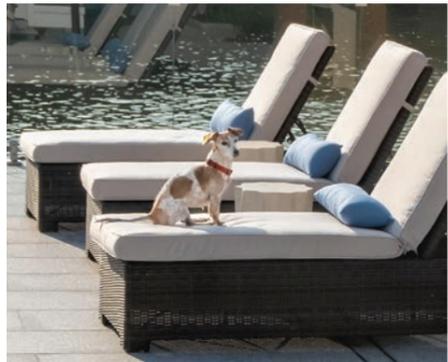


## Bathing Beauty

A couple's riverside stunner is an indoor-outdoor paradise for the whole family.

BY JENNIFER CARMICHAEL



**Moving earth to make heaven:** What did it take to create the riverside spread above? Eight thousand cubic yards of soil had to be moved and 4,500 square feet of stone walls built. The end result was well worth the effort — *all* members of the family agree.

**G**rowing up, Caroline Gaglio would go to a lake in Maine for two weeks every summer with her family. She established the same tradition with her husband, Anthony Gaglio Sr., and their three children, now young adults, renting a vacation home next door to her sister’s family. Eight years ago, they decided to look for a lake house in Connecticut, a closer drive from their full-time residence in Stamford. And they found just what they were looking for in Southbury.

“When we started looking for a lake house in 2014, we took our jet skis out and looked at properties on Bantam Lake, Lake Zoar and Candlewood Lake,” says Anthony, president of Bridgeport-based commercial builder Viking Construction. “When we looked on Lake Lillinonah, there was a sign out on the water and a lady was sitting on a dock. We went and talked to her and made a deal.”

The 900-square-foot house they purchased on the banks of the Shepaug River, which joins Lake Lillinonah, quickly turned into a 3,000-square-foot home built by Anthony and his team. The family enjoyed every summer weekend there, except for those two weeks when they’d still head to Maine. Fast forward to early 2018, the Gaglios decided to sell it, buying the secluded 1.7 acres next door. “We needed more space,” says Caroline, who initially wasn’t sure if she’d like lake life in Southbury, since it wasn’t Maine. “The family is growing, and we have grandchildren now. And when you build it, they will come.”

Before building could begin, Anthony and his team moved over 8,000 cubic yards of soil and built over 4,500 square feet of stone walls. “We had eight masons working there for close to a year,” says Anthony, who tapped Matt Popp, owner of Norwalk-based Environmental Land Solutions because of his wealth of experience in land use and wetlands. “We rebuilt the stone walls all along



**Take me to church:** The *pièce de résistance* on the inside might be the great room with its arch-bottom timber trusses cut from trees in Oregon. The custom trusses are both load-bearing for the cathedral ceiling and a statement design choice.

the river edge, which is almost 1,000 feet, and then multiple stone walls because the lot has a 100-foot grade change from front to back. So, we literally dug into the earth, retained it with stone walls from stone we made on site, and then exported the rest of it.”

Knowing Joe Sepot, founder and principal of Branford’s Joseph Sepot Architects, from the commercial work they had done together, Anthony tapped him to design a classic stone-and-shingle, New England-style house with modern design elements. In March 2020, Anthony and his team got started on its foundation.

“I came out to look at the property with our client, and I was immediately impressed by the expansive view of the riverfront,” Sepot says. “The first set of conceptual designs explored the siting of the house, taking into consideration the sun angles, steep topography of the land, and required setbacks from the Shepaug River. From there, the shape of the house took form.” He knew there would be the opportunity for some “magnificent water views.”

Sepot thoughtfully designed a 7,700-square-foot house in which all the living spaces and bedrooms took advantage of the views. The first floor features open-plan living, which the Gaglios enjoyed in their other house. But this time around, it was on a much larger scale with defined spaces for dining, a wet bar and eat-in kitchen. Also on the first floor is a principal en suite bedroom, laundry room, walk-in pantry, mudroom and three-car garage with a dog-wash station.

“Joe’s design of the house just flows,” Anthony says. “In between the kitchen and the great room is warm and inviting. And it’s enough to entertain with several friends. It flows outside to the outdoor patio to the pavilion to the outdoor kitchen. It’s a great house that entertains, and it’s a great summer home. It’s a great winter-slash-year-round home too.”

