

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AUTHORITY

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**THE ULTIMATE  
ASPEN SKI LODGE**

**75 EXQUISITE  
GIFTS**

**A RAVISHING  
ST. BARTS VILLA**

**WINTER  
MAGIC**



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Vincent Herbert, CEO of Le Pain Quotidien, and his wife, Laurence Verbeke, enlisted Francis D'Haene of D'Apostrophe Design to renovate their weekend house in Remsenburg, New York. Much of its exterior was replaced with siding salvaged from a 200-year-old Canadian barn. **Opposite:** The interior now features a double-height living area; the sofas are by Living Divani, the chairs and matching side table are vintage Allan Gould from 1stdibs, and the paintings are by Alberto Di Fabio. For details see Sources.



# PURE AND SIMPLE

A Belgian expat couple turns to a longtime friend,  
Francis D'Haene of D'Apostrophe Design, to transform  
their rustic Hamptons home into a minimalist haven





Four years ago Vincent Herbert, CEO of the Belgian bakery chain Le Pain Quotidien, and his wife, Laurence Verbeke, spent a few nights at Hegia, an 18th-century French farmhouse turned bed-and-breakfast in the foothills of the Pyrenees. Hegia is the rare setting where tradition and modernity coexist without contradiction; the thick stone-and-timber walls enclose coolly minimalist rooms, like a pair of brawny overalls with Helmut Lang lining. The mash-up was one the couple could appreciate. Le Pain Quotidien, home to country baguettes and communal tables, also tailors rustic style to a contemporary sensibility.

Not surprisingly, Hegia came to mind a year later when the pair bought a 23-year-old barn-inspired home

in Remsenburg, New York, a low-key Hamptons hamlet, and set about renovating it for laid-back weekends and holidays with their three children. They turned to Francis D'Haene, of D'Apostrophe Design, a Belgian architect based in New York City whom Herbert has known since the two were childhood classmates in Bruges. The friendship has yielded several collaborations: D'Haene previously designed the couple's SoHo loft and two Le Pain Quotidien cafés in Manhattan.

For this project D'Haene began by replacing more than half of the exterior's cedar planks, many of them the worse for wear, with siding salvaged from a 200-year-old Canadian barn, enlivening the façade with a patchwork of silvery grays. (The vertical pattern is handsomely offset by the horizontal one found in the board-formed concrete applied to the new poolhouse and existing garage, the latter enlarged to accommodate a combined yoga studio and media room.)

There was no saving the original interior, a low-ceilinged warren with 1980s-era surfaces. "It was not to my taste," says Verbeke, who imagined the house gutted and remade along the lines of austere rooms by her personal design heroes, John Pawson and Tadao Ando. After a complete rebuild, it essentially has been.

Visitors now step past the rugged cladding to find an immaculate space where white walls meet at crisp angles and floating ceiling panels conceal air ducts. The ascetic 5,300-square-foot setting is enhanced by a spare collection of sculptural furnishings, most notably pendant lights by Tom Dixon, vintage chairs by Allan Gould, and low-slung sofas by Living Divani.

