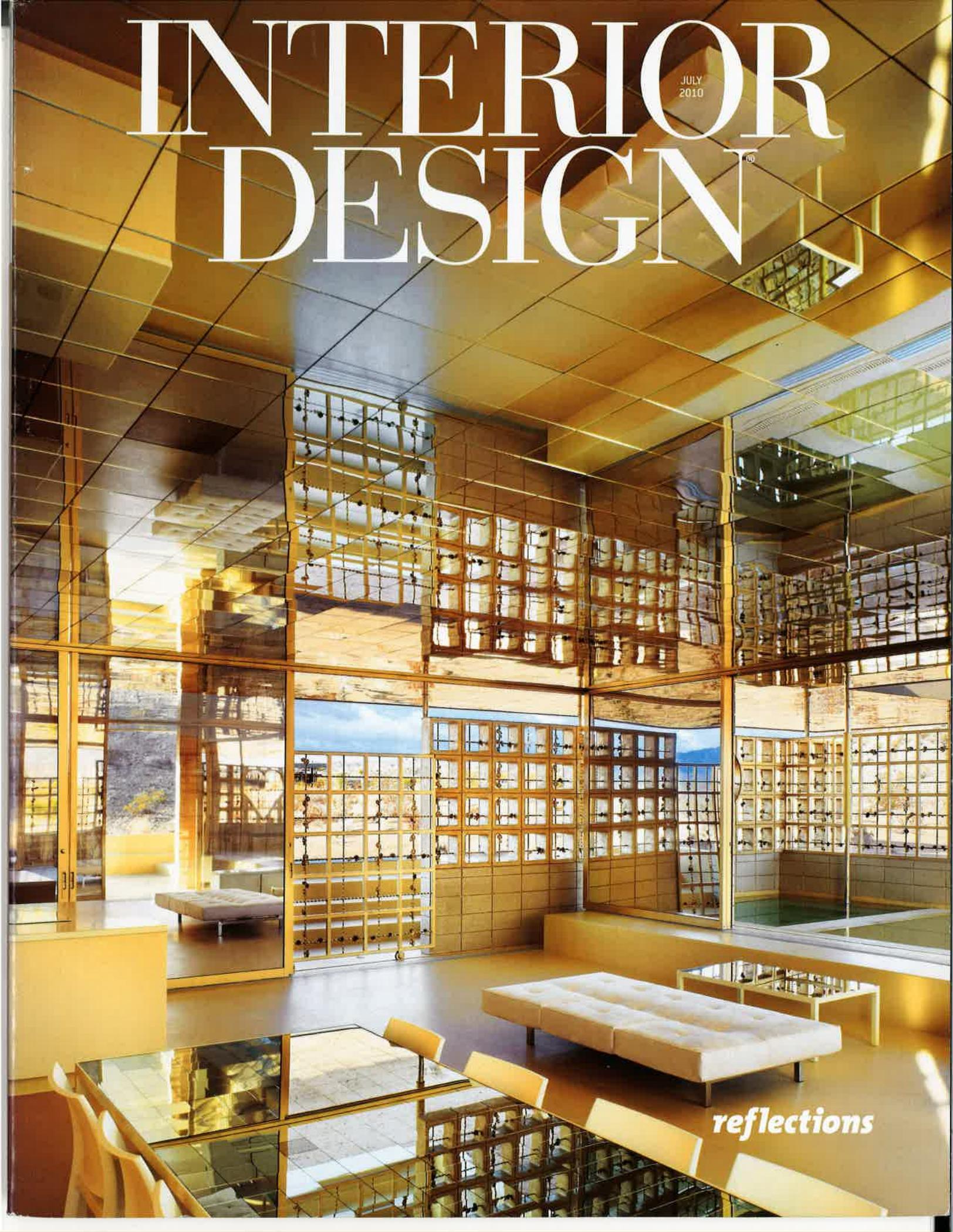


# INTERIOR DESIGN<sup>®</sup>

JULY  
2010

*reflections*

A modern interior space with a ceiling of reflective gold panels and large windows with a grid pattern. The room features a white tufted sofa, a glass table with yellow chairs, and a glass pool area.



