

# Estate in “The Woods”

Upper Montclair home has welcomed generations of achievers

WRITTEN BY **CINDY SCHWEICH HANDLER** PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF **VISUAL MARKETING & DESIGN**



**F**rom the beginning, 205 Fernwood Ave. has been home to people with big plans. According to Montclair township historian Mike Farrelly, it was built around 1900 on a lot sold by Timothy Sellow, who owned the surrounding land and carved it into Inwood, Norwood and the other streets comprising “the woods” section of Upper Montclair. James Stephens, a mill owner and manufacturer of silk ribbons, lived in the house with his wife Anna in 1910; when he died, Anna remained there and married a circuit court judge.

Fast forward to its most recent owners, the president of a New York ad agency and a former producer for comedian Jerry Seinfeld. They brought a “hip” sensibility to the 5,536-square-foot space, says Bob Bailey-Lemansky (Keller Williams Suburban Realty), who co-listed the property with Jacob Lewis (KW NJ Metro Group), and sold it during the winter.

The couple painted most of the dark wood paneling and moldings white, and made fun yet elegant design choices. It’s no wonder the house has been chosen as the setting for many TV commercials, including a recently-shot Verizon ad featuring celebrity chef Bobby Flay.



## RETREAT AND RECREATION

(Top) The sunroom, which runs along the right side of the home, is nearly 30 feet long — enough room to put together two long narrow tables formerly owned by Jerry Seinfeld. Two factors contribute to the room’s brightness: the walls of windows, and the painted moldings, which were formerly dark like the ones in the family room outside its French doors. (Above) Two views of the family room show the dark stained wood that formerly ran throughout the house. Looking toward the street, an air hockey table is at center. The built-in cases along the wall lead to a fireplace, seen in the image at left. An antique typewriter, one of many in the home, sits atop the woodwork, near the TV, fireplace and turntable. ➤





**(IN)FORMAL LIVING**

(Opposite) The squarish living room between the sunroom and family room is a spot for spending time together with the kids, working at the computer overlooking the expansive front porch and relaxing with a book. An antique sewing machine rests on the wooden furniture behind the couch. (Top) The staircase is located to the left of the front door and foyer; the homeowners painted the woodwork in the entryway, too. The color above the chair rail continues to the second floor. (Above) The great room, part of which is seen here, was added on to the back of the house, and is open to the casual dining area. An industrial-style trestle runs beneath the ceiling towards the kitchen. >





**MODERN FAMILY**

(Opposite) The dining room, which was designed by New York-based Dianne Cairoli of Dianne Cairoli Interiors, has parquet floors and is accessible from the kitchen through the butler's pantry. The vibe here is whimsical, with Cole and Sons flamingo wallpaper for a fun sensibility, and Christian Lacroix striped wallpaper for a more serious feel. The elegant, pink velvet dining chairs provide a nice juxtaposition to the flamingos and the oversized dining table, which seats 12. In this space as with most of the house, the woodwork has been painted from dark brown stain to white. (Top) The kitchen between the family and great room has radiant heat and Sonos speakers. The wooden floor is hand-laid in a herringbone pattern. (Above) A medallion is set into the wood floor leading from the kitchen to the casual dining area. The glass-fronted cabinets were bumped out somewhat to provide a sense of separation between the cooking and eating area. Above the table, the ceiling trestle runs from the back of the house to the kitchen, and is an anchor to hanging lights. >





**WISH LIST**

(Opposite) The primary bedroom was also designed by Dianne Cairoli. "The family wanted the bedroom to feel more natural, textured and cozy, but still feel modern and elegant," she says. To achieve that, Cairoli created a built-in seating area with a big, plush cushion and pillows by the windows to allow for cozy reading time. Wallpaper from the Phillip Jeffries "Wish" line in "negative" covers the main wall; the homeowners love vintage photography, says Cairoli, and this image creates a backdrop that looks more like an art installation. The modern furniture combines textures including lacquer and wood, mixed with natural fabrics. The chandelier brings to mind a bunch of grapes.

(Top) The third floor office is also a lounge-sitting room where the ad agency president liked to create artwork. The third floor has its own entrance and interior staircase at the back of the house. (Above) The dressing room in the primary suite has a marble-topped center island and washer-dryer combo, a feature the couple called "a game changer." ■