

# SITTING PRETTY

FROM EVERY ANGLE, A CLASSIC  
SHINGLE-STYLE HOME IN RIVERSIDE  
PRESENTS A LOVELY FACE.

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Styled by ANNA MOLVIK*



Architect Robert Butscher of Wadia Associates incorporated a wealth of detail to every elevation of the Shingle-style home, even the back and sides. Painting the house white gave the classic design a contemporary feel.



**CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT:** It was the homeowners' idea to add the tall, arched window that frames the stairway. The front entrance is warm and welcoming, but understated; Butscher used Alaskan yellow cedar shingles to top the multiple rooflines. Architect Melanie Smith designed the airy, modern, metal stair railing. Super-high-gloss paint on walls and ceiling enlarges and brightens the foyer.

Most of us have a “good” side. When someone pulls out a camera, we jockey for position, turning this way or that so the camera catches our best angle. Then there are those rare individuals who seem to be made up of nothing *but* good sides. While everyone around them is caught mid-chew or with eyes closed, that one photogenic soul never looks anything but radiant and totally put together.



Designer Susie Earls nudged the interiors toward the modern with clean-lined furniture against a pale gray backdrop.



**ABOVE:** Modern and traditional meet in the dining room, where contemporary Jayson Home side chairs in wood and gray leather are paired with the homeowners' own antique head chairs. **RIGHT:** The recess above the kitchen island is outfitted with silver Phillip Jeffries wallpaper on the ceiling and mirrors around the sides. "It feels like it's open to the sky," Butscher says. Again, the classic and contemporary blend in the Shaker cabinetry and the streamlined waterfall-edge island.

**ARCHITECTURE:** Robert Butscher and Melanie Smith, Wadia Associates

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Susie Earls, Susie Earls Design

**BUILDER:** Wadia Associates

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Wadia Associates

This house is a lot like that camera-friendly acquaintance. Every side of the two-story, 5,800-square-foot dwelling exudes the relaxed charm so characteristic of the Shingle-style. No matter the vantage point, there's some detail—the multiple gables and sweeping rooflines, the ornamentation around a window, the graceful wraparound porch—that delights the eye.

That, of course, is by design, says architect Robert Butscher. He and colleague Melanie Smith, also an architect, tag-teamed on the home; he was responsible for the

exterior, while Smith focused on the interior architecture. Because it would sit on a triangular corner lot, virtually every side of the house would be visible to passersby. "We really had to think about designing in the round," Butscher says.

The clients, active participants in the process, came armed with photos of details they liked, many of which found their way into the final design. On the front of the house, for instance, inspiration for the recessed top-story window with its curved shingles came from the clients' files. And,





notes Butscher, the husband suggested the tall arched window that bathes the main stairway in natural light.

Early on, the architect and his clients decided the house would be white. “Traditionally a Shingle-style house is left natural to weather over time,” Butscher says. “We chose to paint it white to give it a much fresher, more contemporary look.”

Smith’s interior architecture performs the same era-merging balancing act. In the open-plan living and dining room area, for example, she brought in elegant columns to delineate the spaces. The library walls are paneled, as might be expected, but Smith chose a spare, unfussy version to keep the feeling up-to-date. And in the kitchen, Shaker-style cabinetry is paired with a thoroughly modern waterfall-edge island.

The stairway, however, may be the best example of Smith’s deft blending of old and new. Here, paneled walls give the stairwell the gravity it deserves, while



the contemporary metal railing adds an airy touch. “It was a challenge to come up with a railing design that was light and beautiful but met code,” Smith says. “But this really worked out; it’s a fresh, contemporary element just as you walk into the home. It sets the tone.”

Designer Susie Earls further nudged the interiors toward the modern by bringing in clean-lined, neutral-toned furniture and setting it all against a quiet backdrop of pale gray walls. “We used variations of soft gray throughout the house,” she says, from the rich pewter hue of the family room rug to the almost-white hide rugs that top the pebble-colored sisal in the library. She and the clients are still working together (“It’s an ongoing process,” she says) on the home’s final touches. But everyone involved in the process agrees, this pretty house is ready for its close-up.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.



**ABOVE:** A Palladian window floods the peaceful main bedroom with light. Come nightfall, gray linen blinds by Designer Upholstery of Westport offer cocoon-like warmth. **LEFT:** The main bathroom’s vanity sports polished nickel hardware. A subtle strié tile from Fordham Marble was used on the floor. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** A textured collage by artist Joelle Somero hangs above the living room’s fireplace. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** Designer Susie Earls outfitted the home in shades of gray, from the almost-white walls to the rich pewter of the J.D. Staron rug.