text: *Jen Renzi* photography: *Gregory Holm*

# The Un-Hamptons

*Francis D'Haene reinvents his friends' barn-style house in the quiet waterfront hamlet of Remsenburg, New York*

**Francis D'Haene and Vincent Herbert** have come a long way together, both geographically and professionally. They met as sixth-graders in Belgium and now live in New York, where D'Haene, an interior architect, heads up D'Apostrophe Design, and Herbert is the CEO of the Pain Quotidien chain-let, beloved for its organic breads and rustic-modern cafés—of which his childhood pal has designed two. D'Haene is also responsible for the loft Herbert shares with his wife, Laurence Verbeke, and their three children. The latest chapter in this history of friendship and collaboration is a weekend house in Remsenburg, a sleepy hamlet

near the village of Westhampton, New York.

"Before renovating, Vincent and Laurence spent lots of time thinking about how to live in the space and organize it," D'Haene says. He describes the ensuing—and ongoing—conversation as both casual and challenging: "They intelligently questioned everything, like the shape of the staircase or where to place the pool. They were interested in exploring numerous possibilities." In return, Verbeke credits D'Haene with being "open to all our ideas and demands." Those included a strong connection to nature, an open floor plan, a dramatic central staircase, and a sparseness verging on monastic. "I'm a big fan of John Pawson and Tadao Ando," she continues. A farmhouse that she and Herbert once spied in southwestern France provided additional fodder, what D'Haene describes as "a minimalist vocabulary as well as a dialogue between old and new."

In Remsenburg, that dialogue starts from the outside in. To lend patina to the 1980's faux barn, D'Haene replaced sections of ordinary cedar siding with planks salvaged from an actual barn 200 years old. The original cedar remains on a small structure that connects to the expanded garage, which now houses a combined yoga studio and media room in front and two parking spaces in back. This division of functions is reflected on the facade: half cedar and half concrete patterned with horizontal formwork that simultaneously ➤

*Previous spread: D'Apostrophe Design upgraded the exterior of a 1980's barn-style house in Remsenburg, New York, with cedar planks, salvaged from a working barn almost two centuries older, and a double set of custom Dutch floors, the outer ones in mahogany slats and the inner ones in steel-framed glass.*

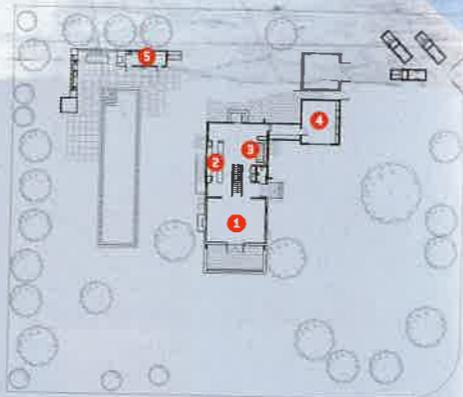
**Top:** The front facade and the connector retain their original windows. **Bottom:** In the double-height living area, a vintage Moroccan rug anchors a Piero Lissoni sectional and a table in steel and walnut.

**Opposite:** Both the floorboards and the staircase's treads and risers are Douglas fir.





*Opposite:* Aluminum framed side doors open to a concrete terrace and steps down to the garden.  
*This page:* Existing beams were enlarged by cladding them in oak salvaged from a 300-year-old Canadian barn.



- 1 LIVING AREA
- 2 KITCHEN
- 3 DINING AREA
- 4 YOGA STUDIO/MEDIA ROOM
- 5 POOL HOUSE



reflects and contrasts with the barn's silvery verticals. (D'Haene used the same concrete treatment for the new pool house.) On all but the front facade and one side of the connector, he replaced original mullioned windows with plain glass and, he says, "the simplest aluminum frames we could find." The intention was to unite the interior with the garden. "We played up the views instead of hanging a lot of art," he explains. Indeed, the living area's series of abstract acrylics are the sole paintings in the public spaces.

