

# Sedate home rejuvenated into nighttime house

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Photos: CHARLIE KIDD

It was a pleasant home on a quiet street in a Troy subdivision until an innovative interior designer and a forward-looking husband and wife team decided to make some dramatic changes.

These young homeowners both work, so their house needed to come alive in the evenings when they came home to relax and enjoy it.

J.L. Hudson interior designer Gary Vermeulen likes to call it his "nighttime house." The challenge was to create a contemporary atmosphere with an understated elegance that included all kinds of original art, textures, colors and fabrics that displayed well under artificial light plus

built-in options for entertaining.

SINCE A great deal of the couple's entertaining is done during the summer, Vermeulen took particular concern with entertainment areas for lazy summer evenings.

A sliding glass door at the rear of the living-dining room area opened onto a small balcony which overlooked the tree-filled backyard from one floor up. The home is a split level. The living area on the upper level includes kitchen, dining and living rooms and bedroom wing. The ground level is a recreation area.

The problem with the small balcony off the dining room, besides its small size, was that it didn't go anywhere—no steps down to the backyard, no way to get to it except through the dining room.

Vermeulen and his clients immediately saw the potential. Together they drew up plans for a two level deck as large as the indoor living and dining area combined. They hired a carpenter who could see immediately what they had in mind and the results were beyond all expectations.

The homeowner now smilingly refers to the natural wood finish, two-level deck as "our summer resort!" and his wife adds "or our tree house."

A stand of tall oaks and hickory trees create the tree house atmosphere. The deck's upper level seems to be suspended among them. The trees provide both beauty and privacy for

the setting. The three wide steps between the deck's levels offer added

seating area when the homeowners invite a crowd for an informal cook-out. Built-in seats around the edges of the deck add extra space for guests. The deck is situated so that the lower level is sunny in the morning and the upper level gets the sun in the late afternoon.

Deck chairs with a chocolate brown fabric, Indian batik prints and two huge hand-woven grain baskets from India carry the feeling of the interior out of doors.

TO DIMINISH THE IMPACT of the high ceilings in the living-dining area and to downplay the non-removable rough hewn ceiling beams, the walls, ceiling and beams were painted a soft plum brown. The wall which extends through both rooms is papered in an Indian leather strapwork pattern, black, off-white and mauve that bor-

ders on brown. The carpeting, taupe brown, is very close to the shade of the plain walls and ceiling. An off-white sectional in the living room is complemented by a large, square striped pine coffee table in country English style. A rattan sofa, really a companion piece to the sectional, is covered in a linen Indian batik print in mauve, brown and off-white.

It is in the many pieces of original art—wall hangings, ceramics, paintings and sculpture—that the color accents come through.

A dozen handwoven pillows, each different, and a hand loomed throw add textural contrasts to the sectional. A large coral to deep pink abstract painting over the sectional takes on a vital, vibrant quality under the discreetly placed track lights.

Table and floor lamps are all on

dimmers so the mood of the home can be changed quickly from bright and cheery to seductively soft.

Open weave linen drapes in the living and dining rooms assure nighttime privacy without obliterating the outdoor beauty of the trees.

This home has a strong individual identity, reflecting the busy, modern-minded people who live there.

The well appointed deck is an ideal setting for summer entertaining in the evening or a Sunday morning brunch for two.

The play of colors and textures, the original art with its touches of brilliance, the carefully planned lighting, all go together to make this nighttime house a delightful retreat that could be in the middle of a big city, in the north woods or in a pleasant subdivision—for instance, in Troy.



A pink abstract painting over the sectional gives a vibrant quality to the living room. (Staff photograph by Charlie Kidd)



The two-level deck off the dining room became a "summer resort."

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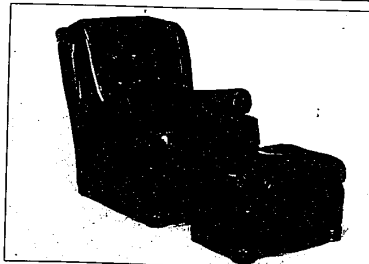
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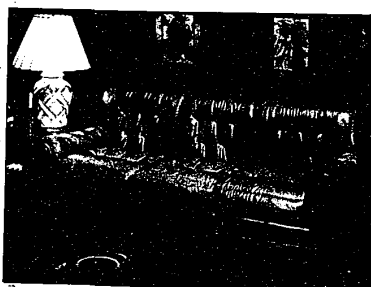
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