

The Kutchman house feels modern while still being warm and inviting.

LAIID-BACK Luxury

BY DYLAN ROCHE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE BUCHANAN

Combining West Coast-style luxury with Chesapeake flair, the home of Anna and Steve Kutchman goes against expectations in many ways—and that’s exactly why the architecture and design work so well. With four floors and lots of open space, it feels much bigger on the inside than its footprint would suggest, and its California vibes work well against the sweeping view of the South River, where many of the waterfront homes have a more traditional style.

“We knew we wanted modern but not cold. We wanted something that was modern but warm,” Anna Kutchman says. “But we had no idea what that exactly would look like. We were just so interested in something that was young and fun and different and reflected how we live.”

The team creating the home—including architect Cathy Purple Cherry, builder Tony DeSimone, and interior designer Polly Offutt—understood the Kutchmans’ vision and knew exactly how to bring it to life. Still, there were other challenges to consider, namely the sloping hill and the site constraints, which made it an “incredibly difficult piece of property,” according to Cherry.

“The hills defined what we could do in terms of maximizing floor area,” Cherry says. “That informs the shape of the architecture, and then your job as an architect is to beautifully embellish it and actually make it feel fantastic.” Specifically, the slope meant the house would be rectangular with a footprint of approximately 35 feet by 70 feet.





The main living area boasts a sweeping view of the South River.



The flat roof provides space for a relaxing deck.

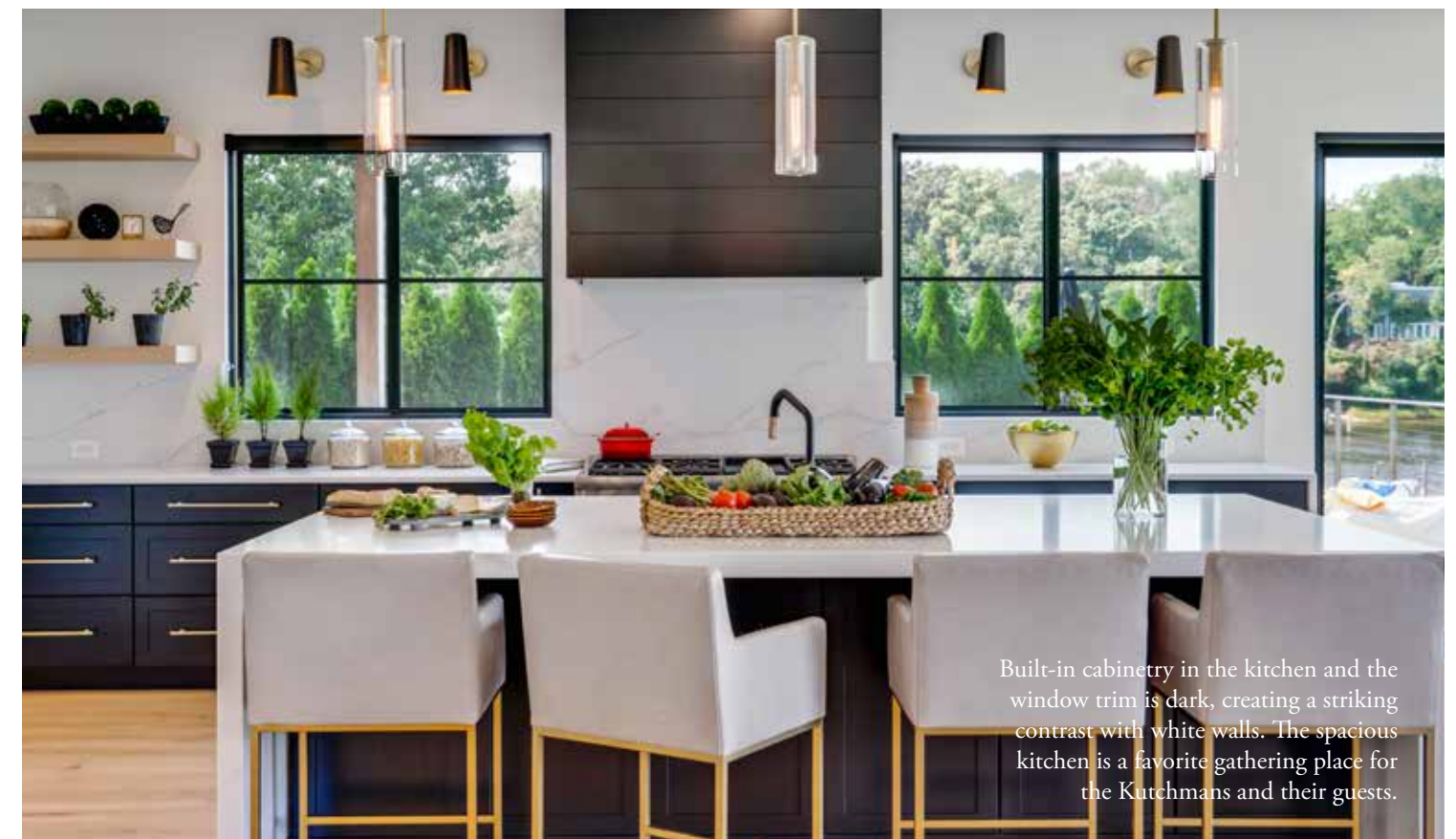
But with four floors, the home boasts more than 5,700 square feet of living space. The front door opens into the lowest level, where floating stairs lead from the foyer into the main living space on the second floor. “We felt very strongly about placing the staircase on the corner because of the large-scale glass and its ability to stream natural light through the rest of the house. That was important to us,” Cherry explains.