While the exterior balances old with new, D'Haene treated the 5,300-square-foot interior to a more radical overhaul. He demolished walls to establish a loftlike sweep culminating in a double-height living area, where a staircase with balustrades folded like origami ascends to three bedrooms. The balustrades' white-painted drywall angles back sharply at the bottom, exposing the lower two steps' open-sided treads and risers of Douglas fir, also used for the 1-foot-wide floor planks. In addition to serving as a statement piece, the stair visually separates the white-lacquered kitchen from a dining area enlivened by a Tom Dixon pendant fixture's playful trio of different brass shades. ➔

**Opposite top:** Floor tile in the combined yoga studio and media room is Carrara marble. **Opposite bottom, from left:** The living area's acrylic-painted panels by Alberto Di Fabio face a 1950's table and chairs by Allan Gould. A 72-foot infinity-edge lap pool and a concrete pool house were added to the 1-acre property.

**Top:** Another flight of stairs descends to the playroom and guest suite in the basement. **Bottom:** In the dining area, Tom Dixon's pendant fixtures hang above Hans Wegner's chairs and a custom table and banquettes in American walnut.



Sobriety returns uninterrupted in the airy living area, a study in minimalism. To one side, the only upholstered seating, a white sectional by Piero Lissoni, faces a planar fireplace of blackened steel. The other side is empty except for a pair of 1950's chairs in steel and cord and a matching table with a cord top. "We asked Francis to put the emphasis on spare volumes instead of furniture. With the beautiful stairs, the focus is on the architecture," Verbeke explains. A baseboard reveal makes the walls appear to float. The detail serves a practical purpose as well, allowing D'Haene to sink electrical outlets out of view. He likewise hid the air-conditioning ducts above floating ceiling panels. Between them pass original beams that he considered too

skimpy as is. To bulk them up, he sourced antique oak barn siding 1 inch thick and applied it like veneer on three sides. Fixtures installed on top of the beams wash the ceiling with a halogen glow.

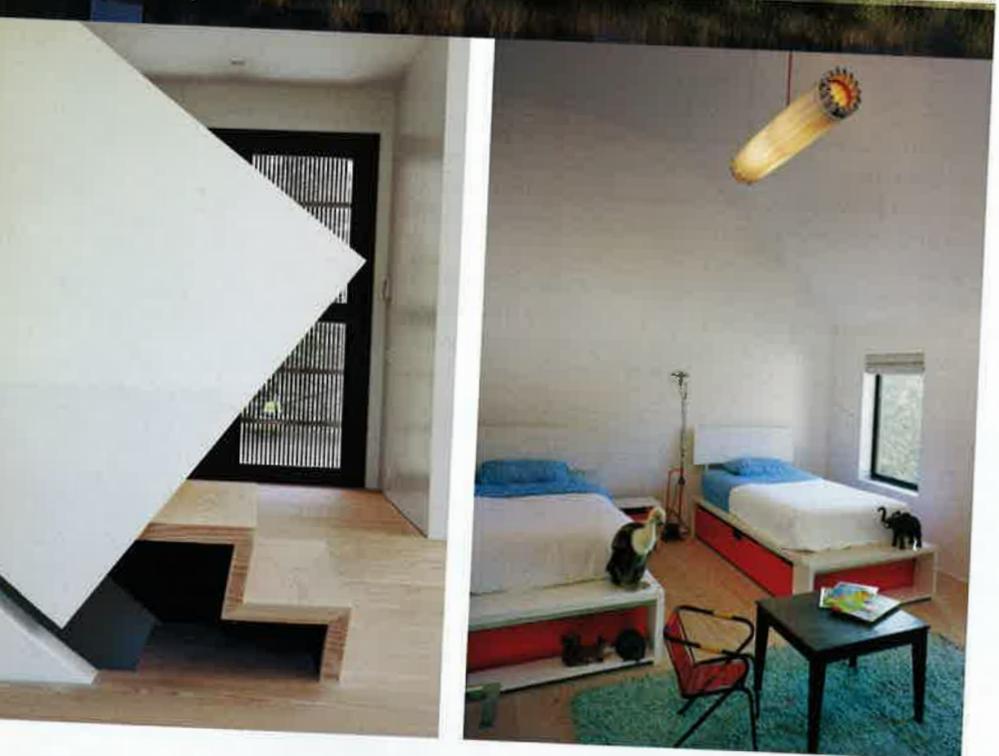
The calm continues in other parts of the house. Carrara marble floor tile stays cool when yoga is in session in the expanded garage, and built-in shelving corrals clutter, allowing the rest of the space to breathe. In the bathing area of the open-plan master suite, flooring is the quietest of inside jokes. It's bluestone from D'Haene, Herbert, and Verbeke's native Belgium.

