

IN THIS ISSUE... MARTHA SCHWARTZ, ANTOINE PREDOCK, THE BEST NEW FURNITURE AND LIGHTING FROM MILAN

DESIGN ARCHITECTURE ART

# AZURE

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## WORK IT BABY! SHINY NEW DESIGNS DAZZLE MILAN

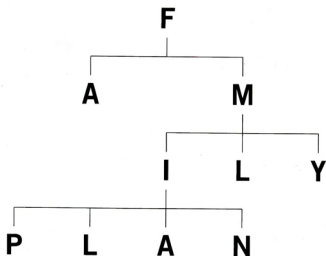
MARTHA  
SCHWARTZ  
BREAKS GROUND  
TALKING TACOMA  
WITH ANTOINE  
PREDOCK  
ARCHITECTURE  
WITH FINNS



US/CAN \$5.95



PLUS  
PLUGGED-IN  
LIGHTING FROM  
EUROLUCE



A young designer's ambitious collaboration with Mom and Dad becomes a unique exploration of modern living, family style.

By Kelvin Browne  
Photography by Jonathan Savoie

Having parents as clients may have moved Le Corbusier, Charles Moore, and perhaps most memorably, Robert Venturi toward some of their most inspired design. However, Keely Colcleugh did not expect to end up having that in common with the trio of celebrated architects when her parents came to visit her in San Francisco. Three years ago she was working as an intern architect for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill: "I was surprised," she remembers. "Suddenly, they were talking about building a new house and they wanted me to design it.

"My brother and I weren't living at home any more and it made sense for my parents to downsize," Colcleugh explains. "But it became more than that. As we explored design directions, they became enthusiastic students of contemporary architecture. And so we pushed the plans further from the traditional style of the house they were in the process of selling."



**LOOKING THROUGH** the transparent corner of the kitchen's sitting area (top) to master-bedroom-and-library wing, interior and exterior meld. Floor-to-ceiling windows are reminiscent of Philip Johnson's Glass House in Connecticut. **KEELY COLCLEUGH** (bottom left) by the entry. **ENTRY GARDEN** (bottom centre) functions as vestibule. Inside, one is immediately aware of the bold scale and soaring ceiling height. **FROM THE STREET**, the house (bottom right) is enigmatic, but the interplay of rooflines and garden wall, plus glimpses of the interior, keep it from seeming austere.





**FROM THE ENTRY**, one side of the living room (left) forms a gallery that runs from library to master bedroom. **A BASEMENT BATHROOM** (top centre), has concrete countertop and a steam shower. **IN THE KITCHEN** (top right), dark-stained wood is a strong contrast with stainless-steel fixtures and light colour palette. **THE LIVING ROOM** (bottom) is the natural hub of the house and connects visually to the adjacent garden area – enclosed on three sides – and to a terraced garden and the river beyond. Furnishings have been kept simple to accentuate the sense of openness.



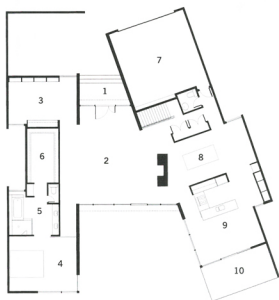
The Colecleughs, who live in London, Ontario, had found a remarkable property that terraced down to the Thames River. Their .1-hectare site was in the middle of an established neighbourhood, one of a few lots that became available when a larger parcel was subdivided. Despite the lot's proximity to other homes, views were bucolic, affording a strong sense of being in the midst of nature.

The program for the house sounds like that of a rather grand bungalow. On the ground floor, 250 square metres of space contain all the principal spaces. Living, dining and kitchen areas were designed to flow together, albeit with the kitchen screened from the dining room. The kitchen was planned with room to relax in, even while meals were being prepared. Master bedroom, bath and library, while private, relate easily to public areas. And in the basement, some 185 square metres of finished space include a media room, gym, bathroom (with steam shower) and a pair of guest bedrooms, with ample storage in the remaining unfinished space.

To realize this plan, the house grew two wings – or “bars” as Colcleugh calls them. Each wing presses up against one side of the lot, with a central space, parallel to the river, connecting them. A classic H, except that one side is on a diagonal to accommodate the lot's diminishing width from river to road.

The Colecleughs' living room, with a lofty 3.6-metre ceiling, occupies the central space. Large windows, facing the river on one side and planted entry court on the other, link the room strongly to the outdoors. One side wing contains the kitchen, dining room and garage, and the other, the master bedroom, bath and library. Ceilings in these side wings are 3 metres high, creating a slightly more enclosed feeling.

Colcleugh took inspiration from California modernist and Mies van der Rohe disciple Craig Ellwood. “He strived for openness in his houses, although his spaces still had defined functions,” she explains. “Many of his houses use large areas of glazing so that the interiors open completely to the landscape.” She also cites, as an influence, less flamboyant examples of symbiotic relationships between nature and architecture provided by



COLCLEUGH RESIDENCE – MAIN FLOOR

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 Entrance       | 6 Walk-in closet |
| 2 Living room    | 7 Garage         |
| 3 Library        | 8 Dining area    |
| 4 Master bedroom | 9 Kitchen        |
| 5 Bathroom       | 10 Patio area    |

Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. “I admire how his work fosters a peaceful day-to-day appreciation of living in harmony with nature.”

Concrete panel walls on the exterior become the interior walls of the house with glazing floating in between, and so give the entry courtyard almost the feel of an interior vestibule, an extension of the living room. Inside, vistas align with windows at every turn and draw the eye back outside to the gardens or to views of the river.

There are few doors to be found on the main floor. The translucent glass door of the master bedroom can be slid aside so that the room becomes the termination of the gallery area of the living room. Light ash flooring and a neutral colour palette used throughout the main floor of the house also accentuate the open flow of space. “Details are important to make an open approach work and to ensure that spaces, while simple, are not too severe,” the designer notes.

With enlivening articulation, Colcleugh's wings punch through the connecting central space. The strong diagonal angles of the kitchen's informal sitting area are particularly striking and the bold geometry of wenge-stained mahogany cabinets has a particularly striking effect when you enter from the serene, rectilinear living room. Careful articulation of ceiling heights and coffers also adds a subtle dynamism that dispels any sense of starkness.

As design on her parents' house proceeded, Keely Colcleugh accepted a job with Rotterdam-based architect Rem Koolhaas, working on a project that required time in both Seattle and New York. A few months after her parents' house was finished, in October, 2001, she moved once more – this time to Toronto, where she now works as a designer for Bruce Mau.

As her career advanced, so did her parents' aesthetic, leading to furniture purchases and adventuresome art acquisitions more in keeping with the new house. It is interesting to wonder if Vanna Venturi – whose Pennsylvania home, designed by her architect son, Robert, was an icon of postmodern design – was turned on to contemporary design through a new house as much as Keely Colcleugh's parents seem to have been by theirs. **A**