



left "Imagine that Corbusier had come over in the 1930s, found this piece of property and built a modern structure and just left it there. That's the feel that we were going for, not necessarily contemporary but more of a modern house," says architect Rodolfo Castro about this two-story treasure. A combination of Georgia granite and oversized concrete bricks adds interest to the exterior layers. *below* A tray ceiling designed by Castro and Belding adds architectural interest to the dining room. A chandelier from Circa Lighting hangs above the homeowner's Stickley table, Montresor buffet and Chion chairs by Jiun Ho, available through R. Hughes. Malayer Persian rug, Sullivan Fine Rugs. Quartz crystal by Ron Dier, available through Jerry Pair & Associates.



OUTSIDE
the
BOX

ARCHITECT
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 THE COMPLEX TASK
 OF MELDING
 CONTEMPORARY
 ARCHITECTURE
 WITH WARM AND
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Written by Elizabeth Ralls Photographed by Erica George Dines



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—THREE YEARS AGO,

Edward Belding was enlisted by a contractor to manage the interior specifications for a traditional two-story house to be constructed on an acre-and-a-half lot in Brookhaven. But it wasn't long before the interior designer started to see a disconnect between the type of house the homeowners envisioned—"green," seamless connection to the outdoors and retirement-friendly—and the house being drawn. After the homeowners determined they were looking for a more modern vernacular, Belding called on former Summerour Architects colleague Rodolfo Castro to go back to the drawing board and design a contemporary home uniquely suited to the couple's passions and needs.

Both accomplished doctors and avid birders, the pair fell in love with a piece of property north of Buckhead that was once a nursery, but now home to a derelict ranch and overgrown trees. But that sort of natural, grown-wild environment was exactly what the homeowners wanted: a place where they could not only attract, protect and feed birds, but also take out their binoculars in any room in the house to catch them in action. Castro, landscape architect John Howard and builder

Belding enlisted metalsmith Charles Calhoun to custom design a fireplace surround in the family room. A slab of stone is encased in a unique steel frame that widens as it nears the wall of windows. Wide walnut planking by Skylar Morgan softens the space and adds warmth to the walls. Turn-around swivel club chairs, Coup d'Etat through R Hughes. Sultanabad Persian, Sullivan Fine Rugs. Roman Ring floor lamp, Alison Berger Glassworks through Holly Hunt Lighting at Jerry Pair. Aspen firewood bucket, Tuell and Reynolds through R Hughes. Petrified wood, Chip & Co. through R Hughes. Onyx bowls through Jerry Pair.



left A pair of tufted velvet Coup d'Etat swivel chairs graces the living room. *below* Landscape architect John Howard collaborated with architect Rodolfo Castro and builder Geoff Duncan to site the house in such a way that its steep lot, about one and a half acres, could accommodate a walk-out backyard with a pool, terrace and a generous amount of green space. The homeowners, both avid birders, worked with the Atlanta Audubon Society to certify their backyard as a registered wildlife sanctuary. *opposite* The library is dark, cozy and handsome and filled with the homeowners' personal treasures, including baskets from their travels to Botswana. A paneled wall with a painting by Georgia artist Bill Turner opens to reveal a Murphy bed. Skull lamp by Blackman Cruz, available through R Hughes. The Turkish rug is from Sullivan Fine Rugs. Nesting tables and antique leather chairs with nail-head trim, Nicholson Gallery.



Geoff Duncan helped the couple fulfill that dream by the way they sited the house on its steep lot, leaving the backyard—nearly three-quarters of an acre—completely natural. And following the project's completion, the homeowners were able to establish their land as a certified wildlife sanctuary with the Atlanta Audubon Society.

Aside from designing the house in tune with its environment, one of Castro's main objectives was to design a "forever" house—one that would not only act as a luxurious retreat for its well-traveled homeowners, but also suit their needs as they, and members of their family, aged. In the cozy and compact library, for instance, a wall panel conceals a Murphy bed, while an adjacent bathroom is ADA-compliant.

Inside, it was also important that the interiors not look or feel like a stark-white modern box; that's where Belding's interior expertise and black book transformed the residence's sleek architectural bones into a home even die-hard tradi-





The kitchen, which boasts ample storage space both beneath the island and on either side of the integrated hood, opens to the family room and breakfast area. The statuary slab on the backsplash reveals a small recessed niche for key ingredients and utensils.



tionalists would love. Take the living room, for instance, where a steel-framed slab of marble fashions a one-of-a-kind mantel and fireplace surround on a planked walnut wall. But its dimension is deceiving: the steel frame widens from three inches to five the closer it gets to the window. That walnut-steel motif is repeated in the master bedroom, where Belding again enlisted metal artist Charles Calhoun and furniture designer Skylar Morgan to design an oversized headboard—which nearly reaches the ceiling—to soften the room’s volume.

With the exception of the library, Belding painted the interior walls Pratt & Lambert Shadow Beige, a neutral that adds color without overpowering. And, while you won’t find many casings or moldings in this modern home, the designer added interest (and elegance) to the dining room in the form of a tray ceiling. But beyond his injections of custom-designed warmth, it’s Belding’s selections of comfortable, conversation-inducing pieces that not only cushions its modern vernacular, but also make this 4,000-square-foot home as comfortable for two as it is for twenty. **SEE RESOURCES, BACK OF BOOK.**



above To soften the volume of the master bedroom, Belding enlisted Skylar Morgan and Charles Calhoun to design a massive walnut headboard encased in steel. Custom side tables by Skylar Morgan Furniture and Design (SMFD), Bollicina lamps, Donghia, Shirvan Russian rug, Sullivan Fine Rugs. The bed linens are by Libeco, available through Nicholson Gallery. **opposite** A large window in the master bath allows natural light to flood the sybaritic space throughout the day.