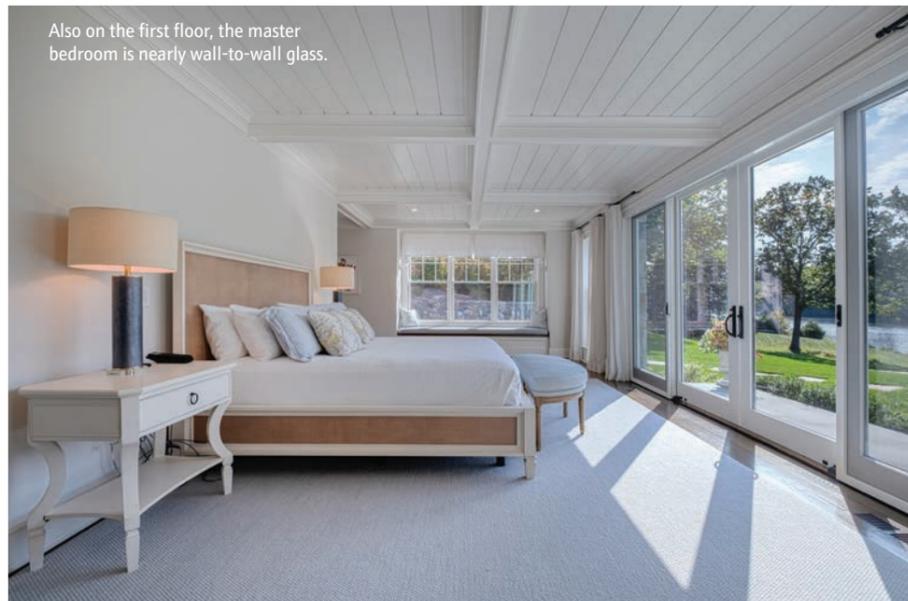
Instrumental in the home’s warmth are custom-designed, hand-hewn, arch-bottom timber trusses cut from trees in Oregon. They were shipped across the country to Vermont Frames in Starksboro, Vermont, where they were fabricated, put together and then taken apart to be shipped to Southbury. “We literally had to lay them out and put them together on site because they were so big and then hoisted them up with a crane,” Anthony says.

The trusses bear the weight of the tongue-and-groove coffered cathedral ceiling in the light-filled great room. Also contributing to the interior’s warmth is the stained rift- and quarter-sawn, 10-inch-wide plank oak flooring with radiant heat throughout, and a floor-to-ceiling fieldstone fireplace.



A 46-square-foot quartz island is the focal point of the kitchen which, like many rooms, has sweeping views of the river.

A quiet corner of the great room is an ideal spot to take in the outdoor vistas and a bit of sun.



Also on the first floor, the master bedroom is nearly wall-to-wall glass.



With a 3,000-square-foot bluestone patio, pavilion with a stone fireplace, 700-square-foot infinity-edge pool, and masonry kitchen, the outdoor area is built for a party.



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The ceiling with exposed timber beams stained to match the dark flooring continues into the kitchen where custom-built, floor-to-ceiling white cabinets, large breakfast nook, quartz countertops, and a 46-square-foot center island takes center stage. While Sepot designed the kitchen, the Gaglios also worked with Bender Plumbing on the fixtures and cabinets.

“Because we had the lake house next door, I knew what I wanted and what was going to work and what wasn’t going to work,” Caroline says. “When we designed the kitchen, it’s a 46-square-foot island in there. And everybody’s like, ‘Are you sure you want that?’ And I said, ‘Yes, this is what I need.’ And I knew I couldn’t do white couches. I have grandchildren, so I’m not going to spend my time saying, ‘Get off the couch, get off the couch.’ It had to be user-friendly but look really nice.”

Caroline worked with their daughter Jessica, along with Jody Deluca of Greenwich-based Jody Deluca Designs, with whom she had worked previously on her home in Stamford. The result was a color palette that reflects a cool take on a modern lake house. “It was important to make this gorgeous lake house feel like a cozy home for their family to enjoy,” Deluca says. “So, we really wanted to use a lot of warm neutrals and textures to do just that. There are areas throughout the house—tiles, wallpaper, lighting and even some furniture—that are really fun and unexpected, yet really pull together the look.”

Highlights of the second floor include a sitting area overlooking the great room below; a grandchildren’s wing with bunk beds and play area; four bedrooms, each with its own balcony; three en suite bathrooms; a five-fixture hall bathroom; and an additional half-bath.

A playroom, home theater, wine cellar, exercise room and mechanical room round out the lower level. And all electronics throughout the property can be controlled by a smartphone. Their son, Anthony Gaglio Jr., vice president of Viking Construction, handled all the electronics and wiring.

But outdoor living really steals the show here. A 3,000-square-foot bluestone patio, pavilion with a stone fireplace, 700-square-foot infinity-edge pool, and masonry kitchen make for grand and relaxed spaces.

“You take everything you learn in your 40-year career, and you put it into your own home,” reflects Anthony, who says he and Caroline look forward to bringing the whole family together and instilling traditions at the house. “I’ve never built a house for anyone else. Never. Because my punch list is never ending.” ■