

# A Perfect Mix

RENOWNED ARCHITECT DINYAR WADIA REALLY LISTENS TO HIS CLIENTS—AND IT SHOWS IN HIS GORGEOUS WORK, LIKE THIS ELEGANT FAMILY HOME THAT SEAMLESSLY MIXES STYLES. HERE'S A LOOK AT HOW IT ALL CAME TOGETHER, WITH INSIGHT FROM THE HAPPY OWNERS AS WELL AS WADIA HIMSELF. BY MARIA LAPIANA

"Imagine a Queen Anne shaking hands with a Victorian Shingle," says architect Dinyar Wadia.





To utilize the pastoral view, the informal breakfast room was placed at the rear of the home.



The study called for detailed crown molding, custom bookcases and a decorative mantel.



Sidelights and clerestory windows surrounding the door bathe the foyer in natural light.

**D**inyar Wadia remembers his first meeting with the couple that commissioned him to design a house in rural Weston, CT. The husband reached into his wallet and unfolded a clipping: It was a picture of a house he'd torn out of a magazine years ago. "We want something like this," he told Wadia, the same architect who had designed the Queen Anne in the picture. At long last, the couple's "one day" had arrived, says the wife; they wanted to build the home of their dreams.

In his usual fashion, Wadia, the founder and principal of Wadia Associates in New Canaan, CT, asked the couple myriad questions. He wanted to know them, discern their likes and dislikes, and learn why a traditional home style appealed to them. Remembers the wife: "There was a genuine interest in making sure he understood how our family lived, where we gathered, where our children studied," she says.

The 7,000-square-foot home sits on 22 acres surrounded by woods. It is described by Wadia as "a hybrid of styles, like most American architecture. Here you have the Queen Anne style meeting the Victorian Shingle style, creating quite a unique and

romantic design." Wadia and his team sought to design the "perfect blend of a house" that wasn't too big for the family of five, and yet was large enough for entertaining, and for the frequent charitable events they host there.

The first floor was designed to be very open, with a well-loved family room, a generously scaled dining room and a formal living room that can be cordoned off, but seldom is. There are five bedrooms with en-suite baths. Wadia notes that the children's bedrooms, at 14 by 14 feet, are average in size—that was by design. "Our children are so blessed to live in such a beautiful and elegant home," says the wife. "We did not want the rooms to be overly large."

The home was situated to disturb as little of the existing landscape as possible, and to augment sweeping views of the countryside, says Wadia. The house itself complements its surroundings with its gables, mix of materials, architectural details and thoughtful fenestration.

"Many architects today try to be different and edgy, but the classic and elegant design and the details that Dinyar brought to us were exceptional," says the wife. "They truly fit our ideal vision of our home." ❁



In the kitchen, a scarlet island acts as a bold focal point.



The architect created intimate spaces like this one, so the large house didn't feel too big for the family of five.

The clients added a big, red barn for entertaining several years after the house was built.



The outbuilding serves as a socializing space for the family and friends.



Wadia disturbed as little as possible of the site's 22 wooded acres.



Wadia discussing plans for a project with clients. He says listening is a big part of his process.

## Six Questions for Dinyar Wadia

WE SAT DOWN WITH OUR 2015 DESIGN MARKET HONOREE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT INSPIRES HIM AND HOW HE BUILDS SUCH SPECIAL HOMES.

### **How has the landscape inspired you?**

To me, this is one of the most beautiful regions in the country. We work hard to make sure that our homes fit into the landscape. The architecture plays second fiddle when the house has a spectacular view—say, of the Sound. Nature always trumps the manmade.

**Your elegant homes truly reflect the vernacular New England style—and yet they are not all the same. How can that be?**

New England (and Connecticut, in particular) has a long history of diverse architecture. We are just following in this eclectic tradition. I like to think of the Connecticut style as one of stately informality.

**Your team excels at listening and helping clients interpret the style that best suits them. How do you do it?**

This really is our strong point. When we first meet a client, we want to find out about the family. We ask and soon find out which parts of the house are most important. That leads to a plan, which leads to variants on a style. What separates one from another is a personal aesthetic choice, what best fits in the setting or simply budget considerations.

**You have said that you bring “architectural intelligence” to every project you undertake.**

### **Can you elaborate?**

I work with very talented people, and there is a real sense of rigor and purpose in what we do. If you were to ask about a specific design element on a house, we can tell you exactly why it is there. Beautiful designs are important, but there is always a reason behind every design move.

### **Your firm offers a full range of services—why is that important?**

For any project to be successful there has to be a single vision. Quite often, clients feel this is best achieved with just one design firm handling all aspects of the project. There is no right or wrong way—but we do like to provide our clients with options. It's something that separates us from most design firms.

### **What philosophy or unique approach to design would you say distinguishes your work?**

Quite often, an architect specializes in one type of style, say American Shingle, which is why a client would go to them. However, we work in a wide range of styles—and budgets and sizes. We don't try to force a style of home on our clients. Rather, we listen to them, as a house is a reflection of the family that lives there.

ANNOUNCING OUR  
2015 HONOREE

**dM**  
Serendipity  
DESIGN MARKET 2015

**Dinyar Wadia**

FOR 40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE  
IN ARCHITECTURE AND  
DEDICATION TO THE COMMUNITY