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Designer Tori Golub and architect James Merrell doubled the size of a 1978 Long Island house by Norman Jaffe. In the living room, the bluestone daybed is an original Jaffe feature. Golub's eclectic mix of furniture includes a tubular metal chair by Kem Weber and stools by Pierre Chareau. The new wing (at right) contains a master bedroom suite.

FAMILY TIES



MET HOME OF THE MONTH
A TOPFLIGHT MANHATTAN
DESIGNER EXPANDED HER
FATHER'S HOUSE ON LONG
ISLAND AND BROUGHT IT
FORWARD FROM THE 1970s.



Nearly

30 years ago, Alan Golub, a divorcee with two daughters, bought a modest beach house on Long Island. The house was the work of Norman Jaffe, an iconoclastic architect renowned for his ability to wrest powerful forms from simple materials. Its setting was a Jaffe-designed enclave known as Sam's Creek, where Jaffe had used earth berms to give each house a private plot. Only the rooflines are visible from the street.

Jaffe himself lived in Sam's Creek, and over the years Golub became as much a fan of the man as of his architecture. They talked about enlarging Golub's house, but before that could happen, in 1993, the architect disappeared while swimming in the ocean. He is believed to have drowned.

A few years later, Golub retired from the fashion business and decided to spend more time on Long Island. Architect

James Merroll and interior designer Tori Golub, Alan's daughter, teamed up to enlarge and modernize the house. Both admired Jaffe's architecture, which has lately come to be seen as an exemplar of an important postwar American style. But Tori didn't want to treat the house as a period piece. "That would have been ugly," she says, matter-of-factly. Instead, she used furnishings that both pre and postdate the architecture.

In the dining room, the oldest pieces may be the original Wiener Werkstätte bentwood chairs. The newest is the credenza Tori designed to look like a restaurant refrigerator, a witty reminder that a modernist house, no matter how luxurious, is always a "machine for living."

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In the original Norman Jaffe house, walls of glass allow indoors to merge with out, and the same fieldstone is used for the living room fireplace and backyard pool. Tori Golub heightened the effect: The dining room's oxidized-metal French chandelier and the oak trestle table, with its cast-concrete top, could be outside, just as the patio furniture could be inside the house.



Tori Golub (opposite, with her client-father) wanted to make sure his cavernous bedroom felt intimate. So she and architect James Merrell placed the bed in a foot-deep niche upholstered in linen (eliminating the need for a conventional headboard). A Karl Springer coffee table is one of the few pieces that was designed around the same time as the house.



At

just 1,700 square feet, the house was one of Jaffe's smallest, according to Alastair Gordon, author of the just-published *Romantic Modernist: The Life and Work of Norman Jaffe, Architect* (Monacelli). Before Alan Golub began using it as his primary residence, he wanted to upgrade the kitchen and add a master bedroom suite. The original bedrooms, just off the kitchen, would become guest rooms for Tori, her sister, Lauren, and their families. In a striking demonstration of how lifestyles have changed in 30 years, the new suite (including a gym and a spa-like bathroom) is as large as the entire Jaffe house.

While doubling the building's size, Alan was determined to be respectful of its architecture. The original house was a rectangle of glass, gray-painted wood and rough-hewn fieldstone. In the new suite, attached to the back of the house, Merrell used sim-

ilar materials and forms. "You come up the driveway and you don't know we did anything," says Alan. "It's seamless."

Yet, on the inside, there is more spatial complexity than in Jaffe's original dwelling. By dropping floors and raising ceilings, Merrell made room for clerestory windows above the sliders. Ceilings seem to float, allowing light fixtures and drapery hardware to nestle discreetly around the edges of the rooms.

Alan's bedroom is particularly dramatic. With two parallel walls of glass, it feels like a transparent projection into the landscape. Tori chose furniture, including a wood-backed club chair, that would look good from front and back. And she arranged the pieces casually, rather than in a tight grouping, so that views from the bed would be unobstructed. "When I wake up in the morning," Alan says, "I feel like I'm living outside."



A large, modern bathroom with a central tub, a wooden chest of drawers, and a blue chair. The room features a concrete floor with a bleached oak inset, a plaster catch basin, and a blue upholstered chair with a white robe draped over it. A wooden chest of drawers with a circular mirror on top is positioned behind the tub. The room is enclosed by two louvered panels that act as barn doors. A bright rug is visible in the foreground.

Two louvered panels hung as barn doors let Alan make his bathing room more or less private. A new hallway (opposite) leads from the original house—with Jaffe's bluestone daybed (foreground)—to the giant master bedroom suite. Diaphanous floor-to-ceiling draperies soften the edges of the architecture. A bright Fabien Baron rug draws visitors into the new wing.



For

architect James Merrell, bathrooms are no longer appendages to bedrooms but living spaces in their own right, generously proportioned and divided into zones. Still, the spalike bathroom he designed for Alan is especially extensive. "When people see it," says Tori, "they gasp."

Alan's biggest contribution to the room came during a golfing trip to Kohler, Wisconsin (where the high-profile bathroom fixtures and hardware company runs a resort). Visiting one of the Kohler showrooms when he wasn't out on the links, he was captivated by a square infinity tub and decided on the spot to buy it. In fact, the tub was a prototype; it was several years before the real one was delivered. In the meantime, Merrell and Tori designed the room around the fixture. There is a lot of glass, including clear panes for the clerestory windows and frosted panels for the cubicles containing the shower and toilet (at right in photo, left).

The room is also contemplative, drawing the eye toward the center: The plaster "catch basin" matches the concrete floor, which has a bleached oak inset. Says Tori, "We created what would be a rug, but it's wood." On that "rug," a Biedermeier settee and a Japanese *tansu* create a cozy furniture grouping, with the tub as the focal point. Standing on the *tansu* is a simple child's toy—a hoop and stick from the turn of the last century—that suggests an altar, enhancing the room's Zen quality.

Alan says that working with Tori not only produced a house he loves, but powerful emotions. "It was a wonderful experience for me as a father," he says. He's sure that Jaffe, who had three children, would approve.

Details


1 To match the poured-concrete floor in the bathroom, Tori Golub had counters made of a 1/8-inch troweled waterproof artisan plaster, a cement-based product. The counters' "aprons" give them heft—like "floating masses," Tori says. They also hide plumbing for the undermounted sinks.

2 Since overhead lighting isn't adequate for shaving, Tori designed handsome sconces that she mounted above the sinks. Knowing they'd be reflected in the mirrors, she made sure their backs (with silk shades notched around bronze plates) are as carefully detailed as their fronts.

3 The bedroom night tables are production pieces designed by George Nakashima. Tori designed the swing-arm lamps with a masculine demeanor.

4 Gauzy linen drapes hang from tracks that were set in the bedroom ceiling during construction. "When the windows reach all the way up, you don't have any other place for hardware," Tori says. The track comes with a tape that is sewn into the top hem of the drape, ensuring a perfect ripple-fold every time.

5 Although the kitchen is large, it's compact. By using stainless steel for the lower cabinets, while painting the uppers a light color, Tori made the room brighter as it goes up. To create an overhang that eliminates the need for handles, she ordered doors two inches longer than the upper cabinets.

6 The lower metal cabinets, from Home Depot, help the stainless-steel appliances blend in. The cabinets also act as mirrors, filling the room with the richness of the charcoal-colored tile floor.  See Resources, last pages.