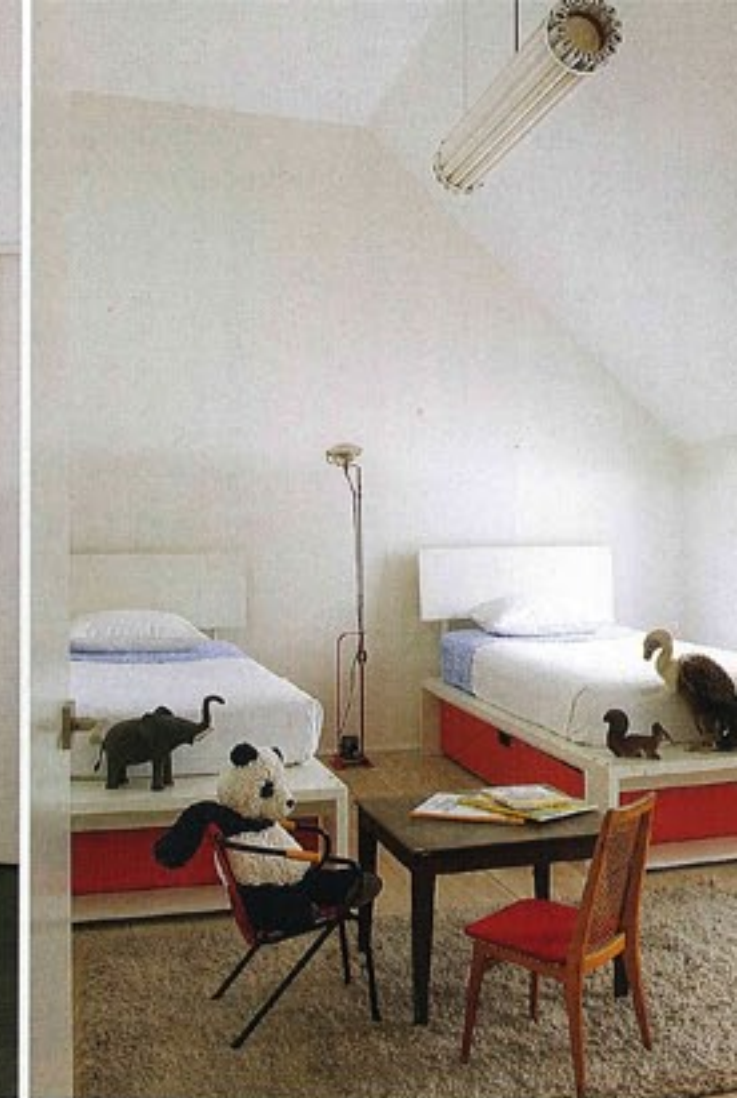
Minimalists tend to favor a rich play of materials over a surfeit of objects. True to that impulse, the homeowners chose a blackened-steel fireplace and a sweep of Douglas-fir flooring, unfinished except for the odd mopping with traditional white soap to bring out the rippled grain of its wide planks. The centerpiece is a staircase with solid balustrades cut back at the landing to reveal the bottom two steps in profile, like a skirt lifted to show off a pair of shoes. "We always knew the stairs would take a central role," D'Haene says. "Once we had them situated, everything fell into place around them." To one side is an all-white kitchen with lacquer cabinetry and a Corian-top island; to the other is a dining area with a walnut banquette and Hans J. Wegner chairs. Three bedrooms occupy the second floor. In a departure from conventional notions of privacy, a Boffi bathtub stands at the foot of the bed in the master suite.

Aside from a group of abstract paintings by Italian artist Alberto Di Fabio and a handful of photographs, the couple has mostly dispensed with art, relying instead on newly installed picture windows to frame views of the outdoors. (Double-hung mullioned windows remain on the front façade.) The kitchen overlooks a Zen garden dotted with dome-shaped evergreens, while the living area takes in a formal, English-inspired landscape.

All minimalism is a form of perfectionism, but perfection may be an unrealistic ambition for a weekend house trafficked by children sporting (depending on the season) snowy boots or sullied tennis shoes. Nonetheless Verbeke sees the home's purity as a boon to efficiency rather than a burden. "There isn't a lot of stuff for the kids to move around," she says. "It's all very easy."

Though the couple never meant to create an exact replica of Hegia, they have captured its spirit by combining old and new. Following winter afternoons outside or games of backgammon, family and friends gather in the kitchen to talk, as pots simmer on the stove. A fire burns in the hearth year-round. Comfort, D'Haene is quick to acknowledge, was always the primary goal. "It's minimalist architecture," he says. "But most important, it has to be a home." □

**Above:** A picture window in the media room/yoga studio frames a view of the outdoors; the chair is vintage Belgian, the speakers are by Proclaim Audioworks, and the Carrara-marble floor tiles are by Studium. **Opposite, from left:** Dinesen wide-plank Douglas-fir floorboards complement the pristine architecture; the lamp is by BDDW. A minimalist fireplace blends into the white walls, while floating panels overhead conceal ductwork; the sculpture is South African, and the rugs are vintage Moroccan.



*Clockwise from top left:* A BDDW bed anchors the open master suite. In a children's room, a Castor light fixture hangs above beds by Duccduc; the floor lamp is by Flos, and the chairs were found at a Paris flea market. The master suite has Belgian bluestone tiles by Studium; the tub and sink are by Boffi. Bisazza tiles line the adjacent powder room, which has a Boffi sink and fittings. *Opposite, from top:* The kitchen cabinetry is Varenna by Poliform; the island is topped with Corian, the range and hood are by Gaggenau, and the stools are by McGuire. In the dining area, Tom Dixon pendant lamps are grouped with Hans J. Wegner Wishbone chairs and a custom-made table and banquette.