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COTTAGESGARDENS.COM | JANUARY 2026

NEW  
KITCHEN  
VIBES

**Fitting In** (THIS PHOTO) Tanner White, the architect of this house, says, "The residence was conceived as a contemporary interpretation of the classic architectural language found throughout the immediate area and town." The foyer (BELOW) is furnished with a Holly Hunt mirror, a chandelier by Il Pezzo Mancante and a coffee table by Opiary through 1stDibs. See Resources.



# RAMP UP THE *Fun*

PLAYFUL SURPRISES ADD MOMENTS OF DELIGHT AT A NEW FAMILY HOME

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hen Alice fell down the rabbit hole into a wonderland, she awoke eventually to find it was all a dream. But when the occupants of this new Fairfield County house take a ride down a sinuous slide, passing a wall of Cheshire cats and other animals right out of the fantasy tale, they reach a fun place that endures.

In keeping with the family-of-four's request for a secretive speakeasy, combined with a play area featuring billiards tables and a video arcade, interior designer Karen Asprea created a memorable way to reach the spaces. "From the upstairs level, when a hidden door



Everyday Elegance Elements in the living room include a custom curved sofa upholstered in Dedar's Vladimiro mohair with leather trim from Edelman Leather and a rug designed by Asprea Studio, while the custom chandelier is by Shakuff, and the fireplace is composed of Breccia Capria marble. See Resources.



**Chic & Cheeky** A custom curved banquette (THIS PHOTO) upholstered in Zen Moment chenille by Kravet with a leather seat by Edelman Leather and Lyz dining chairs from Cliff Young surround a custom table by Mark Jupiter; the chandelier over the table is by Larose Guyon; and the countertops are through BAS Stone. In the powder room (RIGHT) off the kitchen, Astek Home's Drunken Monkey wallpaper lines the wall, the mirror is from Arhaus, and the wall sconce is by Lindsey Adelman. See Resources.



is opened, you can slide right down to the bar," Asprea explains. But as she adds, "We had to put in a few bumpers along the way since people were flying down the chute too fast." An adjacent staircase provides an alternative, albeit less daring, route down to the space.

The New York-based Asprea has difficulty exactly defining the scope of this project. "I keep asking if this is a house or an estate, maybe it's a compound," she notes, outlining that in addition to the seven-bedroom residence, she also worked on the property's sec-

ondary building, sports court, and detached garage with an apartment. "Whatever this is, she's a big and beautiful girl," she says with the playfulness of an Alice in Wonderland. Asprea, however, was undaunted by the scale of the house, the biggest residential project she has taken on to date, since she worked for years designing lobbies of gleaming Manhattan skyscrapers. "Because I know how to design spaces on that scale, I knew what to do here with some of the two-story-high spaces, notably the living room and the primary bedroom."



Tanner White, the architect for the house, acknowledges, too, the scale of the dwelling, saying, "At the core of the design is a double-height living room, anchored by a glass bridge linking the two wings of the house. Floor-to-ceiling windows spanning two full stories frame elevated views of the surrounding grounds, creating a powerful indoor-outdoor connection."

Among the most conspicuous elements that Asprea designed in response to the house's scale are the lighting fixtures, each custom-made and distinctive in the light they emit. "The right lighting can create an evocative, romantic glow, which can make any space, of any scale, comfortable and intimate," she emphasizes. For the living room, which melds with a dining area, Asprea commissioned a chandelier composed of a galaxy of handblown glass orbs. "The electrician was ready to kill me

when he was installing it," she recalls, "because I wanted each strand hung at a certain level to create an overall shape."

For the two-story primary suite, Asprea added rift white oak beams to the ceiling as a way to visually lower the vaulting effect. Warm, creamy, tonal furnishings below, with two inviting seating areas, work to make the space feel, as she describes it, "like the most beautiful, inviting hotel room you've ever been in."

The family is close and like to spend time playing and eating together. In the kitchen, Asprea designed a scalloped banquette able to enfold all of them at a meal. "They really wanted that space to be just for family." The inviting nook is set off in the room not only by the novel seating, but also by the clear-glass lighting globes that hang above. Grayish-blue ceramic tiles and a bold brass stove hood imbue the room with added color and texture.



**Bedroom Bliss** (THIS PAGE) A seating area in the vaulted primary suite is furnished with a pair of Coral armchairs by Paolo Castelli through the Invisible Collection and a Maddox coffee table from West Elm. The handwoven Snow Silk rug is from Landry & Arcari. **Office Spaces** (OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM) A glass wall provides privacy and transparency for his office furnished with a Fendi Casa armchair, a Polo floor lamp by CB2, a Delphi leather desk chair by Dania and a custom desk. A Lucien Parchment desk from RH is at the center of her office, and Asprea designed the area rug, which was fashioned by Edward Fields. See Resources.





**Fun House** (LEFT TO RIGHT ACROSS SPREAD) A custom slide by Evans and Paul that leads to the home's lower-level bar is illuminated with a Tracer Loop chandelier from Luke Lamp Co., while wall-mounted metal animals from the Eric + Eloise Collection complement Creatures of the Night wallpaper from Zak + Fox. Bar stools from Jarrett Furniture provide seating at the bar, and hand-applied Venetian plaster walls are by Omar Yacoub. Furnishings in the lower-level lounge include a modular sectional from Article, a Litho armchair through Pierre Frey, and pool and Ping Pong tables from Blatt Billiards. See Resources.



Because some rooms alternate between being one story or double height, Asprea was careful to establish a contrast in mood wherever needed. Situated near the entrance is the male client's office, defined by a beveled glass wall, through which is visible a chic Fendi chair and handsome navy-hued millwork. The room stands out, too, because of Asprea's addition of ceiling beams that reference coffering. "I wanted there to be a heavier architectural detailing, to introduce a linear language, as a way to lower that ceiling and make the room more intimate, especially since the tall two-story living room is just beyond." Adds Tanner White, "The expansive open volumes allowed

for a level of transparency and flow not typically seen in traditional construction."

While Alice was wowed by the world she fell into, this family continues to revel in their new home. They were treated to a full design reveal only after Asprea's work was complete. "I like to emotionally curate a house," the designer notes with philosophical gravity, "to have a room reflect the way a family wants to live in it."

After staying away for weeks during the final installation of items, the clients were "allowed in" by Asprea. As she recalls, "With every door we opened, they experienced yet another emotional connection to their new home." ❁

