishings editor for major magazines such as *House Beautiful* and *Country Living*, "so I was used to going into empty houses and creating rooms," she says. Still, the owner stresses that the goal wasn't glossy perfection but earthy accessibility.

Take the organic-feeling dining room, with its stained white-oak floor, custom brown-and-green rug, and amorphous zebrano wood table. The host and hostess chairs are covered in a chocolate-flecked green Donghia fabric and the side chairs are upholstered in green Kravet Ultrasuede, while the Desiron wood sideboard, which sits beneath an Oly sunburst mirror, is crowned with copper. One wall is covered in cork from Phillip Jeffries, the others are painted

a mossy green. Catty-corner to the cork hangs a Peter Lik print of a birch forest and, above the table, the Hollywood oval chandelier designed by Brand van Egmond looks like a nest of twigs. "It's all very nature-inspired," the owner says.

Another room that celebrates the outdoors is the playroom, tucked away upstairs. It's an homage to the owners' 2001 honeymoon to Kenya's Masai Mara, boasting walls covered in murals that depict one continuous safari scene, from grazing giraffes and elephants to the newlywed couple themselves riding in their hunter-green jeep. The shag carpet is the color of dry-season brush and the hopsack used to make the rustic, savannah-colored shades is reminiscent of the fabric of a game warden's uniform. Tangerine Ultrasuede sofas-cum-beds feature no frames or sharp corners, so even the little ones can lounge safely.

But where kids can be seen and heard with relish lies two floors below, in the 2,300-square-foot basement, dominated by what Andersen's dubbed "the lost childhood room." Down here, there are neon-bright bean bags for reclining, built-ins for stowing arts and crafts, a

chalkboard for doodling, and—for powwowing—a toddler-height red table with a rainbow of chairs around it. And, yes, enviably enough, there's an inflatable bounce house and an arcade's worth of video and pinball games, from Donkey Kong to Ms. Pac-Man and Galaga.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact about the room is that it's a veritable hockey rink, complete with a blue-dotted rubber floor and light-blue padded walls "so you can 'check' somebody," Andersen says with a laugh. Plexiglas over the plasma TV protects the screen from errant balls; likewise, heavy-duty panels armor the ceiling.

"It's my favorite place in the whole house, by far," says the owner, who grew up playing Wiffle Ball and hockey with his brother in their New Jersey basement, only that space boasted a carpeted concrete floor and wood-paneled walls, "so there were lots of bruises and dings." Hence his new house's slapshot-safe padding. "It was always my dream to have a basement you could play sports in and not break anything." On the roster are soccer scrimmages, (mini) bike rides, and Rollerblade jaunts.

The room is ideal for enduring Northeast winters, when "the weather gets cold and there's plenty to do down there to keep the little kids entertained on a Saturday," the owner says. It's also great for giving the grown-ups a bit of a break. The family lives an hour or so from a clutch of cousins who have children of their own. So this past Thanksgiving, when two dozen boys and girls under the age of eight descended on the house, the owners ushered them to the basement— "we put them down there and locked them in," the patriarch jokes—proving the home is not just kid- and designer-tested, it's also parent-approved.

A New York-based freelance writer, Julia Lange writes frequently about architecture and interior design.

(This page) Grays and beiges were largely banned from the first-floor office. Instead, the owners chose chairs covered in lime green Kravet velvet to coordinate with the block-print Jonathan Adler rug, one of the few holdovers from their Manhattan apartment.

(Top, left) The children's upstairs playroom celebrates the owners' 2001 honeymoon to Kenya's Masai Mara, complete with safari-scene murals and brush-colored shag carpet.

(Left) The 8,600-square-foot, cedar shingle-style house belies its decidedly modern interiors.