

# HOUSES

ARCHITECTURAL CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

## BY DESIGN

CURATED BY JANICE ROHLF





## SCANDINAVIAN FARMHOUSE

Little more than 2300 sq. ft., this home built on the footprint of a 1950s ranch belongs to husband-and-wife professional chefs who frequently cook and entertain at home. In terms of the design and layout, the idea was to have the kitchen—a heavily used space—be a focal point. Another priority was to incorporate hallmarks of Scandinavian-influenced design, such as a steep-pitched roof and a strong indoor-outdoor connection. The wide overhang on the street side deviates from the archetypal Vermont farmhouse front porch, but still offers a warm and welcoming entry. Lined in natural pine, this section of the facade contrasts with the dark exterior, which is black pine that has the look of shou sugi ban (charred wood) at a lower cost. Actual charred wood is used sparingly inside. The simplicity of the open, naturally connected space aligned with the construction budget as well. Large windows are a key part of the design, and their south- and west-facing locations bring in sunshine, warmth, and outside views, especially along the second-floor back deck that provides an extension of indoor living during the warmer months, making the house feel larger than it is. Upstairs, in addition to two bedrooms and a small office, a family room was the solution for taking the TV out of the main living space below.

**Designer** MB architecture + design, [mbarchitectureanddesign.com](http://mbarchitectureanddesign.com)

**Builder** Mountain Builders, [mountainbuildersvt.com](http://mountainbuildersvt.com)

**Location** Middlebury, Vt. **Photos** Ryan Bent Photography



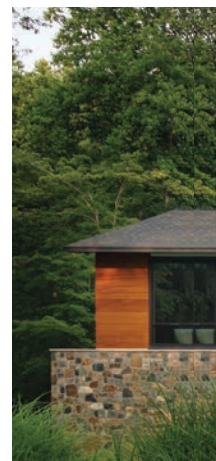
### GABLE WALL OF GLASS

Created for clients desiring a California-modern aesthetic, this 3870-sq.-ft. home has a sweeping gabled roof that contrasts with its clean exterior lines and defines a 20-ft.-high glass wall that gives the house a feeling of openness and outdoor connection. The exterior consists of natural stone, stucco, wood, and windows that fill the interior with light and space. A succession of stone walls extend from the hillside, connecting the home to its surroundings and delineating distinct zones within the landscape and outdoor living areas. Pieces of the clients' art collection, gathered over a lifetime, were carefully selected and integrated both indoors and out, making the art part of the house itself. The overall layout was conceived as a single-level dwelling where the occupants could easily move about and age in place, with a lower level dedicated largely to mechanicals. The primary suite, including a small, private living room that can also open up and connect to the communal space, flanks one side of the main living space, with the guest rooms hidden away on the opposite. This provides separation and privacy while leading everyone back to the central, airy, courtyard-style family room that connects inhabitants with each other and the landscape around them.

**Architect** Carib Daniel Martin Architecture + Design, [caribdanielmartin.com](http://caribdanielmartin.com)

**Builder** Classic Homes of Maryland, [classichomesofmaryland.com](http://classichomesofmaryland.com)

**Location** Potomac, Md. **Photos** Peak Visuals







### MINIMALIST DESIGN IN A RURAL SETTING

A married couple, both architects, built themselves an energy-efficient home with office space that has a deep connection to nature. Because of the woodland context, they approached the design simply and modestly, using local materials such as milled hemlock from their 43 acres of land for the frame, exterior siding, main stair treads, and catwalk floor. Interior boards of eastern white pine milled in a neighboring town are finished in a white-pigmented linseed oil with zero VOCs. The 2000-sq.-ft., three-floor home and office with a simple rectangular shape and basic roofline benefits from the efficiency of building up instead of out. There are three bedrooms and two full baths (plus a bathtub in the primary bedroom space). An open floor plan and plenty of windows—some fixed-pane to keep costs down—make the home feel spacious. The 25-ft.-tall living-room ceiling helps too. Triple-glazed windows create an airtight house and their large size allows for both natural lighting and expansive views. The home, which has an HRV and a heat-pump hot-water system, meets Passive House airtightness levels, and unless the family is away, it is primarily heated with the sun—there are 14 solar panels on the south-facing roof—and a wood-burning cookstove. Handsomely minimalist and easy on the environment, the full-time home is a win-win.

**Architect/builder** Eagle Pond Studio, eaglepondstudio.com  
**Location** Wilmot, N.H.  
**Photos** Jared McKenna



