

OUTSIDE IN  
This Ukrainian Village  
home's modern glass and  
steel annex hangs over  
onto the second floor, giving  
the sunroom off the  
kitchen a front-row view of  
the changes in seasons.

## ALL- SEASON SANCTUARY

GTH Architects devises an all-weather abode in the Ukrainian Village.

By Adilla Menayong  
Photography by Mike Schwartz

The area around Ashland and Chicago is especially vibrant in the summer: Cyclists whiz through the streets; pedestrians chatter here and there; and the smells of cumin, cilantro and roasting beef from the many small taquerias that line the intersection fill the air. Amid the hustle and bustle of West Town is the home of Michelle, Evan and their 3-year-old son, smartly tucked away in the shade of the mature tulip poplar and bald cypress trees—two varieties one does not often encounter in the city. “These trees are actually the second reason we bought the home,” says Michelle, recalling that, in 2007, she and her husband first came across the three-story home on the 50-by-125-foot lot. It was overpriced at the time, but two years later, they were able to buy it at a much lower price.

So what was number one? The substantial second-story porch—a screened-off steel and glass structure on stilts that hugs the main home's facade. Scril, the home needed some help. “It was very utilitarian,” shares Jeffrey Harting of Gensburg Toniolo Harting Architects, who, together with his partner John Toniolo, took the lead in visualizing the homeowner's desire to make the cold, minimalist CONTINUED...





**ZEN AND NOW**  
 From top: The living room has a spa-like feel, with neutral upholstered furnishings and the iconic Arco floor lamp by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni for Flos; the backyard is an entire lush, landscaped city lot.



...CONTINUED main limestone building match the lightness of the glass and steel screened porch.

To do this, Harting introduced more light, puncturing the existing walls of the home with more glass and views to the new and improved garden. The staircase, at the core, was also redone completely. Originally enclosed, dark and

carpeted, it is now a floating cascade of white oak separated from the rest of the home with glass partitions. A large window overlooking the garden was placed on each floor as well. To top it off, an industrial skylight was carved in the roof above to bath each level in sunlight.

The contemporary stair paired well with the other update request

that was imparted to the architects: an open kitchen, renovated with Poggenpohl cabinetry, that flows out to the second-level four-season room. Here, the homeowners often relax or entertain among the foliage, creating the illusion that one is taking their morning coffee in a forest—which is why Michelle and Evan decided to make the third level of the CONTINUED...

**DREAM TEAM**  
From left: The ground-level family room's built-ins allow everything to remain clean and concealed; architects John Toniolo (left) and Jeffrey Harting of GH Architects by the impressive open-stair schema they devised for their clients. The kitchen in the background is a functional design with lots of light and Poggenpohl cabinetry.



...CONTINUED glass and steel annex their son's room. "It feels like a treehouse," says Michelle.

At the back of the lot above the garage, Harting designed a landscaped outdoor living room under a pergola that creates a sense of seclusion but still lets the breeze in. The built-in grill, complete with sink and mini fridge, overlooks the garden, which landscape architect Ryan Kettelkamp wrapped with bamboo to create a natural wall. When the wind blows, the rattle of the branches resonates throughout the home, adding to the "meditative, Zen-like feel" Kettelkamp says he had in mind.

The harmony of indoors and outdoors reflects the accord with which everyone worked as a team. And the home is a gift that keeps giving. "Every season the view is something new," Michelle shares. "At ground level, you see the base of the trees, and on the top floor you can see birds making nests." Harting agrees: "It's like having a permanent screensaver!" ■