#### PROJECT TEAM

**KEVIN ESTRADA** (PROJECT ARCHITECT); **OLGA BUKUR**: D'APOSTROPHE DESIGN; **MALPINE ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS**: ARCHITECT OF RECORD; **JOHN BEITEL**: LANDSCAPING CONSULTANT; **BLUESKY DESIGN**: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER; **ALPE WOODCRAFT**: WOODWORK; **EXPERIENCE POOLS**: POOL CONTRACTOR; **X-ACT CONTRACTING CORP.**: GENERAL CONTRACTOR

#### PRODUCT SOURCES

**FROM FRONT THROUGH** **CONKLIN'S ANTIQUE BARNWOOD**: SIDING (EXTERIOR); **TOWNSEND DESIGN STUDIO**: CUSTOM OUTER DOORS, TRELLISES (EXTERIOR); CUSTOM TABLE, BANQUETTES (DINING AREA); **LIVING DIVANI**: SOFA (LIVING AREA); **ROGERS & GOFFIGNON**: RED PILLOW FABRIC; **INTERIOR STUDIO**: STEEL-WALNUT TABLE; **THROUGH ABC CARPET & HOWE**: CREUSANTA (LIVING AREA); **RUG (BEDROOM)**: **POLIFORM**: CUSTOM CABINETRY (KITCHEN); **GAGGENAU**: RANGE, HOOD; **BOFFI**: SINK FITTINGS; **BARRASSO & SONS**: PAVERS (EXTERIOR); **THROUGH ELMWOOD RECLAIMED LUMBER**: BEAM CLADDING (LIVING AREA, STUDIO); **STUDIO M**: FLOOR TILE (STUDIO, MASTER SUITE); **ROYAL BOTANIA**: FURNITURE (EXTERIOR); **CARL HANSEN & SONS**: THROUGH SUITE NEW YORK; CHAIRS (DINING AREA); **CHARLES JOUFFRE**: CUSHION FABRIC, PILLOW FABRIC; **HOW BYRON**: PENDANT FIXTURES; **DUGDUC**: TABLE, CHAIR, BEDS (BEDROOM); **MATTER**: PENDANT FIXTURE; **FLOS**: LAMP; **BOFFI**: TUB, TUB FITTINGS, SINKS, SINK FITTINGS (MASTER SUITE); **FONTEINA ARTE**: LAMP; **THROUGHOUT ARCHITECTURAL FENESTRATION**: CUSTOM WINDOWS; **DINESEN**: WOOD FLOORING; **XAL**: RECESSED CEILING FIXTURES



Top: The original chimney received a skin coat of concrete. Bottom, from left: Stair treads and risers are 1 1/4 inches thick. Eastor Design made the pendant fixture in the boys' room from recycled fluorescent tubes. Opposite: In the master suite, a Marcel Wanders tub sits on slabs of Belgian bluestone.