Up the floating stairs—a combination of steel fabricated by Bay Metals and wooden treads by Beers Flooring—are the open kitchen, dining, and living areas overlooking the pool deck, the yard, and, of course, the river. It’s a place that lends itself to relaxed living and endless entertaining. A butler pantry sits off the kitchen, along with a bar and a serving window, making it easy to pass drinks and other refreshments from inside to the pool without anyone having to come in through the house. Outside, along the side of the pool deck, a wall of greenery installed by McHale Landscape Design provides privacy, “as if you’re transported to another world,” says senior landscape architect Matt Rhoderick.

The interior design makes use of minimal color and lots of neutral tones to achieve a calming effect while still creating plenty of interest. “It’s nice and peaceful, but there are still striking things like the concrete fireplace,” Offutt says. “And the built-ins and cabinets in the kitchen, butler’s pantry, and living room are all black, so they pop out.”



The reclaimed wood dining room table adds interest to the interior design. As in the kitchen, window trim is dark with white and neutral furnishings, creating a calm unity between the two spaces.



Built-in cabinetry in the kitchen and the window trim is dark, creating a striking contrast with white walls. The spacious kitchen is a favorite gathering place for the Kutchmans and their guests.



Floating stairs connect the home's four floors of living space.



A guest house is strategically placed near the main home's front door, ensuring a comfortable space for guests.

Offutt's biggest considerations when designing the interior were the open layout and the sightlines between different spaces, ensuring that everything from the light fixtures to the furniture flowed and looked good together, even if they weren't directly in the same space. "It takes more forethought designing a big open space than with something that has more closed spaces," Offutt explains.

Another space where the water view is maximized is the primary suite on the third floor, where both the bedroom and bathroom look out over the river. With its all-glass shower and double showerheads, hotel lighting, and electric shades that lower and rise with the touch of a button, the primary suite bathroom is the height of luxury—and the room Offutt describes as her favorite. "I like the way it came together with the centered glass-sided shower, the natural stone mixed in with porcelain tiles, and gold brass fixtures that pop out," Offutt says.

Then there's the rooftop deck. Although the Kutchmans and Cherry briefly discussed having a gabled roof, they knew this house would be flat on top to accommodate a walk-out deck off the fourth floor. Because the Brazilian hardwood decking lays in easy-to-disassemble pieces, any roof replacement that needs to be done in 20 years or further in the future can be easily accomplished.

And for any out-of-towners visiting for an extended stay, the property has a guest house just a few steps away from the front door. "It feels like the main house, but even softer and cozier," Anna Kutchman says. "I wanted it light and fresh." With many of the same materials as the main house, including the same hardwood floors, but on a smaller scale, the guest house feels like a cottage on the beach—and like the main house, it even has the water view.

Although Anna and Steve agree that the process presented its fair share of challenges, it was ultimately worth it to have the home built for the life they like to live. It's a place where, as they like to put it, you can arrive on a Friday and not have to go anywhere until Monday. It's a home built for fun and sharing memories with friends and family. **AH**

ARCHITECT: Cathy Purple Cherry, Purple Cherry Architects, purplecherry.com, Annapolis, Maryland | BUILDER: Anthony DeSimone, DeSimone Construction, desimoneconst.com, West Deptford, New Jersey, Assistant: Charles Dagenhart | INTERIOR DESIGNER: Polly Offutt, Birdie & Bean Interiors | LANDSCAPE: Matt Rhoderick, McHale Landscape Design, mchalelandscape.com, Upper Marlboro, Maryland

Dylan Roche is a journalist and fiction writer who also works in theater.