

IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

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Above the living room fireplace is a 400-pound bronze sculpture, derived from Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic design in the Hotel Geneva and fabricated by Eureka Forge.

Custom-designed, this magnificent Wildwood residence integrates “the best of Frank Lloyd Wright” with its natural surroundings.

Native grasses line the winding drive and sway in the near-three-digit heat. A sunburst of black-eyed Susan daisies backs to the dense forest encircling the residence. With its low profile, all-stone exterior, gently sloping rooflines and cantilevered terraces, the 7,200-square-foot structure harmonizes beautifully with its glorious setting.

An unobtrusive walkway leads to the recessed entrance, which is marked by a massive cut-limestone lintel and a spectacular art glass window – instantly recognizable as Frank Lloyd Wright’s renowned Lake Geneva Tulip pattern. Stepping through the “hidden” entry door, there’s virtually no sense of transition, except for the now-pleasant temperature. Vast banks of windows bathe the spaces in natural light and blur the distinction between indoors and outdoors. Twelve-foot ceilings, raised still higher in certain areas, enhance the spatial volume. Interior walls are blanketed with the same natural Missouri limestone as the exterior, and rich-hued white oak flooring and millwork provide a warm contrast.

This seamless organic effect is precisely what the homeowners and architect Dick Busch set out to achieve when designing this extraordinary Wright-inspired haven, situated on seven heavily wooded acres in Wildwood.



Now retired, the husband is the former executive of a consumer packaged goods company. “For some time, we’d been looking for a secluded, natural setting – a place where we could retreat with family and friends,” he explains. The “boundary-less” property, surrounded by hundreds of acres of wooded parkland, proved ideal and was purchased in 2008.

There was never any question about the architectural styling of the couple’s future sanctuary either. Married for 43 years, they’d lived in five states and raised their family in a variety of traditional homes. “But both of us have always loved the clean, uncluttered lines of Wright’s designs and his use of glass, wood and stone,” says the wife. Over the years, they’d toured and photographed the legendary architect’s residential projects throughout the Midwest, researching and

assembling a comprehensive list of their favorite elements, which they humorously refer to as “the best of Frank Lloyd Wright.”

Similar care went into the owners’ choice of a local architect. After interviewing several, they chose Busch in 2012, and the design process was completed in just four months. With scrupulous attention to preserving the gorgeous terrain, a minimal amount of land was cleared, and the foundation was dug in early 2013. (An interesting side note, 800 truckloads of the rock and dirt removed were transported to the Chesterfield site where the Premium Outlet Mall was under construction.)

Twelve wells, each 180 feet deep, were bored for installation of the three geothermal systems and, under the watchful eye of custom builder Dean Teiber, Teiber Construction Co., the owners’ vision was transformed into reality. “We enjoyed

Opposite page: Designed by custom builder Dean Teiber, all of the home’s white oak cabinetry is built-in and consistent with Wright’s aesthetic principles. *This page:* Set in a freestanding limestone wall, the see-through fireplace separates the dining room from the living room. Geometric patterns accent the ceiling, and a Vortis pendant light is suspended above the dining table.





A dramatic “layered” ceiling tops the sunroom, which adjoins the open-air patio room. The spectacular two-sided fireplace is gas fueled on the interior and wood-burning on the exterior. *This page:* Off the entry foyer, the vestibule soars to 30 feet. On the far wall is a Kit Hevron Mahoney painting, commissioned by the homeowners to reflect the wildflowers and grasses native to the property.



working with Dean on this project,” the husband says. “He and his team’s work are outstanding. Plus, the workmen loved the serenity here, and they hated to leave.” But by July of 2014, the home was ready for move-in.

Although fully open, the main-level activity areas are well-defined and flow artfully from one to another. Wright’s design principles dominate the interior, with finely-crafted banding and clerestory windows emphasizing the horizontal lines and natural materials establishing continuity. Through walls of glass, every space provides a different view, and the built-in custom cabinetry designed by Teiber, shelving and trimwork are all quarter-sawn or rift-cut white oak, often laid in distinctive geometric patterns.

Seven imposing fireplaces, all variations of Wright designs, are located in various areas throughout the home. The pièce de résistance, however, is a see-through fireplace set in the freestanding limestone wall that anchors and separates the living and dining rooms. Surmounting the living room mantel is a dazzling, semi-circular, 400-pound bronze sculpture, derived from Wright’s iconic fireplace in the Hotel Geneva and superbly fabricated by Eureka Forge.

Open to the living/dining area, the spacious island kitchen — a 2016 Platinum award winner by Gegg Design & Cabinetry, featured in SLHL’s January issue — is the one notable departure from typical Wright floor plans. “Wright’s designs didn’t focus on kitchens,” the husband quips. “In his era, kitchens weren’t as important as they are today, and he focused more on the dining rooms.” Nevertheless, this kitchen incorporates the same authentic Prairie-style design elements and natural materials as the rest of



A tranquil retreat in every season, the library emulates the home's scenic surroundings with natural materials, panoramic views, and wildlife paintings by Ryan Kirby. A Hubbardton Forge Cavaletti pendant fixture lights the fireside reading area.



Opposite page: As luxurious as the interior, the patio room features an oak plank ceiling, Brazilian ipe wood furnishings, and decorative concrete flooring. *Left:* Abundant windows provide a different view from every space in the residence. *Right:* The “hidden” entry door is flanked by an exquisite art glass window, an authentic reproduction of Wright’s Lake Geneva Tulip pattern, licensed and created by Oakbrook Essex Studios.



the home, with simple bronze hardware, granite surfaces, a hammered bronze range hood and minimalist oak cabinetry concealing the appliances and pantry entrance.

Plants flourish in the light-filled sunroom, which features a unique “layered” wood ceiling that Teiber designed in collaboration with the homeowners, limestone walls and textured stone floor tiles. Highlighted by a geometric pattern in wood, the majestic stone fireplace is actually two-sided, gas fueled in the sunroom and wood-burning in the adjacent, open-air patio room.

In spite of the heat, a tour of the patio room is irresistible. Overlooking the expansive pool deck, this outdoor entertainment space is as luxurious as the interior, with an oak plank ceiling, decorative concrete flooring and streamlined

Brazilian ipe wood furniture.

Returning to the foyer, the vestibule soars dramatically to 30 feet, with classic 9-lite windows lighting the clerestory. Off the foyer, the library showcases another full-height limestone fireplace and the only two pieces of representational art in the home. Both are commissioned paintings – deer and a red fox by wildlife artist Ryan Kirby – again, bringing the outdoors inside. Or for a breath of fresh air, a cantilevered terrace is accessible from the library and offers spectacular treetop views of the surrounding landscape.

The owners’ privacy suite is also located in this wing; a guest suite in the opposing wing completes the main-floor layout; and two additional bedrooms are provided on the finished lower level.

Consistent with Wright’s interior design philosophy, all of the furnishings were acquired specifically for this home and are clean-lined, predominantly earth-toned and meticulously chosen to complement and focus attention on the architectural aesthetics. Similarly authentic, Oakbrook Esser Studios, working in partnership with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, was licensed to reproduce the Tulip pattern featured in the art glass entry window, kitchen, and stately entrance gates.

Subtle yet sensational, this brilliantly designed residence is as integral to its environment as the towering trees and lush foliage – a sublime refuge for the owners and a worthy tribute to one of America’s most influential architects.

■ See www.stlouisshomesmag.com for resources and additional photos.